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To
The European Commission
Secretary-General
Transparency Unit SG-B-4
BERL 5/327
B-1049 Brussels

Sent by email: sg-acc-doc@ec.europa.eu

21 August 2015

Dear Sir or Madam

Re: Application for access to documents -
Ref. GestDem No 2015/3292

In a letter dated 10 August 2015, DG Sanco informed us that the documents made available to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) by the German government “are protected in their entirety” as confidential. There would be “no overriding public interest” that would justify access. There is, however, clearly public interest in the matter since the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) of the World Health Organisation (WHO) has already declared that glyphosate is probably carcinogenic to humans. However, the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) is claiming there would be no risk to human health. We would like to access these data to provide transparency on the process of risk assessment and ensure that independent experts can assist in avoiding any negative health impact on health of consumers, farmers and animals.

Glyphosate is present in many food products, it is the most widely used herbicide in the world. If it is carcinogenic it could impact consumers’ health substantially. Therefore, from the perspective of public interest, there is no doubt that transparency in risk assessment must be given a high priority.

As stated in the letter, “disclosure of these documents at this stage of the process will be premature and would seriously undermine EFSA’s on-going decision-making process”.

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Nevertheless, it appears that Monsanto and other producers of glyphosate have already had access since they reviewed an advanced draft of the report, dated January 2015. Soon afterwards, industry quickly published a scientific paper (Greim et al., 2015) claiming that glyphosate would not be carcinogenic. This was then promptly picked up by the German authority for the final version of its report.

We cannot accept the view of the Commission that giving industry access to the report does not undermine the process of risk assessment of glyphosate, whilst giving independent experts access to the data apparently does.

In this context we also refer to the court ruling made by the European Court of Justice in 2013 (Case T-545/11), which ruled that data relevant for the risk assessment of herbicides have to be made public. It is time that the EU Commission started to comply with this process to create more transparency and gives access to the data as requested:

- Germany Rapporteur Member State (2015a) Glyphosate Renewal Assessment Report, Volume 1. Final version
- Germany Rapporteur Member State (2015b) Glyphosate Renewal Assessment Report, Volume 3, Annex B.6.1 Toxicology and Metabolism. Final version
- Germany Rapporteur Member State (2015c) List of Endpoints, Active Substance Glyphosate. Final version
- Any other parts of the Glyphosate Renewal Assessment Report as provided by the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

With kind regards,



References:

Greim et al. (2015), Evaluation of carcinogenic potential of the herbicide glyphosate, drawing on tumor incidence data from fourteen chronic/carcinogenicity rodent studies,
<http://informahealthcare.com/doi/abs/10.3109/10408444.2014.1003423>

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