

June 2013

Dear EU decision makers

Re: EU biofuels policy comes at an unacceptably high economic, social and environmental cost – time to fix a failed policy

We, the undersigned civil society organisations, are writing to express our concerns regarding the economic, social and environmental costs of EU biofuels policy. Urgent action is needed to halt the expansion of land-based biofuels¹ which bring few or no climate benefits while putting extra pressure on scarce land resources, especially for food and feed.

Science has convincingly demonstrated that the use of biofuels in the EU is, directly but especially indirectly through increasing pressure on land use, driving the destruction of vital ecosystems and carbon stores like forests and peatlands. This results in most biofuels on the EU market causing similar or even higher greenhouse gas emissions than the fossil fuels they replace. Unless action is taken, a policy supposed to help combat climate change may lead to an increase in carbon emissions from Europe's transport.

Moreover, Europe's growing demand for biofuels to fuel its vehicles risks driving land grabs and causing further increases and volatility to the price of food – exacerbating poverty and hunger for some of the world's most vulnerable people. The amount of land required to fill a family car with grain biofuel would provide enough food to feed a child for 200 days.

And all of this comes at a cost to Europeans (taxpayers as well as drivers) of €10 billion per year.

Mounting evidence paints a clear picture of the costs on people and planet, such that ten major international organisations including the OECD, World Bank, IMF, FAO have jointly called for “G20 governments [to] remove provisions of current national policies that subsidise (or mandate) biofuels production or consumption”. It's time to stop ignoring the evidence.

Europe must change course. We rely on you to vote for reforms² to urgently halt and reverse the radical expansion of land based biofuels in transport. This requires full accounting of their climate impacts, including emissions from indirect land use change, as well as phasing out mandates and financial incentives for these fuels.

Europe needs a shift to truly green transport solutions such as better public transport, much more efficient vehicles, a shift towards green renewable electricity, as well as realising the potential of small amounts of truly sustainable fuels made from waste and processing residues – solutions with real economic, social and environmental benefits.

Yours sincerely,

¹ i.e. biofuels (or agrofuels) made from food crops or dedicated energy crops

² http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/transport/fuel/docs/com_2012_595_en.pdf

International organisations



EU organisations







Non-EU organisations



(112 European and worldwide civil society organisations)