



## Media Release



### **Commission admits that toxic mixes in genetically engineered soybeans need to be assessed**

Mix of residues from combined spraying of herbicides raise health concerns

**19 January 2016 / In a letter to Testbiotech and GeneWatch UK, the responsible EU Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis admits that “it is true that the legislation requires cumulative and synergistic effects of pesticide residues to be considered”. At the same time, he also states that methods to assess these health effects are not yet available. The letter from the Commission was written in response to a call by the two organisations to stop market authorisation of herbicide resistant genetically engineered soybeans. These plants can be sprayed with a combination of herbicides, such as glyphosate with dicamba or isoxaflutole.**

According to a recent toxicological dossier, mixtures of these residues are thought to have adverse effects on health such as genotoxicity, liver toxicity and tumours. Consumers and farm animals could be exposed to a combination of these substances that may be found as residues in the harvest of these crops, use in food & feed. However, the combined toxicity of these herbicides was never assessed by EU authorities. Experts from Member States already voted twice on the application, however no qualified majorities were reached. Now it is expected that the EU Commission will allow the import and usage in food and feed.

Testbiotech and GeneWatch UK are demanding that the authorisation is stopped. As they explain in their answer to the EU Commission: “If the EU Commission and the European Food Safety Authority EFSA are not able to assess the effects these mixtures might have on health because there are no suitable methods available then market authorisation cannot be granted. EU regulations require the highest standards of consumer and environmental protection. In the case of the genetically engineered plants under discussion the precautionary principle has to be applied and the application has to be rejected.”

Testbiotech is today starting an online petition to Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the EU Commission, to stop the soybeans from being imported into the EU. In this context, Testbiotech also hopes to get support from the Environmental Committee of the EU Parliament, which will be discussing this issue on 21 January.

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#### **Further Informations:**

The letter from the Commission: [www.testbiotech.org/en/node/1546](http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/1546)

The answer from Testbiotech and GeneWatch UK: [www.testbiotech.org/en/node/1547](http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/1547)

The toxicological dossier: [www.testbiotech.org/node/1532](http://www.testbiotech.org/node/1532)

The online petition: [http://www.testbiotech.org/en/campaign\\_toxic\\_soy](http://www.testbiotech.org/en/campaign_toxic_soy)