

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY  
USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT  
POLICY

Voluntary  Public

**Date:** 9/14/2017

**GAIN Report Number:** E17060

## EU-28

**Post:** Brussels USEU

### Glyphosate - State of Play

**Report Categories:**

Agricultural Situation

SP2 - Prevent or Resolve Barriers to Trade that Hinder  
U.S. Food and Agricultural Exports

**Approved By:**

Lisa Allen

**Prepared By:**

Tania De Belder

**Report Highlights:**

The renewal of glyphosate remains one of the most controversial issues in the EU at the moment. The vote on the renewal at the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (PAFF) was postponed several times last year, because there was no qualified majority among the Member States to support it. As a compromise, the Commission presented a proposal for a 10 year renewal period instead of 15 years. During the last PAFF committee on July 20, 2017, the Commission asked the Member States to provide written comments to the proposal by September 1, 2017. Only seven MS out of 28 provided their feedback.

## **General Information:**

### **Introduction**

The renewal of glyphosate remains one of the most controversial issues in the EU at the moment. In March 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classified glyphosate a “probable carcinogen” while the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) concluded that it was safe. Although the authorization of glyphosate expired by the end of June 2016, the vote on the renewal at the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (PAFF) was postponed several times because there was no qualified majority among the Member States to support it.

The approval of glyphosate was extended for a limited period in order to allow the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) to assess the potential carcinogenicity of glyphosate since the IARC and EFSA had diverging opinions on it. The Commission limited the extension to 6 months after the receipt of the European Chemicals Agency's opinion or December 31, 2017 at the latest. The ECHA sent its [opinion](#) to the Commission on June 15, 2017, which means that the authorization of glyphosate expires on December 15, 2017.

### **Monsanto papers**

At the beginning of May 2017, controversy surrounding the influence exerted by Monsanto over scientific studies began, claiming that they had falsified academic and/or scientific papers. In view of the intense debate over the last months, both ECHA and EFSA confirmed that the information contained in the “Monsanto papers” would not have an impact on their overall assessment of glyphosate. This is because the articles mentioned were study reviews. The EU experts had access to the raw data and produced their own conclusions on the original studies. Therefore, the study reviews have limited weight in the scientific assessment.

On October 11, 2017, the Parliament's AGRI and ENVI Committees will organize a joint public hearing on the renewal of the authorization for glyphosate, which should be the last chapter in the Monsanto saga. Monsanto declined the invitation to attend the event.

### **Proposal for a 10-year renewal**

Meanwhile, as a compromise, the Commission presented a proposal for a 10 year renewal period because of the lack of support by the Member States for a 15 year renewal period. On July 20, 2017, the European Commission restarted the discussions with Member States on the proposal for a 10 year renewal of the authorization in order to try to resolve any disagreements before to proceed to a vote. The Commission asked the Member States to provide written comments to the proposal by September 1, 2017, since no progress was made during this last meeting. France raised objections and Germany will probably continue to abstain due to the upcoming elections, but neither provided written feedback. It seems only seven Member States out of 28 provided their comments, although it is not known which ones commented.

The next PAFF Standing Committee meeting where the issue can be discussed and possibly voted on is October 5-6, 2017. The last possible meeting to vote is November 6, 2017. If there is no decision taken then, the authorization will expire on December 15, 2017.

**Content of the proposal**

On August 1, 2017, the Commission published its [draft proposal](#) and [Annexes](#), for a 10 year renewal of the authorization of glyphosate. This proposal includes some specific provisions that Member States have to take into account when considering applications for glyphosate-based products, such as the protection of groundwater and terrestrial animals and non-target plants. Member States must ensure that the use in public areas should be minimized. The ban of POE-tallowamine (a 'co-formulant' that was previously used in glyphosate-based products) was already put in place in 2016.