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Biofuelwatch Demand an End to Rainforest Destruction for Biofuels -For immediate release -

From Brazil to Indonesia, millions of hectares of rainforests are being felled and turned into plantations to grow biofuels for our cars. This week, Europe's citizens have a chance to tell the European Commission that rainforest destruction for biofuels is unacceptable.

The formal consultation on the European Biofuel Directive is due to end on 10th July. Readers can take part in the consultation via the campaigns website www.biofuelwatch.org.uk. The current Directive was passed in 2003 and requires that 5.75% of all transport fuel for cars must come from biofuels by 2010. The aim of the directive was to reduce emissions of heat-trapping carbon dioxide, but any savings from using less petrol or diesel are being more than wiped out by the massive carbon dioxide emissions that result from deforestation.

Almuth Ernsting from the new UK campaign group Biofuelwatch says: "Increasing amounts of European biofuels come from palm oil grown in Indonesia and Malaysia. Yet palm oil plantations are fast destroying south-east Asia's rainforests, threatening the extinction of orang-utans and countless other species, and displacing local communities. They are also linked to massive fires, which have already emitted several billions tons of carbon into the atmosphere, and are one of the biggest global threats to the climate. Nobody wants biofuels which destroy rainforests and make global warming even worse".

Biofuelwatch call for a moratorium on the Biofuel Directive, until it can be guaranteed that only those biofuels which are climate-friendly and harm neither the environment nor food supplies will be used. Imports of biofuels linked to rainforest destruction and other environmental destruction should be banned.

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NOTES:

1. Biofuelwatch are a new independent campaigns group for government regulation of the European biofuel market. The campaign aims to raise awareness of the dangers of unsustainable biofuels increasing the rate of tropical deforestation and leading to environmental destruction, particularly in the tropics. More information can be found on the campaign website www.biofuelwatch.org.uk
2. Details of the EU consultation can be found here:
http://ec.europa.eu/energy/res/legislation/biofuels_consultation_en.htm
3. Several Indonesian organisations have warned that more rainforests are being destroyed across Borneo and Sumatra as a result of the European Biofuel Directive:
[http://www.eng.walhi.or.id/kampanye/hutan/konversi/060412_palmoilplantation /](http://www.eng.walhi.or.id/kampanye/hutan/konversi/060412_palmoilplantation/)
4. Satellite images have shown that 75% of the hotspots of peat and forest fires on Borneo have been on land owned by plantations, which tend to grow palm oil:
http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/docs/_ref/publications/newsonline/33/indonesia.htm