



**Memo Victims SABINE GRATALOUP – France.**

**The Hague, October 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

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**Sabine GRATALOU**



## **Testimony of Sabine GRATALOUP- Theo's mother.**

*Theo, my 9 year old son, was born with severe abnormalities of the esophagus and larynx, and has needed to have a tracheotomy and 50 general anaesthesia to keep him well.*

*I sprayed a glyphosate herbicide on a surface of 700 m<sup>2</sup>, at a time that was early in my pregnancy at a crucial time for the development of the esophagus and larynx in the fetus.*

*Many scientific and statistical studies show the influence of glyphosate in malformations in different animal species and humans.*

*I am asking public authorities to take the necessary measures to protect unborn children at risk of malformations associated with this herbicide.*

### **Theo's story**

Theo was born in May 2007 with an esophageal atresia: his esophagus did not go down to his stomach and his digestive system was connected to his respiratory system by a fistula between the esophagus and trachea.

He needed urgent surgery at birth to separate his digestive and respiratory systems.

Moreover, his larynx was very narrow causing great difficulty in breathing because of a very strong tracheomalacia. It was therefore inevitable for him to undergo a tracheotomy just a few weeks after birth.

Théo spent the first six months of his life in medical reanimation.

Since birth, he has undergone 50 general anesthesia for the reconstruction of his esophagus, the mouth of his stomach, larynx ...

Despite dozens of stays and in the hospital in Lausanne (Switzerland), where one of the best worldwide specialists in the reconstruction of the larynx in children works- Professor Monnier- he still cannot breathe normally because of his extreme case of tracheomalacia and recurrent laryngeal stenosis.

Today at 9 years old, Theo still breathes with a tracheotomy, and speaks using

the technique of his esophageal voice because his vocal cords were also malformed. Théo's life is permanently at risk (if his tracheotomy becomes damaged or blocked) and he suffers a significant social handicap, partly because of his esophageal voice and also his visible tracheotomy that provokes hurtful reactions especially in public situations.

This causes great pain and emotional suffering for his whole family, who have had to dedicate great amounts of time and care to Theo since his birth: a child with a tracheostomy needs care (medical aspirations) sometimes every 45 minutes, day and night, for years.

### **Are these severe deformities due to the use of herbicides?**

When I asked the doctors what had caused these serious malformations, not one could answer me. Although there are 200 cases of esophageal atresia every year in France, very few scientists are looking at the origins of this condition because it is treated through various surgical operations and laboratories who finance most medical research and who generally have little interest in this pathology.

Some cases are down to genetic conditions, but not the majority. Children who have a genetic problem usually have other associated anomalies that are not present in Theo (VACTERL syndrome).

Since 2008, however, many studies have shed light on the connection with the involvement of herbicides:

- A Dutch team sent questionnaires to families affected by esophageal atresia, and the only common point between them was the exposure to herbicides.
- Professor Seralini proved the toxic effect of glyphosate-based herbicides on human placental cells. At the time of Theo's birth, the medical staff also noticed that the placenta was not normal, even before discovering its abnormalities.
- Professor Carrasco from Argentina, highlighted the defects caused by these herbicides on frog embryos and chicken.

- Mr Pedersen, a pig farmer in Denmark showed a correlation between exposure to glyphosate pigs and the quantity of malformations, covering tens of thousands of cases. Pork is considered to be one of the closest animal models when compared to humans.

- A statistical study of births in the region of La Leonesa (Province of Chaco - Argentina) over a period of 10 years covering tens of thousands of births found that the defects were multiplied by 4 during this period. The major change in the environment and lifestyle of this population was the massive development of Roundup Ready GM crops and aerial spraying of glyphosate on the region.

These studies all point to a link between glyphosate based herbicides and malformations in the human fetus. Significant exposure to glyphosate early in my pregnancy along with this information alerted me. I work with horses, and around the time of the first months of my pregnancy I sprayed a glyphosate-based herbicide on a horse riding field, more than 700 m<sup>2</sup>. At the time glyphosate was promoted as "the first biodegradable herbicide," the advert showing a dog who could happily eat his bones safely after it having been sprayed with weed-killer outside. I chose this product for its alleged harmlessness.

I sprayed the pesticide in July and August 2006. I got pregnant early August 2006. I did not know I was pregnant until late August, as pregnancy is difficult to detect during the first 3 weeks. So I did not take specific precautions related to such. Unfortunately, the formation of the larynx starts in the 4th week of pregnancy, especially with the separation of the esophagus and trachea, which formed a single tube, at stages 12 and 13 of muscle growth. It is this separation that did not happen with Theo, impacted by a factor that took place during the previous weeks.

The connection between:

- Studies establishing a clear link between glyphosate and malformations at birth,
- The great exposure of Théo to glyphosate in a period of foetal development and the subsequent defects his body suffered

Leads me to conclude and consider the very likely involvement of glyphosate pesticide in Theos' present condition.

### **A potential risk for all unborn children**

Glyphosate based herbicides are the most herbicides sold worldwide. It has been shown that 50% of French rivers are already infected by this molecule.

The entire population is exposed to this herbicide, including women of childbearing age to have children.

As some defects occur in the first weeks of pregnancy, pregnant women - who at this point are unaware of this - cannot take precautions to protect their future child.

**Faced with this potential public health risk inflicted on the population by exposure to the herbicides glyphosate and suspicions about their possible link to birth defects in Theo, we call on governments and competent authorities to take the necessary measures to protect future unborn children.**

19/08/2016

Sabine Grataloup