

## Press release



### **Pesticide Action Network UK welcomes new European Citizens' Initiative to ban glyphosate**

Today, 8<sup>th</sup> February, sees the launch of a European Citizens Initiative (ECI) calling on the European Commission to ban the controversial weed killer glyphosate, reform the pesticide approval procedure and set EU-wide mandatory reduction targets for pesticide use. And this is the opportunity for the people of the EU to show just how much they want to see those changes adopted.

An overwhelming majority of EU citizens want to see the controversial carcinogenic herbicide glyphosate banned from use.<sup>1</sup> And it nearly happened in late 2016 when the reauthorisation for 15 years was postponed and glyphosate was given a temporary 18 month approval whilst further toxicological tests are undertaken.

Glyphosate was classified as a probable human carcinogen by the World Health Organisation in 2015 – this led to huge debate in the EU about whether the herbicide should be approved for use. Pesticide Action Network International has also published a 100 page monograph that outlines all the harmful effects that glyphosate can have – not just its probable carcinogenic effects.<sup>2</sup> Despite the temporary 18 month approval several EU Member States have decided to enforce bans on its use and the EU has issued guidelines stating that its use should, for the time being, be restricted in areas used by the public.

But this does not go far enough. PAN UK, like the people of the EU, want to see a complete end to the use of glyphosate in agriculture, in the towns and cities where we live and in peoples' homes and gardens, there is simply no place for this harmful chemical. PAN UK is already running a Pesticide-Free Towns campaign urging local councils to stop the use of glyphosate and other pesticides in the parks and playgrounds, streets and pavements of the towns and cities where we all live, work and play.<sup>3</sup>

PAN UK is therefore fully supporting the ECI to ban glyphosate and we are urging people to support the initiative by signing the petition at <http://www.pan-uk.org/glyphosate/>

We need 1 million signatures to make the European Commission take action and we believe that there are enough concerned citizens in the EU to make that possible.

"We do not need to rely on harmful chemicals to grow our food and we certainly do not need to be spraying a probable human carcinogen in the areas that we and our children frequent. Glyphosate should have been banned in 2016, together let's get it banned in 2017." Nick Mole, PAN UK Policy Officer.

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<sup>1</sup> "Two thirds of Europeans support ban on glyphosate" – The Guardian 11/04/2016  
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/apr/11/two-thirds-of-europeans-support-ban-on-glyphosate-says-yougov-poll>

<sup>2</sup> "The Glyphosate Monograph" PAN International, 2016 - <http://www.pan-uk.org/publications-resources/glyphosate-monograph>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.pan-uk.org/pesticide-free-towns-and-cities/pesticide-free-towns-and-cities>

Notes to editors:

- PAN UK is the only UK charity that works on all issues relating to global pesticide use
- The full text and supporting documentation for the ECI can be found at <http://www.pan-uk.org/glyphosate/> from Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> February 2017
- A European Citizens Initiative is an invitation to the European Commission to propose legislation on matters where it has competence to legislate, such as this
- An ECI has to be backed by at least 1 million EU citizens from at least 7 of the 28 Member States
- After the necessary signatures have been reached the Commission will examine the ECI and within 3 months issue a response.