

Glyphosate: EU Commission is disregarding the precautionary principle

Further authorisation of genetically engineered soybeans sprayed with a combination of herbicides pending

7 March 2016 Testbiotech accuses the EU Commission of disregarding the precautionary principle. The precautionary principle is an essential part of EU regulations to protect the environment and food safety. If there is any indication that either people or the environment are in some way endangered it means that prohibitions can be declared, even if the exact details of the particular hazard are not known. In the case of glyphosate, the WHO has categorised the active ingredient as „probably carcinogenic“. Even so, the EU Commission is indicating that the use of glyphosate will still be permitted because the European Food Safety Authority EFSA regards it as being less hazardous. It is uncertain as to whether any decision will be taken today in Brussels.

„As long as there are differences of opinion between experts, the EU cannot give authorisation and the precautionary principle takes precedence. Nevertheless, in the recent past EU decisions have increasingly given way to business interests to the detriment of health and consumer protection,“ says Christoph Then, „ That could be because the EU is hoping to quickly finalise the CETA with Canada. This would considerably weaken the precautionary principle.“

Soon a decision could be made which, in future, will allow products with even more toxic residues to be imported than glyphosate as single substance: One instance is soybean FG72 developed by Bayer, which can be sprayed with glyphosate and isoxaflutol at the same time making it highly likely that residues from both herbicides will be left in the plants. Nonetheless, the effects of using this combination of herbicides have never been investigated. Even EFSA regards isoxaflutol as „probably carcinogenic“. Just recently EFSA rejected an application filed by Bayer to set a safe limit for residues. This was, according to EFSA, because present data on isoxaflutol do not allow potential harmful effects on human health to be ruled out. Nevertheless, the EU Commission has already said that it will authorise this particular genetically engineered soybean.

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Further information: [News about possible vote on glyphosate](#) [2]

[Reaction of EU Commission to import of further genetically engineered soybeans](#) [3]

[EFSA opinion on isoxaflutol](#) [4]

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Links

[1] <mailto:info@testbiotech.org>

[2] <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/mar/04/eu-states-rebel-against-plans-to-relicense-weedkiller-glyphosate>

[3] <http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/1548>

[4] <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/4416>

[5] http://www.testbiotech.org/en/campaign_toxic_soy