

EU parliament urges limited approval for weedkiller (Update)

April 13 2016

European Parliament on Wednesday urged the EU to approve the weedkiller glyphosate for seven years and not 15 as requested by the bloc's top regulator amid fears the product could cause cancer.

Glyphosate was first used in the 1970s as the active ingredient in the Monsanto herbicide Roundup and is now one of the world's most popular weedkillers.

The European Commission, the EU's top regulator, is recommending that the bloc greenlight glyphosate for another 15 years when its current licence ends in June.

But critics, led by activists at Greenpeace, point to research from the World Health Organisation that concludes glyphosate is "probably" carcinogenic and are calling for the ingredient's outright ban.

"The European Commission should renew the EU market approval for glyphosate for another 7 years only instead of 15 as originally proposed," the non-binding resolution said.

The EU should also ban the non-professional use of glyphosate as well as its "use in or close to public parks, public playgrounds and public gardens," it added.

The resolution was passed by 374 votes for, 225 against and 102 abstentions.

In March regulators from the 28 EU members states, in addition to the European Commission, delayed their decision on rolling over the approval for glyphosate amid fierce lobbying from both sides of the issue.

"I am sure that the Parliament's vote will have a concrete impact," said Angélique Delahaye a leading MEP from the right-of-centre EPP party.

In an emailed statement, the Monsanto-led Glyphosate Task Force said it "acknowledges" the debate in European Parliament and urged for "constructive dialogue" in respect of the legislative process.

Among major EU member states, France and Austria have expressed opposition to glyphosate, while Britain and Germany are said to support its use generally.

The next meeting of the closed door committee is set for May 17 in Brussels.

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