



**European Parliament Public Hearing – “How to make sure that pesticide manufacturers disclose results of toxicity studies” (18/07/2023):**

**Opening statement delivered by Dr. Cristina Alonso Alija**

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**Bayer stands for transparency and therefore welcomed the opportunity to address questions from members of the European Parliament at a public hearing held on July 18, 2023.**

**Please find the opening statement by Cristina Alonso, Senior Vice President and Global Head of Sustainability, Safety, Health and Environment:**

*Chairmen, Honourable Members of the Committee, and panelists,*

*I would like to start by thanking you, on behalf of Bayer, for the invitation to come and take part in this hearing today. We welcome this opportunity for open dialogue about our work; and believe it is key to maintain trust in the European crop protection risk management system.*

*For those of you unfamiliar with Bayer: we are a Life Science company and are European at heart. Bayer was founded 160 years ago, and our competencies are in the areas of healthcare and agriculture. Safety has always been our #1 priority and is embedded in everything we do.*

*Allow me to also briefly introduce myself: My name is Dr. Cristina Alonso Alija and I am Senior Vice President and the Global Head of Sustainability, Safety, Health and Environment for the Bayer Group. My academic background is in Chemistry and I joined the regulatory world at Bayer in 2005, in the pharmaceutical area. In 2014, I took over the worldwide regulatory responsibility for our Crop Protection portfolio.*

*I come from Spain; a country where agriculture matters. I feel a responsibility to provide farmers with the tools they need to secure a supply of affordable and healthy food for citizens in a changing world. It is with that background and with my respect to the European institutions that I hope to be able to respond to your questions here today.*

*The question being posed by the hearing today is “How to make sure that pesticide manufacturers disclose results of toxicity studies” - my simple answer to this would be that we already do.*

*At Bayer, we have listened to different stakeholders and learned from the past. We have taken those lessons and turned transparency into the foundation of how we operate. Having transparency is also in the interest of industry, as it forms the basis for dialogue with the stakeholders.*



*To make this more concrete, allow me to give you an example of how we raised the bar and promoted transparency beyond regulatory requirements. Bayer was the first company in our industry to make safety-relevant data on crop protection substances voluntarily available to the public; we publicly committed in 2017 and started to deliver in 2018; well ahead of the General Food Law. Since then, the safety studies of our substances are available via our transparency platform.*

*This is only one example of how we are committed to going beyond local and international standards. In this light, Bayer strongly welcomes the OECD's work to improve and harmonize testing and risk assessment methodologies worldwide.*

*We fully concur with the general goal of the legislation that any data that is necessary to evaluate the safety of our substances needs to be made available to the authorities.*

*For these reasons, we treat the topic of today's discussion with the highest rigor. We reviewed in detail the dossiers and the regulatory process followed for the three substances mentioned in the publication, that were previously owned by Bayer and submitted roughly 10 to 20 years ago.*

*Let me underline that: for each of these three substances, we were compliant with the applicable European regulations at the time. Based on the studies already available, European regulators were able to carry out a complete risk assessment - including developmental neurotoxicity, for which the new studies did not provide any additional safety information. Therefore, there was – at no point – any safety concern, neither for farmers, nor for consumers.*

*My message for you here today is thus clear and simple: Bayer has always acted responsibly and transparently to provide the required data for a complete safety assessment of our substances.*

*The European crop protection approval system has evolved and continues to evolve to new societal, economical and scientific demand and knowledge. Therefore, we very much appreciate the new level of clarity that the General Food Law brought, as it makes transparency an even more integral part of the process.*

*It is only by further promoting transparency, that we can continue to build trust in the European approval system. That is why we follow a rigorous process to focus on safety every step of the way as we bring a crop protection product to market. This way, we continue to bring innovative, safe and sustainable solutions to European farmers.*

*Bayer will continue on this path to act responsibly as a corporate citizen; committing to the highest product safety standards, and striving to further advance transparency around our activities.*



*Bearing in mind the subject of today's hearing, I want to reiterate that Bayer has always acted responsibly and transparently to provide the required data for a complete safety assessment of our substances.*

*I want to thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you here today and I look forward to taking your questions.*

*Thank you, Mr. Chairman.*