

## Glyphosate: Is science the playground of industry?

Testbiotech requests that experts with strong affiliations to industry are removed from the FAO/WHO panel

**31 May 2015 / In a letter to the World Health Organisation (WHO), Testbiotech has requested that experts with strong affiliations to industry are removed from the Joint Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR). Furthermore, the standards for avoiding conflict of interests within this body need to be raised substantially. The letter was written and sent in response to a recent assessment of the herbicide glyphosate carried out by the JMPR. The JMPR, which is jointly organised by WHO and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), came to the conclusion that glyphosate is not likely to cause cancer. This is in contradiction to an assessment carried out by a different WHO expert panel.**

As evidenced by the Testbiotech letter, the chair of the task group of the JMPR, Alan Boobis, and the rapporteur Angelo Moretto, are both well-known for their close affiliations with industry. Alan Boobis has been active in the management of the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI), which is funded by Chemical and Food Industry, for many years. According to the Guardian newspaper, in 2012 ILSI received in all about one million US-\$ from Monsanto, which produces glyphosate, and Croplife International, which is the global umbrella organisation of the biotech and agrochemical industry.

As further research shows, Alan Boobis was also actively involved in the tobacco industry. Some years ago, both Boobis and Moretto, also active in ILSI, were excluded from working with the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) due to their affiliations with industry. Apparently, the standards at the JMPR are not strict enough to exclude experts who represent industry. All in all, Testbiotech identified at least five experts of the JMPR glyphosate working group with past or current ties with ILSI and/or the tobacco industry.

The JMPR has already in the past drawn attention for being susceptible to vested interests. In 2000, the WHO received an internal report stating that the tobacco industry had secretly infiltrated the JMPR. At that time, industry wanted the JMPR to assess a fungicide as being not likely to be carcinogenic. As Testbiotech also shows, experts at the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) which came to a similar conclusion as the JMPR, saying glyphosate does not pose severe health risks, were also actively involved with the JMPR for many years.

“The case of glyphosate highlights a much more general problem i.e. the massive influence of industry on science and regulation. What is lacking in the EU is sufficient funding to create incentives for real independent risk research focussing on the protection of human health and the environment. Consequently, most research is commissioned by industry and science becomes the playground of industry”, Christoph Then says for Testbiotech.

**Contact and further information:**

Christoph Then, Tel + 49 15154638040, [info@testbiotech.org](mailto:info@testbiotech.org)

Testbiotech letter: [www.testbiotech.org/node/1647](http://www.testbiotech.org/node/1647)

Annex to the letter: [www.testbiotech.org/node/1650](http://www.testbiotech.org/node/1650)

The JMPR report: [www.who.int/foodsafety/jmprsummary2016.pdf?ua=1](http://www.who.int/foodsafety/jmprsummary2016.pdf?ua=1)

Report in the GUARDIAN (17 May 2016):

[www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/may/17/unwho-panel-in-conflict-of-interest-row-over-glyphosates-cancer-risk?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/may/17/unwho-panel-in-conflict-of-interest-row-over-glyphosates-cancer-risk?CMP=share_btn_tw)