Press release | 19.05.2016

Toxic substances

Glyphosate EU approval decision postponed as concerns refuse to go away

A decision on whether or not to reapprove the controversial toxic substance glyphosate for use in Europe was today postponed for the second time, following disagreement among representatives of EU governments. A revised proposal by the European Commission to reapprove glyphosate for use in Europe for 9 more years, with almost no restrictions, failed to secure the required majority among EU governments (1). Commenting on the development, Green environment and food safety spokesperson **Bart Staes** stated:

"This latest postponement is a sign that the significant opposition to reapproving glyphosate is being taken seriously by key EU governments. It is clear that the EU Commission and the agro-chemical industry were hell-bent on bulldozing through the approval of glyphosate for unrestricted use for a long timeframe but thankfully this push has been headed off for now. We hope this postponement will convince more EU governments to join in opposing the approval of this controversial substance and, at the very least, to proactively propose comprehensive restrictions on its use.

"The Commission cannot keep coming back with proposals that do not address the concerns with glyphosate. Instead, it needs to finally recognise that there are major problems with glyphosate and legislate for this.

"Only last month, the European Parliament voted to highlight its concerns with glyphosate and adopted a resolution opposing approval of glyphosate for most of its uses. MEPs voted to oppose the approval of glyphosate in agriculture where there are alternative methods for weed control, in the pre-harvest stage, in public parks and playgrounds and for hobby gardeners. EU governments should now take this on board both in terms of the pending EU approval but also at national level, where member states can introduce their own bans or restrictions, as France has already indicated it will do.

"While the agro-chemical lobby is desperately trying to spin it otherwise, the finding by the WHO'S IARC that glyphosate is probably carcinogenic to humans is of major concern. This, combined with the established negative impacts on the environment, should be leading to a global moratorium on its use. "

(1) The decision was due to be taken by representatives of EU governments in the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed. The proposal by the European Commission to approve glyphosate for a further 9 years, with no restrictions on its use, would have to have been approved by a qualified majority of member states. It is not yet clear when the next meeting of the committee will take place but the Commission can now either present a new proposal or propose a technical extension for a shorter

timeframe (e.g. 2 years).

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Opinion

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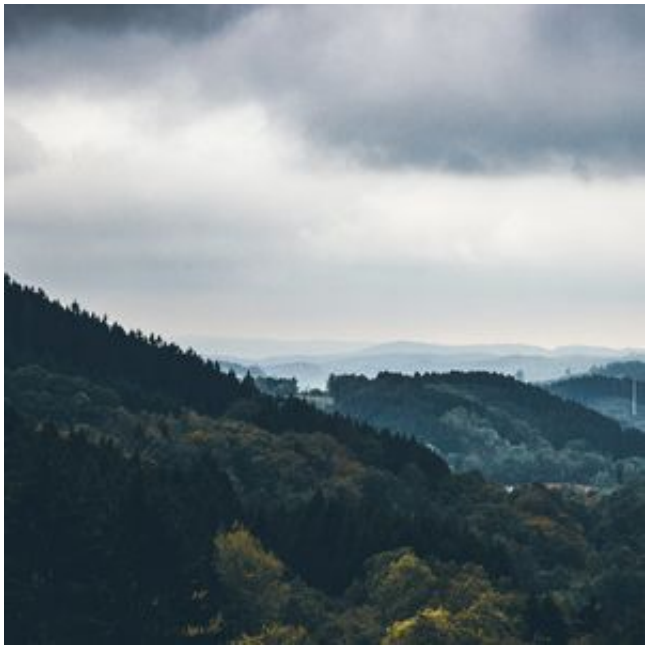


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Bart Staes

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