

Monsanto and the Poisoning of Europe

Open letter to the EFSA Chief Attorney About Re-licensing Glyphosate in the EU

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This week, a Standing Committee of plant scientists from 28 member states in Europe is likely to endorse the European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) findings so that the European Commission (under pressure from Monsanto, Glyphosate Task Force and others) can re-authorise glyphosate for another nine years. This is despite the WHO classifying glyphosate as being "probably carcinogenic" to humans.

An open letter from campaigner Rosemary Mason to Dirk Detken, Chief Attorney to the EFSA, follows the brief background article you are about to read. In the letter, Mason highlights the regulatory delinquency concerning the oversight of glyphosate in the EU. The evidence provided by Mason might lead many to agree that processes surrounding glyphosate 'regulation' in Europe amount to little more than a "[cesspool of corruption](#)."

There are around 500 million people in the EU. They want EU officials to uphold the public interest and to be independent from commercial influence. They do not want them to serve and profit from commercial interests at cost to the public's health and safety. However, what they too often get are massive conflicts of interest: see [here](#) about the 'revolving door' problem within official EU bodies, [here](#) about 'the European Food and Safety Authority's independence problem' and [here](#) about 'chemical conflicts' in the EC's scientific committees for consumer issues.

And they get governing bodies that are beholden to massive corporate lobbying: see [here](#) about 'the fire power of the financial lobby' and [here](#) about 'who lobbies most' for TTIP, with agribusiness being the [biggest lobby group](#) behind this secretive and corrupt trade deal that is attempting [drive a policy agenda](#) above the heads of the European people and contrary to their wishes (see [this](#) on TTIP as well).

Regulators turn a blind eye to the deleterious effects of products that pose a serious systemic risk to the public: see [here](#) about 'the glyphosate toxicity studies you're not allowed to see' and [here](#) 'case closed by EFSA on Roundup, despite new evidence'.

And they also give the nod to products based not on independent research but on a company's statements or secretive studies taken at face value and then deliberately keep the public in the dark: for example, see [here](#) about 'Roundup and birth defects'.

What people get are public institutions that serve a corporate agenda: see [here](#) about 'the black book on the corporate agenda of the EC'.

Last year, [Arthur Nelson](#) noted that as many as 31 pesticides with a value running into

billions of pounds could have been banned in the EU because of potential health risks, if a blocked EU paper on hormone-mimicking chemicals had been acted upon.

A [study](#) by Sebastian Stehle and Ralph Schultz found that 44.7 % of the 1,566 cases of measured insecticide concentrations (MICs) in EU surface waters exceeded their respective regulatory acceptable concentrations. The meta-analysis challenges the efficacy of the regulatory environmental risk assessment conducted for pesticide authorisation in the EU.

Our food and agriculture system is in big trouble. It's in big trouble because the global agritech/agribusiness sector is poisoning it, us and the environment with its pesticides, herbicides, GMOs and various other chemical inputs. This is made possible because of the agro-chemical industry's lavish funds, massive lobbying, slick PR, compliant politicians and scientists and its undermining and capture of regulatory and policy decision-making bodies that supposedly serve the public interest.

The situation in the US is possibly even worse and with TTIP on the horizon, Europeans could be in line for exposure to even more chemicals. Some 34,000 pesticides are currently registered for use in the US. Drinking water is [often contaminated by pesticides](#), and more babies are being born with [preventable birth defects](#) due to pesticide exposure. Chemicals show up in breast milk of mothers. Illnesses are on the rise too, including asthma, autism and learning disabilities, birth defects and reproductive dysfunction, diabetes, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases and several types of cancer. The link with [pesticide exposure](#) is becoming increasingly evident.

Elected politicians and 'public servants' are allowing this to happen. In 2014, the authors of the report '[The record of a Captive Commission](#)' concluded that the outgoing Barraso II EC's trade and investment policy revealed a bunch of unelected technocrats who cared little about what ordinary people want and negotiate on behalf of big business.

The report state that the European Commission had a one-sided relationship with agribusiness on GMOs and pesticides. Far from shifting Europe to a more sustainable food and agriculture system, the opposite had happened, as agribusiness and its lobbyists continued to dominate the Brussels scene. The report noted that the industry had been exerting strong pressure to prevent action by the EU on endocrine disruptors and pesticides.

Failure to expose and challenge the corruption, lobbying, back-room 'free trade' deals and revolving door that exists between agribusiness and decision-making/regulatory bodies will result in these corporations continuing to prosper at everyone else's expense.

Open Letter from Rosemary Mason to Dirk Detken, Chief Attorney to the European Food Safety Authority

(For the sake of convenience, this is an edited version of the original letter and has been reformatted in places)

Dear Dirk Detken,

Humans and the environment are being poisoned by thousands of chemicals of that have never been tested by regulators in the combinations in which farmers use them today. Regulation of pesticides is controlled by the agrochemical industry. It has a financial interest in advising farmers to use as much and as many pesticides as

possible. This week a Standing Committee of plant scientists from 28 member states in Europe is likely to endorse EFSA's findings so that the European Commission (under pressure from Monsanto, Glyphosate Task Force and Crop Protection Organisations) can re-authorise glyphosate for another nine years.

1) Glyphosate is toxic to humans

Pesticide regulators and Monsanto maintain that glyphosate only affects plants, fungi and bacteria, not humans. Regulators claim it is non-toxic to humans because of the enzyme that glyphosate affects is only present in plants, fungi and bacteria and not in animals and humans. This is scientific nonsense. Pesticide scientists and plant scientists have based their assessment of herbicides on complete ignorance of human gut physiology. Humans and animals have exactly the same pathway as in plants; mammals can only absorb nutrients via the bacteria in their gut; the gut microbiome. The gut microbiome is the collective genome of organisms (i.e. bacteria) inhabiting our body (see [this](#)).

2) Environmentalists launch legal case against Monsanto and EU regulators over glyphosate assessment April 26 2016

Viennese lawyer [Dr Josef Unterweger says](#):

"If there has been deliberate manipulation of the new licensing procedure for glyphosate with the intention of approving a carcinogenic substance, then this would be defrauding 508 million EU citizens."

For this reason Dr Unterweger is pressing charges on behalf of Munich Environmental Institute and the six environmental organisations: Global 2000, Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe, PAN Germany, PAN UK, Générations Futures (France), WeMove Europe, and Nature & Progrès Belgique.

A report will also be submitted to OLAF, the European anti-fraud office.

Have EFSA and the EU Commission received a copy of the lawsuit?

3) Ignoring evidence about glyphosate in South America

I probably don't need to remind you of the email I wrote to you on 22/10/2012 about EFSA and the Seralini paper on rat tumours (see [this](#))

I said:

"As Senior Attorney to EFSA, I presume that your CEO Ms Catherine Geslain-Lanuëlle must, on occasions, take your advice. Perhaps you would like to point out to her the trail of disasters to human health and the environment that has followed the planting of GM maize and Roundup Ready® crops in both Latin America and the US since they were first grown in 1996. These statistics are real, not theoretical laboratory ones. Are these the disasters that she would want to see repeated in Europe?"

I had no reply.

I noted that the German Rapporteur Member State (BfR)/Glyphosate Task Force had

excluded all papers from Argentina/Paraguay reporting cancers, birth defects, reproductive problems and DNA changes in their Renewal Assessment Report.

4) Conflicts of interest

The German RMS (BfR) has members of industry serving on it. Le Monde revealed that one third of the Members of the BFR Commission on Pesticides and their Residues are directly employed by the chemical industry; others came from the 'dubious' bee institutes. The satirical comment from Le Monde was, that in Germany: "people from the pesticide industry give expert safety advice on their own products."

Walter Haefeker President of the European Professional Beekeepers' Association (EPBA) confirmed this:

"Federal authority for Consumer Protection and Food Safety: BVL (Bundesamt für Verbraucherschutz und Lebensmittelsicherheit), during a presentation in 2015, in Berlin, at the world's largest agricultural products fair, 'Die Grüne Woche', the Director of the Department for the Admission of Plant Protection (Pesticide Regulation Authority), Dr. Karsten Hogardt, stated that the BVL sees itself as: 'a service for its clients, the plant protection industry'. In this role it is 'advised' by an expert group of 'risk managers' including many from the pesticide industry. It is shocking and disgraceful, that no independent scientists are allowed in the regulation, or licensing, of pesticides in Germany."

They were correct. The BfR Committee for Pesticides and its residues had two members from Bayer and two members from BASF. Bayer manufactures Super Strength Glyphosate and BASF supplies a chemical component of glyphosate.

The WHO/JMPR (WHO Expert Committee on Pesticide Residues held jointly with the FAO Panel of Experts on the Use of Pesticides in Agriculture) met to make the final decision about the registration of glyphosate in September 2015 based on IARC's full report; at least three had conflicts of interest

Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) wrote to the World Health Organization (WHO) with the list of eight members of this Committee. They complained that three members had conflicts of interest. Angelo Moretti resigned in 2011 from EFSA after he had failed to declare conflicts of interest because he had shares in a company that helped companies needing to comply with EU Regulations. Prof Alan Boobis is Vice-President of the Board of Directors of the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) Europe, Vice Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Committee of ILSI Europe and a Member of the Board of Trustees. He had served as a WHO expert on Pesticides Residues on the WHO/JMPR Committee when glyphosate was granted approval in 2002.

Dr Roland Solecki, Head of the BfR, was one of the eight experts on the WHO/JMPR even though BfR had said: "In BfR's opinion, it would be inexpedient if BfR as the composer of the assessment report on glyphosate would comment on the IARC monograph."

5) Members of the Office of the European Ombudsman appear to be protecting industry

On 06/03/2016, I sent a letter to the EU Ombudsman Janet O'Reilly: 'Maladministration and criminal collusion with the agrochemical involved in the renewal of glyphosate

registration'. I received a reply on 13/05/2016, five days before the vote on the re-registration of glyphosate:

Complaint 378/2016/JVH "After a careful examination of your complaint, it seems that this condition is not met, because you do not appear to have made any administrative approaches either to the European Food Safety Authority or to the European Commission, in relation to your complaint. I regret to have to inform you, therefore, that I am not entitled to deal with your complaint."

On 12/10/2015, I wrote an Open Letter to the European Commission and the European Food Safety Authority.

On 07/12/2015, I sent the Health Commissioner an Open Letter to the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed asking for a copy be sent to the Committee.

On 16/02/2016, I sent letter to Bernhard Url: Glyphosate causes cancer and birth defects.

6) Glyphosate, which Monsanto claimed isn't metabolized, was found in MEPs urine (see [this](#))

The recent Green Party's MEPs test was inspired by a German study 'Urinale 2015', which sampled glyphosate concentrations in urine from more than 2,000 participants.

"The study found that the scale of the glyphosate problem is enormous, with detected concentrations in urine between five and 42 times over the maximum value of residues for drinking water in Europe," the Green Party pointed out. "No less than 99.6 percent of all citizens who took part in this survey had higher residue levels. This means that virtually all citizens are contaminated with glyphosate."

A [number of other studies](#) have detected glyphosate—the "[most widely applied pesticide worldwide](#)"—in [feminine hygiene products](#), [everyday food items](#) and, yes, human bodies.

As veteran reporter Carey Gillam [says](#) in the article: What Killed Jack McCall? A Farmer Dies; A Case Against Monsanto Takes Root:

"Monsanto has deliberately concealed or suppressed information about the dangers of its product," said environmental and chemical pollution attorney Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who is assisting in litigating glyphosate cases. "This is big. It's on every farm in the world."

There are now hundreds of court cases against glyphosate (and PCBs) for causing non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and since Anthony Samsel obtained the secret sealed files from the US EPA under Freedom of Information about Monsanto's knowledge in the 1970s that glyphosate caused cancer and cataracts in animals, he is in great demand as a witness.

[In her letter, Mason then goes on to outline the track record of Monsanto in relation to PCBs and its own internal memos that [proved it knew about the toxicity of PCBs](#) as far back as 1970 but continued production. She also notes US EPA's close links with

Monsanto and the failure to protect the public interest.]

I look forward to hearing that the Standing Committee for Plants, Animals, Food and Feed has rejected EFSA's Report on glyphosate and that the European Commission heeds the Appeal by the International Society of Doctors for the Environment to immediately and permanently ban, with no exceptions, the production, trade and use in all the EU territories of glyphosate-based herbicides and the four insecticides as assessed by IARC (see [here](#)).

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Mason

16/05/2016

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