

Brussels, 27 April 2012

Dear President Barroso,
Dear Commissioners,

Biofuels and carbon footprint

Europe's use of biofuels to fuel its vehicles risks driving land grabs and deforestation, increasing food prices, exacerbating poverty and hunger, and accelerating climate change. We are seriously concerned that the Commission has not yet taken action to ensure that Europe's green transport policy discourages those biofuels that cause higher greenhouse gas emissions than fossil fuels¹.

Scientists have made it clear that urgent action is needed, warning about the high levels of emissions that result from indirect land use change (ILUC). According to the results of the Commission's own studies, the carbon footprint of biodiesel can be worse than that of fossil fuels once these indirect side-effects are taken into account².

Land that would otherwise be used to feed people and livestock now satisfies the EU's growing hunger for biofuels. New lands must be ploughed up elsewhere for food and feed, destroying vital ecosystems and carbon stores like forests and peat land, a process that releases millions of tons of emissions and accelerates climate change. This reality undermines the environmental benefits that EU biofuels policy promises.

Without effective policy measures, subsidised biofuels consumed in Europe are highly unlikely to reduce the rising contribution of Europe's transport sector to global climate change, and threaten to undermine the otherwise positive outcomes of renewable energy and fuel quality policies.

Moreover, increasing the use of biofuels can also squeeze food supplies, amplifying the risk of food crises (and exacerbating land-grabbing conflicts across the world). Industrial biofuels production requires large amounts of land and other natural resources such as water, which should be used to meet the basic needs of local populations, not to sustain extraction of energy for foreign markets.

The Commission is about to meet to decide on its legislative proposal on how to deal with the issue of ILUC. **We call on you, as an immediate first step to prevent the use of the most climate-damaging biofuels, to introduce a proposal for feedstock-specific ILUC emission factors when calculating carbon footprints in both the Renewable Energy and Fuel Quality Directives.**

On behalf of all signatories,

Yours sincerely,



Natalia Alonso
Head of the Oxfam International EU Advocacy Office

¹ Within the article 19.6 of the Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC), the Commission was due to submit a report on ILUC by 31 December 2010 accompanied if appropriate by a proposal, based on the best available science, containing a concrete methodology.

² IFPRI study "Assessing the Land Use Change Consequences of European Biofuel Policies", October 2011
<http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/biofuelsreportec2011.pdf>

EU AND INTERNATIONAL

ActionAid
BirdLife Europe
Can Europe
CDM Watch
CEEweb for Biodiversity
CIDSE - together for global justice
ClientEarth
European Environmental Bureau
Friends of the Earth Europe
Greenpeace
Naturefriends International
Oxfam
Transport & Environment
Wetlands International
WWF EPO

AUSTRIA

BirdLife Austria
EU-Umweltbuero
SOL – People for Solidarity, Ecology and Lifestyle
VCÖ - Mobilität mit Zukunft.

BELGIUM

Associations 21
Bond Beter Leefmilieu Vlaanderen - BBLV
Centre tricontinental (CETRI)
Inter-Environnement Wallonie
NATAGORA
Natuurpunt
SOS FAIM Belgique

BULGARIA

Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds/
BirdLife Bulgaria

CYPRUS

BirdLife Cyprus
Friends of the Earth Cyprus

CZECH REPUBLIC

Czech Society for Ornithology
Glopolis

DENMARK

Danish Society for Nature Conservation
The Danish Ecological Council
Verdens Skove (Forests of the World)

FRANCE

Comité français pour la solidarité internationale
FNAUT
France Nature Environnement (FNE)
Réseau Action Climat-France

FINLAND

BirdLife Finland
Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU Kehys
NGO Platform KEPA

GERMANY

Berggorilla & Regenwald Direkthilfe
INKOTA-netzwerk
Brot für die Welt
MISEREOR
Pro REGENWALD
Pro Wildlife
Rettet den Regenwald/Rainforest Rescue

GREECE

ELLINIKI ETAIRIA - Society for the Environment & Cultural Heritage
Hellenic Ornithological Society/ BirdLife Greece

GUATEMALA

Promoción y el Desarrollo de la Comunidad (CEIBA)

HUNGARY

MTVSZ/Friends of the Earth Hungary

INDONESIA

KePPaK PEREMPUAN
Lentera Rakyat
WALHI - Friends of the Earth Indonesia

LUXEMBOURG

Caritas Luxembourg
Catholic Church Luxembourg
Cercle de Coopération des ONG de développement
Fondation Bridderlech Deelen
Justice et Paix / Justitia et Pax
Mouvement Ecologique – Friends of the Earth Luxembourg
Natur&ëmwelt (LNVL)
SOS Faim Luxembourg

Mauritius

Maudesco Friends of the Earth

NETHERLANDS

Natuur & Milieu
Nederlands cultuurlandschap

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Center for Environmental Law And
Community Rights Inc./Friends of the Earth-
Papua New Guinea.

PHILIPPINES

Ecological Society of the Philippines

POLAND

Animal Conservation and Wildlife Society
(ACWF)
ISD - Instytut Na Rzecz Ekorozwoju - Institute
for Sustainable Development

PORTUGAL

Oikos – cooperação e desenvolvimento
Quercus

ROMANIA

AGORA - Working Group for Sustainable
Development
Fundatia ADEPT Transilvania
Re.Generation
TERRA Mileniul III Foundation

SIERRA LEONE

Friends of the Earth- Sierra Leone

SLOVAKIA

Centre for sustainable alternatives
Slovakia-Southern Africa Society
SOS/BirdLife

SLOVENIA

DOPPS-BirdLife
Focus - Association for Sustainable
Development
Institute for Sustainable Development

SPAIN

Amigos de la Tierra España.
Ecologistas en Acción
Salva la Selva
SEO/BirdLife

UK

Campaign against Climate Change
Christian Ecology Link
Compassion in World Farming
Down to Earth Indonesia
Elephant Family
Friends of the Earth England, Wales and
Northern Ireland
GreenSpeed
Occupy London Energy, Equity & Environment
Working Group
Orangutan Foundation
Real Bread Campaign
Sumatran Orangutan Society
York and Ryedale Friends of the Earth

USA

Clean Air Task Force
Environmental Working Group
Friends of the Earth USA
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
Rainforest Action Network (RAN)