



Wednesday, 2 April 2008

Dear Ambassador,

Re: sustainability standards for biofuels

Sustainability standards for biofuels will be on the agenda of COREPER this Friday April 4. We are writing to express our concerns about the current direction of the discussions in the Ad Hoc Working Group and the failure of existing proposals to ensure sustainability.

We are deeply concerned that the latest proposals remain very weak, both in ensuring that biofuels policy delivers in greenhouse gas reduction and in addressing negative impacts on wildlife and people. We have already set out our concerns to the Working Group in the appended letter, which outline what we believe to be the minimum requirements for a sustainable biofuels policy.

In particular, we wish to highlight the importance of considering the issue of indirect land use change in the discussion on biodiversity as well as greenhouse gas reduction standards. The substantial impacts of indirect effects render any criteria meaningless if these significant impacts are not taken into account. Specifically, an emissions threshold that does not take into account direct and indirect land use change ignores the majority of emissions arising from biofuels production.

Given the overwhelming scientific evidence emerging in recent months, which highlight the risks posed by biofuels, it is inconceivable that decisions on sustainability should be rushed. Council agreement on sustainability standards that fail to prevent potentially devastating outcomes for climate protection, biodiversity and vulnerable peoples would severely undermine the credibility of EU efforts to tackle climate change and to address emissions from transport in a sensible way.

We strongly urge you to reject weak proposals for biofuels standards and ensure that adequate time is taken to reflect the latest scientific evidence. The Council should deliver meaningful standards to avoid exacerbating the current climate and ecological crises and to prevent detrimental human impacts.

Yours faithfully/sincerely,

John Hontelez, Secretary General of the EEB

On behalf of:

Magda Stoczkiewicz, Director Friends of the Earth Europe

Jorgo Riss, Director Greenpeace European Unit

Clairie Papazoglou, Director European Division, BirdLife International