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A chance to salvage the EU's failing bioenergy policy

Brussels. June 2, 2017 – Today's draft report on bioenergy sustainability criteria by Environmental committee (ENVI) rapporteur MEP [Bas Eickhout](#) (Greens) is a chance for the EU to end a policy which is causing huge damage to forests and the climate.

"This draft report tackles one of the fundamental weaknesses of the EU's bioenergy policy. It reinforces the argument that experts and campaigners have long made - which is that the massive subsidies handed out to energy companies to burn biomass from roundwood and stump trees is having a dire impact on the climate," said Hanna Aho, forest and climate campaigner at Fern.

"The draft report tallies with a growing body of scientific evidence, as well as the European Commission's own impact assessments regarding the adverse climate impacts of forest bioenergy. Consequently, it promotes only using genuine wastes and residues."

"The destruction of unique biodiverse environments has to stop. The draft report's call for safeguards in biodiverse forests is a welcome step towards doing so."

Supporting wasteful use of biomass is a big problem in the current Renewable Energy Directive.

"This report shows momentum is building for scaling down incentives for biomass use in new electricity-only power plants, and using biomass only in the most energy efficient installations," said Aho.

The new draft report also increases ambition of energy transition and recommends a 45% target for renewables for 2030. For a safe energy transition, effective sustainability criteria and acknowledging the limited availability of biomass are an imperative.

Under the current Renewable Energy Directive, burning forest biomass to meet green energy targets has been massively incentivised by subsidies without any sustainability safeguards. This means bioenergy use has caused forest destruction, increased emissions and used wood – which is a limited resource – inefficiently.

"The Commission's proposal last November lacked effective tools to ensure bioenergy actually achieves emission savings. As such it was 'greenwashing'. It is the responsibility of the parliamentarians and Member States to step up efforts to combat climate change and make the sustainability criteria work for climate and forests. This new draft report by MEP Eickhout is a good start."

After today the ENVI committee will continue working on the sustainability criteria for bioenergy in the proposal for Renewable Energy Directive and a committee vote is expected during the autumn. That vote should take the recommendations of this draft report seriously.

Fern recommendations to amend the Renewable Energy Directive: <http://www.fern.org/publications/ngo-statements/ensuring-bioenergy-comes-clean-clean-energy-package-joint-statement>



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Fern is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) and a Dutch Stichting created in 1995 to make the EU work for forests and people. Our work centres on forests and forest peoples' rights and the issues that affect them such as EU consumption, trade, investment and climate change. All of our work is done in close collaboration with social and environmental organisations and movements across the world.