



MEPs vote to phase out land-based biofuels

On 24th February the Environment Committee voted some important reforms to the EU's biofuel policy. The compromise has positive elements, however, in the coming weeks there will be a triologue between Commission, European Parliament and the European Council (i.e. EU governments). In 2014 it appeared that member states were not willing to go as far as the Parliament to limit damaging biofuels. Now MEP Nils Torvalds (ALDE) (lead MEP) will have to bargain on the basis of this Parliament compromise with European Council which is more favorable towards industry demands. The final vote is expected by April 2015.

Let us briefly sum up the important points of the EP compromise. Firstly the cap or limit on the consumption of biofuels to be counted towards the EU's 10 % target of the use of renewable energy in transport by 2020: The EP wants a stronger limit on the use of land-based agrofuels than the Council, namely 6% while the council has been pushing for 7% (June 2014). Current consumption levels at 4.7% will require more land and water to be diverted to biofuel production as well as more food to be burned for fuel. This of course will continue to have a negative impact on food prices and food sovereignty in developing countries. A positive element of this limit proposed by the EP is that it includes both food and energy crops (like jatropha, sunflower, etc.) and member states can no longer subsidize these types of biofuels after 2020. The EP also introduced the so-called ILUC-factors (Indirect Land Use Change) that account for indirect emissions resulting from land conversion (i.e. clearing of rainforests) for biofuels production. Additionally, a target as well as sustainability criteria for "advanced" biofuels (i.e. waste and algae) were set. However Friends for the Earth argues that these suitability criteria are not strong enough and fear that some of these biofuels will compete with food crops for land.

The Guardian Article on vote: [here](#)

Euractiv article: [here](#)

Press release Friends of the Earth: [here](#)

Sierra Leonean Civil Society demands a moratorium on land deals

In June 2013 AEFJN and partners published a case study of land grabbing for agrofuels in Sierra Leone. The study was presented to policymakers in Europe and Sierra Leonean civil society raised concerns in Sierra Leone and at the company involved. However, the situation did not improve in practice and now these organisations are demanding a moratorium on large scale land acquisitions of the Sierra Leonean government. AEFJN of course supports the plea of these organisations.

The demand ALLAT: [here](#)

The study on AEFJN website: [here](#)