

# Joint Press Release

Brussels, 27/06/2024

## Glyphosate: EU Commission rejects request to cancel re-approval, NGOs go to EU court

**On 26 June 2024, the European Commission rejected the formal request by PAN Europe and 5 of its member NGOs to review the 10-year re-approval of glyphosate. The NGOs plan to challenge the decision in court and have 2 months to file a court challenge.**

In parallel to this legal procedure, all EU Member States are currently re-assessing glyphosate-based products. A national ban is perfectly feasible with the current legislation, as is shown by a guidance document issued by PAN Europe.

In January 2024, the NGOs ClientEarth, Générations Futures, GLOBAL 2000, PAN Germany, PAN Netherlands and PAN Europe sent a formal Request for Internal Review to the European Commission (1). They asked to revise the re-approval of glyphosate – a harmful pesticide – based on an extensive description of the numerous flaws in the work of the EU agencies, namely the European Commission, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA). Furthermore, the European Commission disregarded a series of major data gaps identified by the EFSA, which is not in line with the pesticide regulation (EC) 1107/2009.

The European Commission rejected the request. Despite major flaws in the EFSA and ECHA work, the Commission refused to review the re-approval of glyphosate. The 6 NGOs have extensively demonstrated in their Request for Internal Review that the risk assessment of EFSA and ECHA is flawed, with regards to carcinogenicity, genotoxicity, neurotoxicity, endocrine disruption, as well as toxicity to insects and amphibians. Findings from independent science were systematically discarded or given much less weight than sometimes decade old industry studies. Furthermore, the Commission keeps refusing to assess the toxicity of a representative formulation (i.e. one glyphosate-based herbicide), in order to assess the synergistic effects of the mixture of glyphosate and its co-formulants.

Angeliki Lyssimachou, head of science and policy at PAN Europe said: "The Commission's reply is unacceptable. People and the environment are exposed to glyphosate on a daily basis. Independent research and data from the pesticide industry itself show that glyphosate pesticides can cause harm to humans and the environment. This should lead to their ban under EU law. Yet EFSA, ECHA and the European Commission persist in downplaying these facts".

Pauline Cervan, a toxicologist at Générations Futures said: "The Commission keeps rejecting 99% of literature studies in the evaluation of glyphosate. They continue to defend the EFSA's methodology of discarding valuable studies. However, these studies should be included in order to take account of all available knowledge".

Peter Clausing, a toxicologist at PAN Germany said: "It is high time to subject the authorities' mantra to independent scrutiny through a court ruling. The ECHA "weight of evidence" approach in assessing carcinogenicity is flawed from a scientific perspective."

Helmut Burtscher-Schaden, a biochemist at GLOBAL 2000 - Friends of the Earth Austria said: "We had expected that the authorities would take a closer look at the glyphosate manufacturers' studies. Many of them are outdated. However, it is shocking to observe that the authorities repeated the conclusions of previous approval procedures in a copy-paste manner. The EU Commission is now defending this unacceptable practice. This is highly concerning. The Commission is not adequately fulfilling its mandate to protect citizens."

Hélène Duguay, legal expert at ClientEarth said: "The Commission is doubling down on its decision to re-approve glyphosate despite the fact that it is legally required to act with caution to prevent harm to humans and nature. We won't hesitate to take this matter to the EU's highest court to get the Commission to comply with its own rules."

**Pesticide Action Network (PAN Europe)** is a network of NGOs working to reduce the use of hazardous pesticides and have them replaced with ecologically sound alternatives. We work to eliminate dependency on chemical pesticides and to support safe sustainable pest control methods. Our network brings together over 45 consumer, public health and environmental organisations and women's groups from across Europe.



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Margriet Matingh, chair of PAN Netherlands said: "The Commission hardly looks at potential air pollution caused by drift and evaporation. They completely ignore the main source of chronic exposure to residents and farmers by inhalation of particle-bound glyphosate. The commission states the risk assessment performed is fully protective for human health, although independent scientists observe an ongoing Parkinson epidemic with an indication of a connection to the exposure to glyphosate. The Commission should adapt the risk assessment of the exposure by inhalation to the practice."

Since 2021, a revision of the Aarhus regulation allows NGOs to challenge EU pesticide approvals – and other environmental decisions. Submitting a Request for Internal review is the first step of a legal procedure. After receiving a negative reply, NGOs are entitled to challenge the reply before the General Court of the EU. The procedure lasts approximately 2 years.

## Authorisation of glyphosate-based products at national level

Following the EU re-approval, Member States have to take a decision on the re-authorisation of glyphosate-based products at national level within 15 months. As recently reminded by the Court of Justice of the EU, Member States shall not re-authorise the products in case of any doubts about their safety. Given the considerable evidence of harm glyphosate pesticides can pose to humans and the environment, Member States should enforce national bans. The legislation offers clear grounds for banning these products, as highlighted in a new [guidance document](#) published today by PAN Europe. This information has been shared with EU Ministers of the Environment, Health and Agriculture in a [letter sent today](#), calling them to oppose the unlawful renewal of glyphosate-based herbicides' national authorisations.

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## Read more:

- [Answer from the European Commission](#) and [Explanatory Annex - Assessment of the grounds for the request of internal review of glyphosate](#)
- [Request for Internal Review of the re-authorisation of glyphosate](#)
- [PAN Europe preliminary ruling by EU Court of Justice C-309/22 and C-310/22](#)
- [Letter to ministers in EU Member States on possibilities for a national ban on glyphosate products](#)
- [Guidance document to Banning glyphosate-based herbicide at national level](#)

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