

ILUC decision postponed, biofuels battle continues

Title

On 12 December 2013, Energy ministers were meeting in Brussels to make a decision on biofuels and Indirect Land Use Change (ILUC). The proposed agreement, prepared by the Lithuanian presidency, had been watered down greatly under the pressure of a group of more conservative countries. However, at the end of the meeting, two conservative countries, Poland and Hungary, decided that the proposed text was not to their liking. In voting against the proposal, they added their votes to those of the progressive countries - Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, the Netherlands and Denmark - who found the text too weak. Now it's up to the Greek Presidency to take over the file which will result in further delays.

Trees Robijns, Senior EU Agriculture and Bioenergy Policy Officer at BirdLife Europe remains frustrated and stated that, "Not only did they massively weaken the proposal, they then voted against a text that was specifically crafted for them."

•ILUC is the result of the competition for land between crops used for food/feed, and crops used for fuel. This leads to a decrease in food production and an increase in food prices. It also leads to the conversion of new land into agriculture fields. The result is a landscape of extensive fields used for one purpose and a future lacking biodiversity.

The issue of Indirect Land Use Change has been on the agenda since the Renewable Energy Directive and Fuel Quality Directive were put into place in 2008. In the fall of 2012, the Commission put forward a proposal which included a limit on food based biofuels and an obligation to report ILUC emissions. The Parliament came to an agreement in the first reading in September 2013 asking for a 6% cap on all land based biofuels and also included ILUC emissions into the Fuel Quality Directive (by 2020).

The Lithuanian Presidency made huge efforts to try to satisfy the pro-biofuel countries by submitting compromises sapped of substance to the debate. Clearly, their efforts have been in vain. The Greeks should now leave aside the countries denying scientific facts and work

towards a fast and effective solution not causing deforestation, hunger and climate change.

For more information, please contact [Trees Robijns](#), Senior Agriculture and Bioenergy Officer at BirdLife Europe.
