

ENSSER e.V. * Marienstr. 19/20 * 10117 Berlin * Germany

Press release

3 November 2023

P +49 (0) 30 / 21234056
F +49 (0) 30 / 21234057
E office@ensser.org
W <http://www.ensser.org>

Glyphosate: EU neglects obvious precautionary duty to ban it, scientists say

While the EU hesitates about yet another re-authorisation of glyphosate, the science is quite clear enough for this decision, according to the European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental Responsibility (ENSSER). The herbicide ingredient can give rise to toxic effects and serious diseases, for instance fatty liver disease, oxidative stress, DNA damage, neurological damage and cancer. Its impact on ecosystems and biodiversity is very complex and adverse effects on these must be reckoned with, too: an example is the fact that glyphosate also turns out to work as an insecticide on multiple insect species. It may thus play a role in the on-going insect population decline. Taken together, this shows that the European Commission's proposal to renew glyphosate's market approval is a flagrant abandonment of the Precautionary Principle, which the EC is legally bound to uphold. Glyphosate should be banned from the market.

ENSSER points out that the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have neglected to consider extensive, damning scientific evidence from both laboratory and population studies into the effects of glyphosate and glyphosate-based herbicides on human health, biodiversity and ecosystems. A series of examples of this evidence is listed in a statement by ENSSER. Further, EFSA has ignored cocktail effects with other toxic substances, as well as the fact that the excessive use of glyphosate has resulted in its emergence as a diffuse environmental contaminant with increased background levels. On the other hand, EFSA did identify data gaps and "outstanding issues" in the evidence. Thus, EFSA's conclusion that there are "no critical areas of concern" in its glyphosate assessment appears in flagrant conflict with the evidence, according to ENSSER.

Due to the serious character of the evidence with respect to human health and the environment, there ought to be no question as to the appropriateness of precautionary measures, in this case the termination of the market approval of glyphosate by the European Commission. The application of the Precautionary Principle, to which the EC is committed by the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, requires reasonable grounds to suspect possible harm, even though full scientific certainty might be lacking. Such grounds are more than present, ENSSER states.

Contact: Diederick Sprangers dsprangers@ensser.org