

Will business secrecy keep defeating the public's right to know on food safety?

As discussions about a European Commission proposal on the transparency of EU food safety data are underway in both the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, organisers of the #StopGlyphosate European Citizens' Initiative today warned that to live up to its promising objectives, the proposal must be amended.

In 2017, more than [one million Europeans asked](#) the European Commission to ban glyphosate and to ensure the publication of all industry-funded studies used to back up regulatory decisions on pesticides.

In response, the Commission proposed a legislative [reform](#) that aims to oblige the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to proactively publish all studies that are submitted by companies when they request EU market authorisation for their products. While industry-funded studies play a very important role in EFSA's evaluations of pesticides and other food-related products, only summaries of these studies are so far published, no full study reports.

Martin Pigeon, researcher and campaigner with Corporate Europe Observatory, said: "Data secrecy is a central element of agribusiness companies' influence over the EU regulatory system, as this hush-hush approach prevents independent scientific scrutiny of the EU's decisions."

The organisers of the European Citizens' Initiative (Corporate Europe Observatory, Global 2000, Greenpeace, the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), Pesticide Action Network Europe and WeMove.EU) applaud the European Commission's intention to make EFSA's assessments more transparent and accountable.

Helmut Burtscher-Schaden, biochemist at Global 2000, said: "If the early and proactive publication of industry's studies becomes a standard in the regulation of substances that end up in our food, it will help to achieve the high level of protection of health and the environment which is enshrined in EU law."

But certain ambiguities and weaknesses in the proposal threaten to compromise this objective.

Sophie Perroud, Policy Coordinator at the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), said: "If not properly amended, the current proposal could lead to even less relevant information available. We are asking the European Parliament and governments to fix this."

Based on a [legal analysis](#) performed by ClientEarth, the NGOs are asking the Parliament and EU member states to amend the proposal to ensure that:

- Citizens' existing right to access documents upon request is not in any way restricted, the existing obligation to publish is not restricted;
- The final text leaves no room for contentious interpretation, protecting EFSA from excessive confidentiality claims and costly litigations by industry, and;
- The reform actually leads to the publication of all information needed by scientists and citizens to understand the potential impact of a given pesticide or other food-related product on human health and the environment.

****ENDS****

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