

Proposal for a motion on a Roadmap for Renewable Energy in Europe

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) would like to express the support for the Thomsen report on a Roadmap for Renewable Energy in Europe on which the European Parliament will vote on 24th September during its Plenary Session. IUCN supports the transition to energy systems that are ecologically sustainable, socially just and economically efficient. Together, climate change and biodiversity loss are the most urgent environmental challenges facing the EU, and safeguards must therefore be in place to ensure that tackling one of these problems does not undermine EU efforts to tackle the other.

We would like to draw your special attention to the binding 10% replacement target of fossil fuels by biofuels. This policy will have limited potential to reduce GHG emissions in the transport sector unless accompanied by sustainability safeguards, and if part of a comprehensive transport energy strategy.

Not all biofuels significantly reduce GHG emissions

The GHG reduction potential of biofuels depends on the efficiency of the feedstock chosen, the cultivation method, transportation and processing. When analyzing the full life-cycle, including indirect impacts, most 1st generation biofuels are unlikely to have a significant reduction in overall GHG emissions compared to fossil fuels. Furthermore, the loss of carbon stocks through changes in land use for biofuel feedstock production can make the balance negative for biofuels. Using biomass for combined heat and power generation is up to 3 times more efficient. Biofuels should only be developed if they substantially reduce average GHG emissions compared to fossil fuels.

Biofuels may harm natural ecosystems and livelihoods

OECD's recently published report on *Biofuels: Is the cure worse than the disease*, describes how the growth of the biofuels industry, combined with inadequate pricing of environmental values, creates powerful incentives to replace natural ecosystems such as forests, wetlands and pasture land with dedicated bio-energy crops, particularly in tropical regions where land is most suitable and annual yields are highest. Biofuel standards and certification may help to mitigate some of the *direct* negative effects of biofuel feedstock production. However, the *indirect* effects of biofuel feedstock production, such as competition for land and water resources, displacement of other agricultural activities, and increased food prices should also be taken into account.

IUCN recommends the European Commission's Energy and Transport Directorate-General to take a broader analysis when considering biofuels, to reflect the contribution biofuels can make amongst other more effective options for reducing GHG emissions in the transport sector, and to consider an ecosystem approach when considering both environmental as well as social risks and opportunities of biofuels production.

Clear targets for reduced GHG emissions in the transport sector are needed to stimulate effective regulatory and market incentives for efficient technologies, including increased investments in public transport, on-road fuel efficiency, and smart fuel technologies. Sustainable land use and avoided deforestation, both of which are linked to biofuel feedstock production, can also contribute to climate change mitigation.

IUCN welcomes the amendments that are tabled by the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance and would like to urge members of the European Parliament to vote especially **in favor** of the amendments 3 and 6 as they are quoted below:

Amendment 3, paragraph 13:

Calls on the Commission to ensure that Community legislation relating to renewable energy and RAPs includes criteria and provisions to avert conflicts between different uses of biomass **so that biomass is used first where it is the most energy efficient;**

Amendment 6, paragraph 43:

Calls on the Commission to carry out an integrated well-to-wheel climate, environmental, social and food security impact assessment before setting and implementing a possible 10% compulsory target for plant fuels; notes the importance of second and third-generation biofuels becoming commercially available and calls for technological progress to be accelerated in this field; stresses that **plant fuels produced in a sustainable way** could reduce oil dependency and CO₂ emissions in the transport sector, **if sustainable practices and priority for food security are to become compulsory in this field;**

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) is the world's largest conservation network. The Union brings together 83 States, 110 agencies, more than 800 non-governmental organizations (NGO's), and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries in a unique worldwide partnership.

The Union's mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

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