

To Members of the Press

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### **The beginning of the end for bad biofuels**

Today the Environment Committee of the European Parliament has confirmed, with an overall majority\*, a political deal with Council to cap the use of first generation biofuels. This vote concludes over 5 years of political wheeling and dealing on the pros and cons of biofuels. The deal is now two rubber-stamping exercises away from becoming legislation: first by the overall EP plenary and second by the Council of ministers. This is expected to happen in April and May.

Trees Robijns states: “The deal voted here today is far from perfect, but one should not be mistaken about the clear message behind it: This is the beginning of the end for first generation biofuels: Europe is capping them because people can no longer afford to have them as part of the future, be it from a climatic, environmental or social perspective. For the first time, all emissions – both direct and indirect – will require reporting so that European citizens are aware of the full impacts. This reporting can be used to inform future policies on renewables especially in the context of the 2030 Climate and Energy Package.”

Despite early warnings by NGOs about the fundamental unsustainability of crop based biofuels, policy makers have indulged in funding this new, falsely sustainable, booming sector. And the direct and indirect effects have been telling: a global increase of demand for agricultural land resulting in forests being cut down and converted into palm oil plantations, and grassland being ploughed to produce rapeseed and maize. The climatic, biodiversity and social effects of this biofuels bonanza have been too large.

This demand for crop based biofuels, largely triggered by tax breaks and blending mandates, has attracted huge investments and displaced food production or natural habitats. From the field to the tank, the naïve dream of feeding our SUVs and trucks with colourful flowers, seeds and “greenery” has revealed its fallacious nature.

“Today”, as Trees Robijns explains, “Europe turns its back to unsustainable biofuels and moves forward. This message should be clear across the planet for policy makers and investors alike. Second generation industry should be careful to draw lessons from this. Renewables must be sustainable, whether it is called bio, advanced or second generation. BirdLife hopes that policy makers will use this vote to be taken as the beginning of a more sustainable future for all bioenergy.”

### **ENDS**

BirdLife Europe is a Partnership of nature conservation organisations in 47 countries, including all EU Member States, and a leader in bird conservation. Through its unique local to global approach BirdLife Europe delivers high impact and long term conservation for the benefit of nature and people.

## Notes

\*: The vote passed with 51 in favour, 12 against and 1 abstention of a total of 64 MEPs voting in the ENVI committee.

1) The deal in short:

- 7% cap on biofuels limits the original plan of Member State governments to see biofuels go up to 8.6%, which is almost the entire 10% transport target. This cap ensures that Europe avoids up to 320 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions that would otherwise have been caused by biofuels (based on calculations – see briefing ) - Member States have the option to go lower than 7%.
- For the first time in Europe, indirect emissions will have to be reported. This will allow for more clarity on the full impact of crop based biofuels.
- There is a 0.5% indicative advanced biofuels target and some of these advanced fuels will be counted multiple times. Although very timid, an element of sustainability has been added because the document makes a reference to the Waste Framework Directive's waste hierarchy.

2) [Common NGO briefing](#)

## Contacts

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