

Press release

-for immediate release-

EU Energy Strategy risks failing to stabilise the climate at the cost of exporting emissions to the global South

January 10th, 2007

Large Scale Biofuels Action Group and **Biofuelwatch**² warn that the European Commission Energy Strategy, published today, is inadequate towards the goal of staying within 2° C global warming, and that the expected high biofuel targets will be dangerous and counter-productive.

Commissioners have unveiled plans to cut Europe's emissions by 20% by 2020, whilst demanding that the developed nations overall must cut theirs by 30%. Although their Energy Strategy recommends an overall renewable energy target of 20% by 2020, it seems likely that the only specific target mandatory target for any type of renewable energy will be for biofuels, with a steep increase from the present 5.75% target being almost certain. Indications are that biofuels from any sources will count towards the target, including those grown by companies which burn and log vast tracts of rainforest in the process.

Almuth Ernsting of Biofuelwatch says "The European Union have committed themselves to try and limit global warming to no more than 2⁰C and to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. This Energy Strategy completely undermines this aim. A 20% emissions cut by 2020 (just 1.5% a year) is way below what is needed to stabilise greenhouse gases and to avoid the worst of climate change - a 80-90% cut is required by 2050 or before and must start now¹. There is now a real risk that we will meet those low targets by fuelling rainforest and peat destruction, and thus greenhouse gas emissions in the global south. We could be exporting, rather than cutting emissions".

Earlier this month, hundreds of Latin American NGOs, as members of five networks, wrote an open letter to the European Commission, entitled "We want food sovereignty, not biofuels". They gave evidence of large-scale deforestation for biofuel production across Brazil, Colombia, Argentina and other Latin American countries³. The letter called on Europe "to seek solutions that do not worsen the already dramatic social and environmental situation of the peoples of Latin America, Asia and Africa".

Dr Andrew Boswell of Large Scale Biofuel Action Group adds: "With record temperatures across the globe, news of the rapid loss of Arctic sea ice and escalating climate disasters, the European Commissions' proposals are completely inadequate. They will not even get Europe's emissions down to the global average, let alone below it. It would be particularly irresponsible if Europe was to reduce their own emissions by sourcing biofuels from countries where rainforests, peatlands, and the livelihoods of communities are being destroyed in the process. If biofuel targets were met at any cost, this could mean a death sentence for the Amazon and other rainforests and push global warming completely beyond our control".

Notes:

1. See "High Stakes: Designing emissions pathways to reduce the risk of dangerous climate change", Institute of Public Policy Research -

http://www.ippr.org.uk/members/download.asp?f=/ecomm/files/high_stakes.pdf&a=skip

2. Biofuelwatch is a UK campaign which seeks regulation to ensure that only sustainably-sourced biofuels can be sold in Britain in the European Union. See www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/

3. See <http://www.regenwald.org/news.php?id=568>

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