

Sustainable Biofuels in EU

Proposals from International Network for Sustainable Energy - Europe¹, December 2009

The EU is promoting increased use of liquid biofuels for transportation in the new renewable energy directive (Dir. 2009/28/EC, target for renewables in transport is 10% in 2020) and well as in the older directive for renewable energy in transport (Dir. 2003/30/EC). Like many other NGO's, INFORSE is concerned that this could lead to unsustainable production of biofuels in particular in tropical countries, as well as to maintaining a low energy efficiency in the transport sector.

In the coming months all EU countries will have to draw up action plans for the new EU renewable-energy directive. As part of that, they shall specify how they will ensure that biofuel use is sustainable and how they will reach the target of 10% renewables in transport by 2020. INFORSE-Europe urges the countries in this process to:

- * Use waste materials for biofuels as first priority. This includes promotion of waste-based biofuel production using existing organic waste.
- * Maximise use of electricity in transport. With electrification of trains and city buses, priority of public transport, and support for electric cars, it will be possible to electrify at least 10% of the transport by 2020, up to at least 30% in some countries.
- * Use national production of biofuels rather than imports.
- * Set clear criteria for biofuel production.

CRITERIA FOR BIOFUELS

With the implementation of the new renewable energy directive, criteria for biofuel production should follow the EU guidelines as described in the directive, They should also consider social and other consequences of biofuel production that are not so well covered by the directive. INFORSE asks the EU countries to include the following criteria for production of biofuel:

- *Harvesting for biofuel production must not lead to degradation of biodiversity or carbon content of wetlands, peatlands, and forested areas.
- *Biofuel production must not lead to increased pollution from agriculture, compared with the agriculture that it replaces.
- *Biofuel production must be sustainable, i.e., that agricultural practices must not deplete the soil and its fertility.
- *The use of agricultural land for biofuels must not lead to reductions in the availability of foodstuffs or to unaffordable prices of food.
- *Labour rights must be respected, as established in international conventions.
- *Sustainability criteria must also be respected by ensuring successful relocation of agricultural and forest production from areas that are used for production of biofuels.
- *Imports be allowed only from countries that fulfill above criteria with certainty. Imports from countries that do not have a secure and uncompromised system to guarantee sustainability must be banned.

¹ INFORSE-Europe is a network of 73 NGOs in Europe, see www.inforse.org/europe