



MEPs against Cancer (MAC)
European Parliament Interest Group

9 May 2017

Socialists & Democrats discussion on the setting up of a special inquiry committee on the “Monsanto Papers” - 10th May 2017

Support the creation of the inquiry committee on Monsanto’s actions in relation to the assessment of glyphosate

Dear Members of the MEPs against Cancer (MAC) interest group,

On Wednesday 10 May, the Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group in the European Parliament will hold a special discussion on the potential setting up of a special inquiry committee into the so-called Monsanto Papers – internal Monsanto emails that were released by a US court earlier this year (1).

Background

Monsanto has significant commercial interests in regulatory decisions made in relation to glyphosate, the world’s most selling herbicide, which is widely commercialised under Monsanto’s Roundup. The communications released through the Monsanto Papers reveal that the firm was involved in ghost-writing academic studies on glyphosate that were later attributed to independent scientists with the intention of influencing the EU assessment and relicensing of the substance. This was intended at casting doubt on the conclusion reached in 2015 by the International Agency on Research on Cancer (IARC), the specialist cancer research body which advises the World Health Organization (WHO), that glyphosate should be classified as "probably carcinogenic to humans" (2).

It is particularly concerning that there are indications that Monsanto’s actions have impacted the EU assessment of glyphosate that concluded that glyphosate is not carcinogenic (3) (4). In particular, the Renewal Assessment Report (RAR) at the basis of EFSA’s conclusion refers to Monsanto-sponsored reviews in several places.

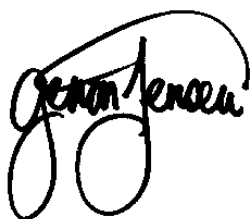
IARC’s conclusion on glyphosate’s probable carcinogenicity should guide policy action to protect human health and prevent cancer in the best possible way. And it is absolutely essential that the revelations on Monsanto’s attempt to manipulate scientific evidence to influence the EU relicensing process of the substance are fully investigated.

This is why we at the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) and the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) are calling on you to support the creation of an inquiry committee about the possible

impact of Monsanto's actions on the EU assessments. This can happen through participation in the S&D discussion on the matter on Wednesday 10 May as well as through promoting similar positions among other political groups in the European Parliament.

We thank you in advance for your support and remain fully available in case you need any additional piece of information on this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Genon K. Jensen
Executive Director
The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)



Dr Wendy Yared
Director
Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)

Notes:

1. "Monsanto Weed Killer Roundup Faces New Doubts on Safety in Unsealed Documents", The New York Times, March 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/14/business/monsanto-roundup-safety-lawsuit.html? r=2>
2. IARC Monographs Volume 112: evaluation of five organophosphate insecticides and herbicides, World Health Organization (WHO), March 2015. <http://www.iarc.fr/fr/media-centre/iarcnews/pdf/MonographVolume112.pdf>
3. "EU weed-killer evidence 'written by Monsanto'", EUObserver, May 2017. <https://euobserver.com/environment/137741>
4. "Green MEP: EFSA should release full glyphosate studies", EurActiv, May 2017. <http://www.euractiv.com/section/agriculture-food/interview/green-mep-efsa-should-release-full-pesticide-studies/>

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HEAL is a leading European not-for-profit organisation addressing how the environment affects health in the European Union (EU). It brings together 75 member organisations, several of which are themselves Europe-wide networks.

ECL is a pan-European umbrella organisation of national and regional cancer leagues including countries from Iceland to Turkey. It provides the secretariat for the MEPs against Cancer group, which has 43 members.