

Press Release from AEFJN (Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network), Biofuelwatch, Carbon Trade Watch, COAG, Corporate Europe Observatory, CPE Board, Ecologistas en Acción (Spain), Econexus, FIAN, GRR, the Soya Alliance and the Transnational Institute

Immediate release: 28th May 2008

MEP REPORT CALLS FOR 10% BIOFUEL TARGET TO BE SCRAPPED

A key report from the European Parliament has called for the EU's 10% biofuel target to be scrapped, amidst growing evidence over the impact on wildlife, people and the world's food supplies.

The report by the European Parliament's Rapporteur for the new laws on biofuels, Claude Turmes MEP, concludes that there is "overwhelming evidence to drop the mandatory 10 per cent target for fuels from renewables" [1].

Campaigners from a range of Europe-wide organisations welcomed the proposals to scrap the target and urged the industry and environment committees to drop the target [2].

Sofia Monsalve Suárez from FIAN said: "European demand for crops for fuel is already helping push up food prices and creating a serious food crisis in some parts of the world. Land use for agrofuels is forcing small farmers and indigenous peoples off their lands, causing poverty and hunger. Agrofuels will not solve the hunger problem in the world. They will make it worse."

Anders Wijkman MEP (Sweden PPE), who is reporting to the Environment Committee on the same legislation, has also called for the target to be reduced, but campaigners say his proposal of eight per cent - designed to "create a market" - cannot be justified.

Nina Holland from Corporate Europe Observatory said: "An eight per cent target will cause almost as much damage as a ten per cent target. Pushing up food prices is causing hunger and that fact is inescapable. The EU's targets should be dropped."

They are also concerned by some of the other recommendations made in the draft Turmes report, including the recommendation that large amounts of biomass are used for electricity generation and heating.

Campaigners say they want to see a tougher definition of "renewables", excluding agrofuels from large scale plantations which rely on large quantities of oil-based inputs, and which have damaging social impacts.

In parts of Latin America, cattle farmers are being forced on to previously un-farmed areas, threatening biodiversity in the region, and contributing to deforestation [3]. Palm oil production in Indonesia is a major cause of deforestation, which in turn leads to massive carbon emissions as the forest peatlands dry out [4].

René Louail, from CPE Board: "Agrofuel plant construction in Europe should be stopped. The money should be instead spent on switching production in Europe to vegetable proteins so that we no longer depend on imports."

EU representatives are currently in Bonn for discussions on the Convention on Biological Diversity where discussions are focused on how the agrofuel boom will impact on biodiversity. Civil society organisations present in Bonn are calling on the Parties to ban agrofuels from industrial monocultures.

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[1] The Turmes draft report on the Directive on Renewable Energies will be discussed this week by the Industry Committee

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/energy/interview-mep-seeks-revamped-eu-renewables-law/article-172316>

[2] Campaigners from AEFJN (Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network), Biofuelwatch, Carbon Trade Watch, COAG, Corporate Europe Observatory, CPE Board, Ecologistas en Acción (Spain), Econexus, FIAN, GRR, the Soya Alliance and the Transnational Institute are backing the call.

[3] See: <http://www.corporateeurope.org/docs/soygreenwash.pdf>

<http://www.waronwant.org/Murders20spark20palm20oil20alert+15885.twl>

[4] <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/reports/cooking-the-climate-full>