

Declaration:

Large-scale bioenergy must be excluded from the renewable energy definition

We, the signatories of this declaration, are calling on the European Union (EU) to exclude bioenergy from its next Renewable Energy Directive (RED), and thereby stop direct and indirect subsidies for renewable energy from biofuels and wood-burning.

The EU is provoking a global expansion in industrial bioenergy use and the rapid development and expansion of a global trade in biofuels and wood-based bioenergy. Of all energy classed as renewable in the EU in 2012, bioenergy and 'waste' accounted for around two-thirds.

By including bioenergy in renewable energy targets, the EU is promoting direct and indirect subsidies for it, claiming that it is a sustainable alternative to fossil fuels. But according to the International Energy Agency, renewable energy is "energy derived from natural processes (e.g. sunlight and wind) that are replenished at a faster rate than they are consumed". Bioenergy does not meet this definition as there is no guarantee that all biomass that is burned is replenished, and it is never replenished "at a faster rate" than it is consumed. Moreover, large-scale bioenergy is far from sustainable, as it relies on a major expansion of industrial agriculture, of monoculture tree plantations, and of industrial logging. These industrial activities deplete and pollute soils and water, destroy forests, grasslands and wetlands, and destroy the livelihoods of workers, farmers, Indigenous Peoples and other communities, particularly in the global South.

The EU claims to have a very ambitious climate policy and emission reduction targets. But this claim is built on the false premise that large-scale bioenergy is inherently carbon neutral, or at least "low carbon". A growing body of evidence, however, shows that, especially when bioenergy is produced and used on a large scale, it tends to increase rather than decrease carbon emissions when compared to fossil fuels.

Many in the EU claim that the adverse environmental and climatic impacts of large-scale bioenergy can be avoided through the application of sustainability standards. However, standards applied to individual batches of 'raw material' cannot address an issue that is inherently one of scale: the very scale of industrial bioenergy is a problem in itself. Standards and certification schemes are applied only to specific loads of biomass or biofuel, and have no impact on overall scale and expansion. On the contrary, they may add to the problem by legitimising large-scale bioenergy use in the eyes of the public. Furthermore, as the Volkswagen scandal has shown, standards and even regulations are ineffective without strict independent enforcement, yet existing biofuel standards and proposed ones for biomass rely entirely on self-regulation by companies and their chosen consultants.

In the EU, bioenergy tends to compete with less carbon- and land-intensive renewable energy sources such as wind and solar power, rather than with fossil fuels, because it fits into the current infrastructure for the latter, so hindering real change.

Bioenergy can provide a sustainable energy option, but only when produced on a small-scale basis for local energy needs, and only if (for example) the health impacts of indoor smoke, especially on women, are taken into account. Small-scale local bioenergy schemes could still attract support, for example under Rural Development programmes. In fact, community-based bioenergy schemes often benefit from this type of support already, rather than from the subsidies that stem from the Renewable Energy Directive, which disproportionately boost large-scale industrial schemes.

The EU cannot be allowed to continue the current model of energy consumption, promoted through false assumptions about bioenergy being renewable, when its application at an industrial scale clearly is not. Claims of emission reductions are often false, and come at the expense of land, livelihoods, workers rights, forests, soil and water. The EU already bears great responsibility for the climate and biodiversity crises currently facing the planet. Claiming more land for bioenergy production, under the false premise that this is a contribution to climate protection, can only increase the already unacceptably high land footprint of the EU.

We call on the EU to end the current overconsumption of energy, and its huge impact on peoples and ecosystems globally, and to move towards a major reduction in energy consumption with all the changes in current development models that will imply.

A positive step and a good signal for the rest of the world would be to fully recognise the devastating direct and indirect impacts of large-scale bioenergy on people, territories, forests, and the climate, and to exclude bioenergy from definitions of renewable energy and from the next EU RED.

For background information, see:

Bioenergy Out: Why bioenergy should not be included in the next EU Renewable Energy Directive, <http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/files/EU-Bioenergy-Briefing2.pdf>

Signing on:

If you want to sign on to this declaration, please send the name of your organisation to BioenergyOut@gmail.com

Signatories:

Name	Country
Abibiman Foundation	Ghana
Acción Ecológica	Ecuador
AEFJN (Africa Europe Faith & Justice Network)	International
AFAC (Action Communautaire des Femmes Autochtones du Congo)	Democratic Republic of Congo
Africando	Spain
ALDEAH (Alternatives au Développement Extractiviste et Anthropocentré)	France
Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)	International
Asociación Galea Cova Crea	Spain
Asociación MONTUBIA	Peru
Asociación pola Defensa da Ría APDR	Galicia, Spain
Association Nigérienne des Scouts de l'Environnement	Niger
Attac	France
Australian Forest and Climate Alliance	Australia
Belantara Papua Sorong	Indonesia
Biofuelwatch	UK/US
Biowatch	South Africa
Blackwater Nottoway Riverkeeper Program	US
Bob Brown Foundation`	Australia
Boletín Ecológico	Nicaragua
Bosques Sin Forestales	Chile
Bumi Bhakti Persada Pasuruan	Indonesia
Censat Agua Viva (Friends of the Earth Columbia)	Colombia
Center for Biological Diversity	US
Center for Encounter and active Non-Violence	Austria
Center for Environment	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Center for Indigenous Farming Systems	India
Centro de Estudios Ecueménicos	Mexico
Centro Internazionale Crocevia	Italy
Centro Mandela DD.HH. Centro de Estudios e Investigación Social	Argentina
Centro Salvadoreño de Tecnología Apropriada (CESTA) / Friends of the Earth El Salvador	El Salvador
Coal Action Network	UK
Coalition Against Landgrabbing	Philippines
COECOCEIBA (Friends of the Earth Costa Rica)	Costa Rica
Colectivo Madre Selva	Guatemala
Comisión Par la Defensa de la Vida y La Naturaleza	Guatemala
Comité Oscar Romero de Vigo	Spain
Community Alliance for Global Justice	US
Comunidad Salud Ancestral Ñuke Mapu Newen	Chile

Corporacion Colombianos por el Agua	Colombia
Corporacion Kakataima	Colombia
Corporate Europe Observatory	EU
Crocevia	Italy
Dayak Voices (DVFC Borneo)	Indonesia
Denkhaus Bremen	Germany
Dogwood Alliance	US
Earthlife Africa Durban	South Africa
Ecologistas en Acción	Spain
EcoNexus	UK
End Ecocide on Earth	International
Environment East Gippsland (Victoria)	Australia
Environmental Rights Action (Friends of the Earth Nigeria)	Nigeria
ESAFF - Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum	Eastern and Southern Africa
ETC Group	International
European Coordination Via Campesina	Europe
European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism	Europe
FIAN International	International
Food and Water Europe	Europe
Food and Water Watch	International
Friends of the Earth Australia	Australia
Friends of the Siberian Forest	Russia
Fuel Poverty Action	UK
Gaia Foundation	UK
GISA (Grupo de Investigación de Suelo y Agua)	Venezuela
Global Forest Coalition	International
Global Justice Ecology Project	US
GMWatch	UK
Green Cross Society	Ukraine
Growth Partners Africa	Africa
Grupo de Reflexión Rural	Argentina
ICCA Consortium	International
ICPPC (International Coalition to Protect the Polish Countryside)	Poland
INFOE e.V.	Germany
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)	US
Institute of Cultural Affairs Cameroon	Cameroon
JATAM Sulteng (Jaringan Advokasi Tambang Sulawesi Tengah)	Indonesia
JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation)	Indonesia
Justiça Ambiental (Friends of the Earth Mozambique)	Mozambique
KeFRA - Kenyan Food Rights Alliance	Kenya
Kesatuan Nelayan Tradisional Indonesia	Indonesia
Link-AR Borneo	Indonesia
Maderas del Pueblo del Sureste, Oaxaca-Chiapas	Mexico
MADGE Australia	Australia
Mangrove Action Project	International
Markets for Change	Australia
Meada Thoamacheat (Mother Nature)	Cambodia
Merangat Foundation	Indonesia

Mitra Lingkungan Hidup Kalimantan	Indonesia
Movimiento Mesoamericano contra el Modelo extractivo Minero - M4	Central America
MUFRAS-32 (Movimiento Unificado Francisco Sánchez 1932)	El Salvador
National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE) (Friends of the Earth Uganda)	Uganda
Nativesrule Inc. (NSW)	Australia
NOAH (Friends of the Earth Denmark)	Denmark
North Coast Environment Council (in NSW)	Australia
North East Forest Alliance (in NSW)	Australia
OPPUK	Indonesia
Organización Rakizuum mapuche	Chile
Organización Sabiduría del LaKuTuN	Chile
Organización Trepey Pu Lamngen	Chile
Otros Mundos A/C (Friends of the Earth Mexico)	Mexico
Plataforma de Solidaridad con Chiapas y Guatemala de Madrid	Spain
Pragya	International
Programme Intégré pour le Développement du Peuple Pygmée (PIDP)	DR Congo
Protect the Forest	Sweden
Pro Wildlife	Germany
Quercus - Associação Nacional de Conservação da Natureza	Portugal
RECOMA (Red contra los monocultivos de árboles en América Latina)	International
Red Latina sin fronteras	International
Regenwald Institut e.V.	Germany
Rettet den Regenwald e.V.	Germany
Salva la Selva	Spain
Samudram Odisha	India
Save Our Borneo	Indonesia
SERIKAT TANI MANGGATANG TARUNG	Indonesia
SERJOS (Servicios Jurídicos y Sociales)	Guatemala
SKP KAME (Sekretariat Keadilan dan Pedamaian) Papua	Indonesia
Solidarity Sweden-Latin America	Sweden
South East Region Conservation Alliance (NSW)	Australia
Sunray Harvesters	India
Terra Nuova	Italy
Timberwatch	South Africa
Transnational Institute	International
Traperos de Emaus, Torrelavega	Spain
USC Canada	Canada
Walhi NTT (Friends of the Earth East Indonesia)	Indonesia
Woodland League	Ireland
World Family	UK
World Rainforest Movement	International
Védegylet – Protect the Future	Hungary
Yayasan Lebah Nusantara	Indonesia
Yayasan Pusaka	Indonesia
Za Zemiata (Friends of the Earth Bulgaria)	Bulgaria
Zimbabwe Smallholders Organic Farmers Forum (ZIMSOFF)	Zimbabwe

