

Popular weedkiller doesn't cause cancer: EU agency

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The EU's chemicals agency said Wednesday that glyphosate, one of the world's most widely used weedkillers, should not be classed as a carcinogen.

The assessment paves the way for Brussels to make a final decision on the chemical, despite deep divisions in the 28-member European Union over its use.

Glyphosate is used in the best-selling herbicide Roundup, produced by the US agro-chemicals giant Monsanto.

"Glyphosate should not be classified as carcinogenic," Jack de Bruijn, director of the risk assessment committee of the European Chemicals Agency, said at a news conference.

De Bruijn said the weedkiller had not been found to cause genetic or reproductive defects, a finding based on "extensive evaluation of all the information that was available for this substance".

In July 2016, EU member states approved an 18-month extension of an approval for glyphosate pending the agency's report, but limited its use.

Among member states, France and Malta opposed re-approving the chemical, while Germany was one of seven countries to abstain on the issue.

The European Commission has been waiting for the agency's assessment to make a final decision on approving glyphosate for general use.

The commission said that it "takes note" of Wednesday's announcement, and that a [decision](#) is expected by the end of this year.

Opponents of glyphosate, led by Greenpeace, point to research from the World Health Organization that concludes it may be carcinogenic, and are calling for an outright ban.

In May, a review carried out by experts from both the WHO and the UN

Food and Agriculture Organization said "glyphosate is unlikely to pose a carcinogenic risk to humans from exposure through the diet".

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