

EN
E-001870/2024
Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(15.12.2024)

The Commission is aware of studies indicating that the presence of glyphosate in EU waters may be linked not only to its herbicidal use^{1,2} but also to the breakdown of phosphorus compounds present in some detergents. It notes that a) since 2012 the Detergents Regulation³, now being revised⁴, has introduced limits on the content of phosphates and other phosphorus compounds in laundry and dishwasher detergents, b) the revised Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive⁵ includes stricter limits on the release of phosphorus and c) the revised Industrial Emissions Directive⁶ requires all companies falling in its scope - including large manufacturers of detergents - to reduce the use of hazardous substances in processes and products, in interplay with the Eco-design for Sustainable Products Regulation⁷.

Pollution from chemical pesticides used in agriculture remains a key pressure on waters⁸. The search for alternatives is supported by EU-funded research projects⁹ focusing on replacement by safer low-risk pesticides, integrated weed management¹⁰, non-chemical weed-control solutions¹¹ and agroecology¹², as well as projects monitoring the effects of pesticides. Through Eco-Schemes (ES) and Agri-Environmental and Climate Commitments (AECC), the Common Agricultural Policy supports the reduction of chemical dependencies on a total of 43 million hectares (26.6% of the EU agricultural area, either by ES (in 21 of the 28 CAP Strategic Plans 2023-2027) or AECC (in 26 Plans) or both. The Commission is working on promoting good practices as recommended by the European Court of Auditors¹³.

¹ Agricultural, municipal and household weed treatment.

² Recently re-approved under the Plant Protection Products Regulation: Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/2660 of 28 November 2023 renewing the approval of the active substance glyphosate in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council and amending Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 540/2011, OJ L, 2023/2660, 29.11.2023.

³ Regulation (EU) No 259/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 March 2012 amending Regulation (EC) No 648/2004 as regards the use of phosphates and other phosphorus compounds in consumer laundry detergents and consumer automatic dishwasher detergents, OJ L 94, 30.3.2012, p. 16–21.

⁴ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on detergents and surfactants, amending Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 648/2004; COM(2023) 217 final.

⁵ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/proposal-revised-urban-wastewater-treatment-directive_en

⁶ Directive (EU) 2024/1785 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 April 2024 amending Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on industrial emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control) and Council Directive 1999/31/EC on the landfill of waste, OJ L, 2024/1785, 15.7.2024

⁷ https://commission.europa.eu/energy-climate-change-environment/standards-tools-and-labels/products-labelling-rules-and-requirements/ecodesign-sustainable-products-regulation_en

⁸ Europe's state of water 2024, EEA Report 07/2024, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/publications/europes-state-of-water-2024>

⁹ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/document/e8a5772e-9fca-4583-a81b-649729068f1e_en;

https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/document/download/4ae48c83-5852-4d7a-8892-718a02d29595_en

¹⁰ IWM Praise developed a toolbox of integrated weed-management methods -

<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/727321>

¹¹ Conserwa - <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101081802>; Good -

<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101083589>; Agrosus - <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101084084>; Oper8 -

<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101060591>;

¹² Agroecology Partnership; First call: <https://agroecology.ptj.de/call1>

¹³ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/publications/SR-2024-20>