en

News | 28.02.2019

European Court of Justice to decide if transparency over cancer studies should override commercial secrets

On the 7th March 2019, the European Court of Justice will deliver its verdict in a landmark case pitting the public interest in transparency against the commercial interests of private companies. The case was brought by four Greens/EFA MEPs in May 2017, after EFSA claimed that it had used unpublished studies by Monsanto, Syngenta and Cheminova to conclude that glyphosate was not carcinogenic.

In contrast to the specialised World Health Organisation agency for cancer (IARC), which only bases its scientific assessments on studies that have been published in the scientific literature and which concluded that glyphosate is possibly carcinogenic for humans, EFSA used unpublished studies, which it later refused to provide public access to. EFSA's reasoning is that the commercial interests of the companies who submitted the studies are more important than the right of access to documents established in the EU Treaties.

Monsanto and Cheminova joined the case to support EFSA's refusal to provide access to the studies on carcinogenicity, though they did not send any written arguments nor were their lawyers present at the hearing. The German government also initially joined the case in defence of EFSA, but then quickly decided to withdraw.

The 12 studies that the European Court of Justice will rule upon are the results of tests conducted on rats and mice in laboratories to ascertain the potential effects of glyphosate on human health. In the European Union, products that are potentially carcinogenic cannot be licensed for sale, which is why EFSA's assessment - and the studies upon which it is based - are a matter of extreme public interest.

To read more about the background of the case and the main arguments, check out our briefing here

You can also read our blog article here

Or watch our facebook live here:

Recommended

Press release

Leonardo1982



Parliament puts far-right party on notice

07.07.2026

Press release

European External Action Service (https://www.flickr.com/photos/eeas/32978511020)



[Now is the time to transform the EU before another Orb…]

21.04.2026

Press release

Foto von Sasun Bughdaryan auf Unsplash



GDPR: MEPs to vote on faster and fairer enforcement

21.10.2025

News

© European Union 2019 - Source : EP



Debriefing of the September Plenary Session

12.09.2025

Contact person



Pam Bartlett Quintanilla

Team leader - Outreach and campaigns

Please share

- E-Mail