Press release | 06.12.2018

Time for stricter testing around pesticide authorisation

PEST final report

The authorisation procedure for pesticides such as glyphosate must be fundamentally reformed, according to the final report by rapporteurs Bart Staes (Greens/EFA) and Norbert Lins (Conservatives) of the Special Committee on the authorisation procedure for pesticides (PEST), which has just been adopted by a large majority.

The final report calls on EU governments and the European Commission to step up environmental and health assessments of pesticides and pesticide active substances, to ensure that no conflicts of interest affect the authorisation procedure and to make risk assessments transparent. The product glyphosate will be tested for cancer risks. MEPs will vote on the final report in the plenary session of the European Parliament in January.

Bart Staes, Greens/EFA rapporteur for PEST report, comments:

"It's great that we have such broad support for the call to test dangerous substances such as pesticides independently, and to end conflicts of interest in their approval. The authorisation procedure for pesticides must be thoroughly reformed. Industry-funded studies on the harmful or dangerous effects of substances must not be buried away in backroom cupboards and public peer reviewed studies should be taken more into account.

"Independent and transparent decision making will help protect biodiversity and can restore public confidence in the European Union. EU governments must finally provide data on the use of pesticides. For a sufficient risk assessment, we need far more public investment in independent research.

"The risk assessments of dangerous substances must not be put in the hands of the pesticides industry that manufacture these products. These chemical cocktails of pesticide products must be tested fully for risks and their cumulative effects. The PEST committee recognises that there is still scientific controversy surrounding the cancer risk of glyphosate that cannot simply be swept aside, all studies on its carcinogenic effects must be reviewed by the end of 2019 at the latest."

The reports requirements in detail:

- full testing of active substances,
- full testing of pesticide products, including of cumulative effects,

- stronger risk management measures,
- full transparency with regard to the studies used for the assessment,
- strengthening independence, ensuring absence of conflicts of interests,
- meeting of deadlines (to end technical extensions due to delays in the assessment),
- implementation of provisions for vulnerable groups,
- reduction of animal tests,
- better statistics,
- further action against neonicotinoids.

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