

Joint letter to Members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives in the EU, 11th February 2008

To Members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (Coreper 1)

cc Environment Ministers of EU Member States Permanent Representatives to the EU on Environment matters

Dear Member of the Committee of Permanent Representatives,

Fuel Quality Directive is the right place to debate sustainability of agrofuels

Last year's Spring Council demanded that the EU policy to promote biofuel use in transport should be met sustainably. The Coreper meeting on 13th February on the Fuel Quality Directive will be decisive in this respect. The undersigned organisations urge you to: Move the debate about the sustainability of agrofuels to the Fuel Quality Directive (FQD)

Climate change and sustainability issues are the responsibility of Environment ministers. It is crucial that this debate covers both direct and indirect land use change, other indirect emissions (like nitrous oxide emissions) and all social issues concerned (including human rights, land rights, food sovereignty and food security, water rights, cultural rights, indigenous people's rights, labour rights), as well as all environmental and biodiversity impacts. The European Parliament has already introduced sustainability concerns into the Fuel Quality Directive, although its proposals are still insufficient and not specific enough. Move the debate about greenhouse gas calculation method and default values to FQD

Equally, these should be the responsibility of Environment ministers. This will also prevent delays to progress on renewable energies not based on biomass in the RE directive. Current research indicates that assumptions about the value of agrofuels in combating climate change have to be revised, especially taking into account land-use change and indirect impacts. Not taking into account all these emissions could therefore put the overall aims of the EU's climate change policy in jeopardy. The published default values in the Renewables Directive, adopted by the Commission on January 23rd are understood to be based on calculations by the Joint Research Centre. The JRC has said clearly that those figures do not include direct or indirect land-use change. The discussion about greenhouse gas calculation methods and the default values under the FQD must therefore include consideration of all emissions from direct and indirect land use change.

Based on the above, we call for a moratorium on all agrofuel targets and incentives until the debate on the true impacts of agrofuels, direct and indirect, social and environmental, is complete and regard this to be even more urgent in view of the data referred to above.

Yours faithfully,

Beati i costruttori di pace (Italy)
Begegnungszentrum fuer aktive Gewaltlosigkeit (Centre for Encounter and active Non-Violence)(Austria)
Biofuelwatch (UK)
Carbon Trade Watch (UK)
Corporate Europe Observatory
Ecologistas en Accion (Spain)
Econexus (UK)
FERN
"Gaia" Ecological and Rural development Foundation (Hungary)
Grupo de Reflexion Rural (Argentina)
Noah/Friends of the Earth Denmark
OeBV-Via Campesina (Austria)
Rettet den Regenwald e.V. (Germany)
Robin Wood (Germany)
Transnational Institute
World Rainforest Movement
Verdi Ambiente e Società, VAS (Italy)
Xarxa de l'Observatori del Deute en la Globalització (Catalonia, Spanish State)