

German railways to stop using glyphosate on tracks

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A red light from Deutsche Bahn for the controversial weedkiller, glyphosate

German state-owned rail operator Deutsche Bahn is to stop using glyphosate on its tracks and is looking for substitutes to replace the controversial weedkiller, one of its board members said in an interview

Friday.

"We want to set up a [research project](#) to find effective ways to operate our 33,000 kilometres (20,500 miles) of network without [glyphosate](#) to be environmentally friendly," infrastructure chief Ronald Pofalla told the weekly business magazine WirtschaftsWoche.

The rail operator is Germany's largest user of glyphosate and buys nearly 65 tonnes of the herbicide per year to stop weeds from propagating on its tracks.

German Environmental Minister Svenja Schulze welcomed the initiative.

"Glyphosate kills insects which is why we are going to ban it in Germany," she told WirtschaftsWoche.

The World Health Organization classifies glyphosate as "probably carcinogenic".

In December 2017, the European Union renewed the licence of glyphosate across Europe until 2022.

Among the possible alternatives Deutsche Bahn is looking at to kill off the weeds are "hot water, electric shocks or UV lights", according to WirtschaftsWoche.

One of the best-known glyphosate-based products is the weedkiller Roundup manufactured by Monsanto, the US company recently taken over by Germany's Bayer, and which has been at the centre of several health-related lawsuits.

Last year, Deutsche Bahn transported a record 148 million people on its main lines in Germany while across Europe 2.6 billion passengers

travelled on trains belonging to the red-and-white-liveried company.

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