

Embargoed press release

Press release - ACTIONAID, BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL, CLIENTEARTH, EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU, FERN, FRIENDS OF THE EARTH EUROPE, GREENPEACE, TRANSPORT & ENVIRONMENT, WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL

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Europe's biofuels plans driving social and environmental destruction  
New research warns of massive increase in carbon emissions and land conversion

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Media briefing: [http://www.foeeurope.org/agrofuels/ILUC\\_briefing\\_November2010.pdf](http://www.foeeurope.org/agrofuels/ILUC_briefing_November2010.pdf)  
Read the report, 'Anticipated Indirect Land Use Change Associated with Expanded Use of Biofuels in the EU': [http://www.foeeurope.org/agrofuels/ILUC\\_report\\_November2010.pdf](http://www.foeeurope.org/agrofuels/ILUC_report_November2010.pdf)

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Brussels, Belgium, November 8, 2010 – Plans to increase the use of biofuels in Europe over the next ten years will require up to 69 000 square kilometres of new land worldwide and make climate change worse, a new study reveals today [1].

The report finds that an area over twice the size of Belgium will need to be converted into fields and plantations – putting forests, natural ecosystems and poor communities in danger, if European countries do not change their plans for getting petrol and diesel from food crops by 2020.

The new research analyses for the first time biofuel use planned by the EU's member states in their renewable energy plans [2], concluding that:

- Europe is set to increase significantly biofuel use by 2020 when biofuels will provide 9.5% of transport fuel – more than 90% of which will come from food crops.
- When indirect land use change is taken into account, biofuels will emit an extra 27 to 56 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year – the equivalent to an extra 12 to 26 million cars on Europe's roads by 2020.
- Unless EU policy changes, the extra biofuels that Europe will use over the next decade will be on average 81 to 167% worse for the climate than fossil fuels.

Under the plans, five countries will be responsible for over two thirds of the increase in emissions. The UK, Spain, Germany, Italy and France are projected to produce the most extra greenhouse gas emissions from biofuels – with up to 13.3, 9.5, 8.6, 5.3 and 3.9 extra million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year respectively.

Adrian Bebb from Friends of the Earth Europe said: *"The scale of the damage that European countries will cause with their biofuels plans is now clear – forests and nature will be destroyed on a shocking scale to fuel our cars. The resulting release of climate-damaging greenhouse gases will make biofuels a worse polluter than fossil fuels. The EU needs to urgently review the sustainability of using biofuels and ensure their use does not lead to more climate change or environmental destruction."*

Laura Sullivan from ActionAid: *"Biofuels are not a climate-friendly solution to our energy needs. The EU plans effectively give companies a blank cheque to continue grabbing land from the world's poor to grow biofuels to fill our tanks rather than food to fill their stomachs. Europe's energy policies are putting millions of people in danger, threatening Africa's fragile food security"*.

The research, commissioned by a coalition of environmental and development organisations [3], includes indirect land use change impacts caused by biofuels, making it the most realistic assessment so far of the real world impacts of EU biofuels targets. It comes at a key time for EU biofuel policy, with the European Commission due to report on how to address and minimise these emissions by the end of the year.

The groups are calling on EU governments and the European Commission to review urgently the real impacts of biofuels on climate change and food security, and to prioritise energy efficiency in transport. New legislation must take account of the full carbon footprint of biofuels by introducing indirect land use change 'factors'.

Nusa Urbancic of Transport & Environment said: *"This research shows that EU biofuels targets are putting climate policy for transport in reverse gear. Until indirect land use change is fully taken into account, Europe will continue to subsidise an alternative energy that is no better than the fossil fuels it is designed to replace."*

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Notes for editors:

[1] Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP). November 2010. 'Anticipated Indirect Land Use Change Associated with Expanded Use of Biofuels in the EU: An Analysis of Member State Performance'. Author: Catherine Bowyer, Senior Policy Analyst. <http://www.ieep.eu>

[2] The study analyses the 23 plans that had been submitted by October 2010 (Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, UK). [http://ec.europa.eu/energy/renewables/transparency\\_platform/action\\_plan\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/renewables/transparency_platform/action_plan_en.htm). This forms part of the EU Renewable Energy Directive.

[3] The organisations are: ActionAid, BirdLife International, ClientEarth, European Environmental Bureau, FERN, Friends of the Earth Europe, Greenpeace, Transport & Environment, Wetlands International.