

Press release

- For immediate release –

Vote on Thomsen report next week: 37 organisations call on EU to abandon plans for a 10% biofuel target

37 environmental and human rights groups have called upon the Members of the European Parliament to drop support for a 10% mandatory biofuel target during next week's vote on the Thomsen report.

They warn that biofuel targets are already linked to serious social impacts in the global South, such as rural depopulation, health impacts, land conflicts, human rights violations. They also warn that most biofuels are produced from large-scale monocultures and that those accelerate global warming because they speeding up the destruction of forests, peatlands, healthy soils and other ecosystems on which we depend for a stable climate.

The letter also points out that none of the proposals made by the European Commission and by member states offer any safeguards against serious environmental and social harm. The European Commission's proposal ignores all social impacts and would allow biofuels to be certified as sustainable even if they come from plantations where communities have been forcibly evicted.

The organisations warn MEPs not just against the 10% biofuel target plans to be debated next week, but also against separate plans for 'greenhouse gas reduction targets' from transport, contained in the draft Fuel Quality Directive, which are effective biofuel targets – possibly well in excess of the 10% biofuel target.

Nina Holland of Corporate Europe Observatory states: ““Recently, 1988 Chemistry Nobel Prize winner Hartmut Michel called for the annulment of the current target of 5.75% biofuel use by 2010. On 26th September, MEPs will have the opportunity to demand from the European Commission to change course and drop the 10% biofuel target for 2020.”

Almuth Ernsting of Biofuelwatch adds: “Right now, Paraguay is experiencing the worst forest fires on record, and vast areas of forest and farmland are also ablaze in Brazil, Bolivia and Argentina. Fires are being deliberately set to clear land for new soya plantations for biofuels as well as animal feed, much of it for export to Europe. This shows how biofuels are fuelling dangerous climate change, not mitigating it”.

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Note:

For a copy of the letter and a list of signatories please see

<http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/files/lettertomeps.pdf>