Press release | 14.04.2015

Biofuels, land use and climate

Problems with EU biofuels policy prolonged under compromised new rules

The European Parliament's environment committee today voted to endorse an agreement reached between the Parliament and EU governments on new EU rules on biofuels. The rules had aimed at curbing the negative impact on the climate associated with indirect land use change (ILUC) due to biofuel production and the problems associated with fuel crops but the Greens expressed concern that the final deal will fail to do so. After the vote, Green climate spokesperson **Bas Eickhout** said:

"This deal falls far short of what is required to address the myriad of problems with the EU's biofuels policy. This legislation was supposed to ensure the EU does not continue to promote biofuels that exacerbate climate change and have a negative social impact but what has been agreed and voted today will not do so. It is a major missed opportunity.

"The new rules will allow a 7% share of land-based biofuels like food crops (first generation biofuels) in the overall fuel mix. Feeding crops into cars has fuelled rising food prices and rainforest destruction and the EU should not be further exacerbating these trends by promoting the use of agricultural land for fuel. We should be shunning the use of food crops for fuel altogether but a 7% 'cap' is clearly too high and will allow for further increasing the large share of climate-damaging biofuels in our fuel mix.

“The deal takes a small step towards transparency regarding emissions resulting from indirect land use change (ILUC) by requiring fuel suppliers report them as part of the life-cycle emissions of fuels. Most importantly however, ILUC will not be taken into account in assessing compliance towards the greenhouse gas reduction target. This will mean that the excess greenhouse gases produced when land is converted to other uses because of biofuel production elsewhere will still be tolerated. The failure to formally include ILUC in the so-called 'sustainability criteria' for biofuels under the EU's renewable energy directive is a gap, which will enable these unsustainable biofuels to form part of the mix and fail to steer investments in the right direction. This will not properly address the fact that Europe's current biofuel consumption is leading to the destruction of tropical rainforests, with major greenhouse gas implications.”

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