



Recommendation 823 (1977)¹

Potential dangers of the use of chemical herbicides

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Expressing its uneasiness at the increasing use of chemical herbicides, while having regard for the need for such chemicals in agriculture, horticulture and forestry ;
2. Being of the opinion that the hazards resulting from the use of certain herbicides have been established ;
3. Considering that some increasing uses of herbicides may be incompatible with the protection of the countryside ;
4. Considering that some of these herbicides could constitute a danger to the health of those who apply them ;
5. Noting that in the United States, Canada and Sweden herbicides containing hormones are now only permitted subject to restrictions, and that in Switzerland a conference of cantonal forestry authorities has recently decided to abandon chemical herbicides in principle ;
6. Considering that :
 - a. long-term toxicological data are limited for some herbicides ;
 - b. considerable data on human exposure over long periods exist for most of these ;
 - c. the long-term effects on human health arising from the use of these herbicides cannot be predicted,
7. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers instruct the competent organs of the Council of Europe to examine this problem, with a view to recommending that member states should ensure that :
 - a. those few herbicides having a high toxicity to man should be carefully controlled, and operators using them enjoined always to use the necessary protective clothing appropriate to their use ;
 - b. home gardeners should not have access to the more toxic herbicides ;
 - c. legislation or a code of practice be drawn up to ensure that aquatic herbicides be used so as to avoid contamination of irrigation or drinking water, or harm to aquatic fauna and flora,
 - d. the practice of using herbicides for the control of roadside vegetation be discontinued in favour of mechanical methods where practicable ;
 - e. chemical companies, universities and research organisations be encouraged to undertake studies to determine the long-term toxicity of those herbicides for which such data is lacking.

1. See [Doc. 4067](#), report of the Committee on Agriculture. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly on 13 December 1977.

