Press release | 10.06.2010

Biofuels

Bio-fooled: proposal on EU criteria would allow damaging unsustainable biofuels

Commenting on the Communication on the sustainability criteria for biofuels, presented today by the EU Commission, Green MEP **Bas Eickhout**, Member of the Environment Committee, said:

"The Commission's proposals on applying the so-called 'sustainability criteria' for biofuels are riddled with loopholes and would allow climate-damaging fuels to get the all clear in Europe. Far from ensuring the sustainability of these fuels, the communication could undermine overall EU climate policy. The Commission does not acknowledge the potential problems with biofuels anywhere in the communication. While pressure from MEPs and NGOs has thankfully resulted in the deletion of the scandalous definition of palm oil plantations as forests, the new loopholes that have been introduced are just as shameful.

"Among the more odious loopholes, are the 'by-product definitions', which take no account of the existing economic uses of by-products. This would mean that by-products could be diverted from one economic usage to use as biofuels and be substituted by more greenhouse gas intensive alternatives, without any attempt to factor in the resultant emissions increase. Another major flaw is the 'energy allocation definition', which would allow undistilled ethanol to be classified as near-zero emissions! This makes a mockery of the lifecycle greenhouse gas assessment process and renders the so-called 'sustainability criteria' nothing more than an exercise in greenwash."

Green MEP **Claude Turmes**, Vice-President of the Greens/EFA in the European Parliament and Parliament's rapporteur for Renewables, said:

"It seems that Commissioner Oettinger is ill-advised in this dossier. The Commission has still made no progress in setting out how to take account of the climate impact of indirect land-use change (ILUC) for biofuels. This issue is absolutely crucial for assessing how much greenhouse gases these fuels account for over their lifecycles and is therefore fundamental to assessing the 'sustainability' or not of biofuels. This prolonged delay is inacceptable. Under the legislation on renewable energy agreed in December 2008, the Commission was tasked to come forward with measures to account for the full climate impact of agrofuels. It is also inimical to the interests of investors, who are badly in need of legislative certainty for their investments."

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Claude Turmes

Member

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