



Contact: Linde Zuidema

Tel: +32 2 894 4694  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Email: [Linde@fern.org](mailto:Linde@fern.org)

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION SACRIFICES FORESTS FOR ENERGY

**Brussels, November 30** –Today’s [Winter Package](#) on Climate and Energy marks a crucial missed chance by the European Commission to end a policy which is causing untold damage to forests and the climate.

The Winter Package includes a major overhaul of the EU’s electricity market, and [new rules for renewable energy](#) and energy efficiency. It does not, as Fern and other NGOs with expertise on forests [have long called for](#) – reverse the current destructive bioenergy policy that encourages the burning of wood for energy.

“The Commission has opted to sacrifice forests for energy. Burning forest biomass on an industrial scale for power and heating has proved disastrous. The evidence that its growing use will increase emissions and destroy forests in Europe and elsewhere is overwhelming.” said Linde Zuidema, [Fern’s](#) bioenergy campaigner.

“Today’s proposal by the Commission lacks effective tools to ensure bioenergy actually achieves emission savings and is therefore a form of ‘greenwashing’.”

It also doesn’t ensure that biomass is used in the most resource efficient way or environmental harm is avoided. The only positive element is that it bans the worst cases of biomass use in large-scale electricity-only plants, which are highly inefficient.”

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.

With today’s proposals, the new Renewable Energy Directive will actually allow for an increasing reliance on biomass for renewable energy. Particularly concerning is the target for advanced biofuels and the target for renewables in heating and cooling. The heating and cooling sector currently relies on biomass for almost 90 per cent of its renewable energy.

“This renewable energy proposal shows the EU Commission has failed to learn from the big biofuel debacle. It does not guarantee that burning wood for energy, the largest contributor to renewables in Europe, saves emissions, nor does it protect forests. It is now up to the EU Parliament and EU Member States to rectify this,” said Zuidema.

Fern is preparing a deeper analysis of the EU renewable energy proposals, which will be available later this afternoon via [linde@fern.org](mailto:linde@fern.org)

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.