

To the members of the press – for immediate release

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The *Black Book of Bioenergy* unmasks the culprits behind the carbon con of EU bioenergy

Shocking new evidence that exposes the great carbon con of bioenergy are revealed today by BirdLife Europe and Transport & Environment following extensive research and on-the-ground investigations conducted with their local partners. The case studies in the *Black Book of Bioenergy* are perfect examples of what happens when good intentions go bad.

Bioenergy currently makes up the vast majority (65%) of the EU's renewable energy mix. However, as the saying goes 'All that glitters is not gold' and, similarly, all that is renewable is not sustainable. Bioenergy is simply not the clean dream we hoped it would be: burning of biomass still results in CO₂ emissions and, in some cases, it even makes global warming worse. It has also been leading to massive biodiversity loss.

The cases in Europe involve burning whole trees, even from protected forests in Eastern Slovakia and Italian bioenergy companies clearing critical riverside forests in Emilia Romagna. In Germany cropland and food crops such as maize are being used for biogas. Finland's bioenergy industry, despite the country's iconic forest landscape, is also resorting to whole trees and even stumps to meet the politically set demands. In the Canary Islands and in Southern France bioenergy companies building subsidised power plants are now even requiring wood to be imported from further afield.

In North-Western Russia, a massive wood pellet mill by Vyborgskaya Cellulose, has been exposed making thousands of tonnes of pellets a year by clear cutting forests in the region and supplying the European bioenergy markets, including companies like Germany's RWE, Sweden's Vattenfall, Finland's Fortum and Denmark's Dong Energy. This case study will also be shown in the upcoming BirdLife documentary [The Burning Issue](#).

Colombia, the world's 4th biggest producer of palm oil, has also joined the rush to supply European biodiesel markets with exports to the Netherlands, Germany and Spain tripling between 2013 and 2015. Even though biodiesel is the worst type of biofuel in terms of its climate impacts, EU laws are still too weak to stop the growing use of palm oil biodiesel. The Colombian case is showcased in the T&E documentary [Frontera Invisible](#).

Sini Eräjää, EU bioenergy policy officer at BirdLife Europe, said: *"This report provides clear evidence that the EU's renewable energy policies have led to increased harvesting of whole trees and to continued use of food crops for energy. We are subsidising large scale*

environmental destruction, not just outside Europe as in Indonesia or the US but also right in our own back yard.”

Jori Sihvonen, biofuels officer at T&E, said: *“It’s easy to fall into thinking that all bioenergy is sustainable, but time and again we see some forms of it can be worse for society, the natural environment and, in the case of burning land-based biofuels or whole trees, even the climate. The European Commission should phase out all land-based biofuels by 2030 and devote greater efforts to promoting sustainable renewables such as solar, wind, geothermal and tidal.” ENDS*

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Notes:

- The Black Book of Bioenergy is available online
<http://www.birdlife.org/campaign/black-book-bioenergy>
- For additional photos of the case studies in the Black Book of Bioenergy check out this photo blog <https://eubioenergy.com/2016/11/17/new-publication-the-black-book-of-bioenergy/>
- To read more about our work and to get the latest news on bioenergy visit our blog EU Bioenergy: <https://eubioenergy.com> and follow [#EUBioenergy](https://twitter.com/EUBioenergy)

*BirdLife Europe and Central Asia is a **[partnership of 48 national conservation organisations](#)** and a **leader in bird conservation**. Our **unique local to global approach** enables us to deliver high impact and long term conservation for the benefit of **nature and people**. BirdLife Europe and Central Asia is one of the six regional secretariats that compose BirdLife International. Based in Brussels, it supports the European and Central Asian Partnership and is present in **47 countries** including **all EU Member States**. With more than **4100 staff** in Europe, **two million members** and tens of thousands of skilled volunteers, BirdLife Europe and Central Asia, together with its national partners, owns or manages more than **6000 nature sites** totalling 320,000 hectares.*