

Fear of 'mighty multinationals' could spur European glyphosate bans despite evidence, EU food safety official says

The world's most used herbicide is now more of a political football than a weedkiller.

Bernhard Url, the head of Europe's food safety watchdog, still sticks by his agency's assessment that glyphosate is safe, but argues that there is little he can do to hold back political tides that now threaten to ban it.

France, Germany and Austria are all taking steps to phase out the pesticide in the coming years, and Url argued that the debate over glyphosate had been subsumed into broader fears about globalization and mighty multinationals.

"I think we have to respect with humbleness if national parliaments decide to ban glyphosate," he told POLITICO in an interview. "They are elected to take these value judgments."

Url is executive director of the Parma-based European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), which played a decisive role in the arguments over the safety of glyphosate by declaring in 2015 that it "is unlikely to pose a carcinogenic hazard."

In the meantime, Url conceded he thought the weedkiller had become a proxy for other fears. "I think that in conjunction with discussing the [Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership], global trade, multinational companies like Monsanto, food has become a surrogate for a much bigger question."

Read full, original article: [EU food safety boss says glyphosate is swept up in political tides](#) (Behind paywall)