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Time for the European Commission to facilitate the transition to a sustainable EU farming model

Stop glyphosate and make low risk pesticides available to EU farmers!

One week after the launch of a European citizens' initiative aiming at banning glyphosate-based herbicides in the EU and setting EU-wide mandatory reduction targets for pesticide use, the European Parliament adopted today with a broad majority a non-binding resolution calling for increased EU availability of low-risk pesticides, focussing on those of biological origin.

Pesticides of biological origin are based on microorganisms, botanicals, bio-derived chemicals or semi chemicals (such as pheromones and various essential oils) and their by-products. In the EU, active substances are approved at Union level and regulated under Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009, while the authorisation of products containing those active substances lies within the remit of the Member States.

For the moment, only seven active substances classified as 'low-risk' are approved in the Union. Six of them are active substances of biological origin. MEPs want to increase the availability for farmers of those substances in the pest management toolbox.

In order to promote the development and use of new low-risk plant protection products of biological origin, MEPs consider that the evaluation of their efficacy and risks, and of their capacity to respond to the environmental, health-related and economic needs of agriculture, should be designed in a way that does not hinder their development and market entry.

In concrete terms, the European Parliament today calls on the Commission to submit, before the end of 2018, a specific legislative proposal amending Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009, with a view to establishing a fast-track evaluation, authorisation and registration process for low-risk pesticides of biological origin.

The resolution also highlights the need for a definition of ‘plant protection product of biological origin’ that would cover pesticides containing an active substance that is a microorganism or a molecule existing in nature, either obtained from a natural process or synthesised as identical to the natural molecule. These pesticides should be distinct from those containing an active substance that is a synthetic molecule not existing in nature.

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