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MEPs vote against renewal of herbicide approval

The EP's (European Parliament) Environment, Public Health and Food Safety committee has adopted a non-binding motion which calls on the EC (European Commission) to refrain from renewing the approval of the herbicide substance glyphosate on the EU market for another 15 years (until 2031) without any restrictions as proposed.

In addition, and citing concerns from the WHO about the carcinogenicity and endocrine disruptive properties of the herbicide glyphosate, which is used in hundreds of farm, forestry, urban and garden applications, MEPs called on the EC to commission an independent review and disclose all the scientific evidence that the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) used to assess glyphosate.

The non-binding resolution will be voted on in the EP's plenary (full session) on April 11/14, which will precede the May vote - by national experts sitting in the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (Phytopharmaceuticals Section) - to adopt or reject the EC proposal. If there is no qualified majority, it will be up to the EC to decide whether or not to renew the proposal.

Further information about the vote can be read via the link below:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20160321IPR20296/Glyphosate-herbicide-don%E2%80%99t-renew-its-authorisation-urge-MEPs>

EU public health funding opportunities

The EC's Health Programme has begun to launch its 2016 calls for proposals (funding opportunities) which seek to support activities in the following areas:

- encouraging innovation in health care
- increasing the sustainability of health care systems
- improving citizens' health
- protecting citizens against cross-border health threats

The BMA's European Office has drafted a briefing on the Health Programme and its open calls for proposals, which can be read via the first link with background information about the programme available at the second:

<http://www.bma.org.uk/working-for-change/policy-and-lobbying/bma-europe>

http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/policy/index_en.htm

TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) update

Following the conclusion of the 12th round of negotiations – 22/26 February, Brussels – the EC has published further documents from its ongoing negotiations with the United States.

The documents include the EU's most recent offer with regard to regulatory cooperation, which states that "nothing in this chapter shall affect the ability of each Party to... provide or support services of general interest, including those related to...health."

Whilst such assurances are welcome, we will continue to monitor the negotiations and engage, where necessary, to ensure that TTIP does not adversely impact upon the NHS.

The negotiating documents can be read in full via the first link with additional background about the BMA's work on TTIP available at the second link:

<http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=1477>

<http://www.bma.org.uk/working-for-change/policy-and-lobbying/bma-europe>

CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement) update

The EU Commissioner for Trade, Cecilia Malmström, has confirmed that the legal review of the English text of CETA has been completed and that work will now begin on the translation and review of the text in French and the 21 other EU treaty languages. The Commissioner also stated that she was "confident that CETA will be signed in 2016 and enter into force in 2017."

Consequently, it is expected that the text will pass before the EP for approval or rejection in the latter part of 2016.

The BMA will continue working with partners from across Europe to ensure that neither CETA nor any other free trade agreements like the TTIP or TiSA (Trade in Services Agreement) adversely impact upon the NHS.

Further information about CETA is available via the link below:

<http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ceta/>

ECJ rules against pro-sugar advertising

The ECJ (European Court of Justice) has ruled that companies cannot advertise the sugar content of their products in order to promote physical performance enhancing activities.

As Dextro Energy's, a producer of energy tablets which had appealed an EC decision against this practice, advertising only highlighted the positive effects of sugar consumption, without providing any information on the hazards, the ECJ ruled in favour of the earlier EC decision that such advertising was unlawful.

The judgement, which came in the same week that the UK government announced its plans to introduce a tax on sugary drinks, is another positive step towards reducing sugar consumption across Europe.

The ECJ judgement can be read in full via the link below:

[http://curia.europa.eu/juris/liste.jsf?pro=&lgrec=en&nat=or&ogp=&dates=&lg=&language=en&jur=C%2CT%2CF&cit=none%252CC%252CCJ%252CR%252C2008E%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252Ctrue%252Cfalse%252Cfalse&num=T-100%252F15&td=%3BALL&pcs=Oor&avg=&page=1&mat=or&jge=&for=&cid=1016646](http://curia.europa.eu/juris/liste.jsf?pro=&lgrec=en&nat=or&ogp=&dates=&lg=&language=en&jur=C%2CT%2CF&cit=none%252CC%252CCJ%252CR%252C2008E%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252Ctrue%252Cfalse%252Cfalse&num=T-100%252F15&td=%3BALL&pcs=Oor&avg=&page=1&mat=or&jge=&for=&cid=1016646)

