



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Trade

Directorate A - Resources, Information and Policy Coordination
Information, Communication and Civil Society

Brussels, 18 September 2015

Meeting report

Meeting on 14 September 2015 between COM and PAN Europe on endocrine disruptors, chemicals and TTIP to clarify the scope of an access to documents request from PAN (2015/3059)

Participants: [redacted] from PAN Europe; [redacted] from DG ENV, [redacted] and [redacted] from DG SANTE and [redacted], [redacted] and [redacted] from DG TRADE

COM ([redacted]) explained that endocrine disruptors (ED) issue is not one of the pilot projects in the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement negotiations. EDs are discussed between EU and US in the framework of the bilateral cooperation lead by DG ENV. PAN took note of this and has in fact already introduced an access to documents request on the bilateral cooperation to DG ENV. PAN wanted to know if there are any project of possible EU-US harmonization on pesticides, stating that the list of banned substances in the EU still includes some that are allowed in the US. COM ([redacted]) replied that we are not talking about harmonization of pesticides: there is no regulatory co-operation on the basis of TTIP as the agreement is not yet in force.

COM ([redacted]) explained that the exchange and an open discussion on ED issues with the US started two years ago and one meeting was held in 2014, next workshop is on 6-7 October 2015. These meetings are between government authorities and they concentrate e.g. on prioritization and risk assessment. COM ([redacted]) added that DG SANTE is also attending these events and that the focus of these events is on scientific research. Regulatory approach is very different in the US and in the EU: in the US the focus is on screening the universe of chemicals and searching for priorities for further testing; in the EU, some pieces of legislation require to set scientific criteria to identify endocrine disruptors and the regulatory consequences for those substances are already defined. PAN noted that there is an Endocrine Disruptors Screening Program (EDSP) in the US. PAN then continued that they are interested in the technical part of the discussion, the methodology and processes – meaning documents that would give more detail than what is currently available publicly, on the TTIP website for example. In the exchange of information, also harmonization of standards is discussed. COM ([redacted]) explained that, at the level of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), there is ongoing work on harmonization of test methodology and testing strategies for the hazard identification and assessment of chemicals, including endocrine disruptors. But no decisions about harmonization of regulatory approaches on endocrine disruptors are foreseen or are under discussion in any of the ongoing bilateral EU-US cooperation.

In conclusion, PAN agreed to review the scope of their request, indicating that "EDs in all levels" is their key interest, but they will look into horizontal chemicals issues also. COM () suggested that PAN checks the information publicly available or already received and then asks for precise documents to "fill in the gaps" of their specific request focused on ED and TTIP. Asking for all documents related to 'chemicals and TTIP' would produce a huge amount of documents not at all focused on ED. This would not satisfy the objective of the request. Moreover, it would take much more time, as the documents would need to be treated in batches, given the high amount of them. In order not to lose time on both side, it would be very much appreciated if PAN could better detail its request, following the clarifications provided from both sides during this meeting. PAN agreed to this and promised to come back with clarifications to their request in the coming days.

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Author: () ()