



Fulfilling the promise of “Green energy”

BirdLife International and EEB briefing for the European Parliament’s discussions on the Strategy on Biomass and Biofuels

The Commission’s Communication on the Biomass Action Plan and the Communication on an EU Biofuels Strategy are two important orientation tools for the EU bio-energy policy.

BirdLife International and EEB recognise the positive role that bioenergy can play in reducing the EU dependence on fossil fuels and tackling climate change. However, extreme care should be taken in promoting bioenergy, and in particular biofuels, in order to ensure they are sustainably produced and truly help reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, the promotion of bio-energy should take place in an appropriate context where first and foremost priority is given to energy efficiency, then the promotion of all renewable energy sources and as one of these sources, the use of bio-energy, with biofuels as only one of several forms of bio-energy.

The Commission Communications highlight clearly the potential negative impacts that the expansion of energy crops could have on biodiversity, inside and outside Europe. They also recognise that the greenhouse gas balance is extremely variable and depends on production methods.

We appreciate that the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy (TTE) Council in its draft conclusions from 20th April calls for “integrated approach...which takes account of sustainability...as well as environmental issues including biodiversity conservation and life cycle analysis as far as possible” to be one of the general principles of a biomass policy. We also welcome the Council’s call for the “exploring the issue of the development of a... European certification system guaranteeing that biomass is produced in a sustainable way”, but we would welcome stronger wording ensuring a clear commitment.



BirdLife International and EEB underline the reality of potentially very negative impacts and urge policy makers to ensure that bioenergy is sustainably produced and that it brings real and significant greenhouse gas savings as a core principle of EU bioenergy policy development. To this end, we urge on European Parliament to ensure that the EU bioenergy policy:

- Include a strong **commitment to sustainable bioenergy production**, in particular through a **comprehensive accreditation scheme for biofuels**. This should cover both imports and local production and take into account the greenhouse gas balance over the whole production cycle and the environmental impacts of cultivation;
- Clearly indicate that **preference should be given to those bioenergy sectors that provide the highest greenhouse gas savings** in the most cost and environmentally effective way. Incentives should be as much as possible pegged to environmental performance in order to spur technological development and innovation.
- In the context of application of the Energy Crops Scheme, ensure that biodiversity assets currently **safeguarded through set aside are maintained** through the implementation of an alternative system with no large scale conversion of set aside to energy crops allowed before such system is in place.
- Ensure that bioenergy policies are set within a wider context of **energy efficiency** policies, and make them consistent with the EU's commitment to **halt biodiversity decline by 2010**.

We hope that the Parliaments report on Biofuels and Biomass will underline and support these political commitments.

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