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The European Commission extended the authorization of glyphosate

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A day before the expiry of the glyphosate licence, the European Commission decided to extend the authorisation for its use by 18 months. This fateful step was received rather critically by various European environmental organisations, which for months have been trying to prove the detrimental impact of the active substance on humans and the environment.

The European Commission renewed the authorisation of glyphosate for 18 months. By the end of this period, the European Chemicals Agency is expected to prepare and make public a detailed report clarifying whether the active substance can indeed increase the risk of cancer in living organisms.

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Initially, the Commission intended to extend the authorisation period for 15 years, but following pressure from some of the Member States and the European Parliament, a compromise of 18 months was reached.

The lack of support from the EU Member States and the inability to reach a qualified majority on the issue transferred the full responsibility for the decision to the European Commission.

Neither environmental organisations nor companies engaged in the production of plant protection products are satisfied with the decision taken. While the former hope that the controversial pesticide will disappear completely from the market, agricultural companies are calling for the renewal of the authorisation for use for another 15 years.

Glyphosate is one of the most commonly used chemical substances on which a large part of the authorised and applied broad-spectrum herbicides worldwide are based. In March 2015, the controversy regarding the risks associated with the use of glyphosate flared up again, when the World Health Organization (WHO), in a report of its own, declared the substance to be “probably carcinogenic”. However, the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) classified it as “not carcinogenic.” The dispute deepened even further in May 2016 as a result of a new expert assessment by the World Health Organization, which concluded that glyphosate does not cause cancer.