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Climate the loser as the European Parliament fails to ensure wood is burnt sustainably

(Brussels) – 17 January 2018. The European Parliament today failed to help the climate by reversing the European Union's (EU) disastrous bioenergy policy.

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) voted on the new Renewable Energy Directive for the period 2021-2030, which includes a sustainability policy for bioenergy. The previous Renewable Energy Directive has, since 2009, encouraged Member States to burn wood for renewable energy, making it the biggest form of renewable energy today.

Today was an opportunity for MEPs to reduce harmful aspects of the Directive; instead they voted to increase the target for renewable energy from 27 per cent to 35 per cent by the year 2030.

“MEPs have overlooked the scientific consensus that increasing reliance on wood for so-called renewable energy will harm forests and increase emissions. The Parliament's ambition to increase renewable energy is laudable, but without meaningful sustainability criteria on burning wood, the bioenergy policy could easily increase emissions” said Linde Zuidema, Fern's bioenergy campaigner. *“With this vote, the EU is sending the perverse message to other countries considering their renewable energy policy that cutting down trees and burning them should be encouraged.”* Zuidema added.

[Rapporteur Bas Eickhout](#) (Green/EFA) together with the Socialist & Democrats had proposed to end support to the worst practices: burning whole trees and biomass use in the least efficient power-only installations. [Hundreds of scientists have publicly warned](#) that burning whole trees is harmful for the climate, but conservative groups and Scandinavian MEPs still voted down the proposal. The requirement to only burn biomass in the more efficient energy installations was, however, maintained.

“Forests and biomass are limited resources that should be used for energy with great caution. Large-scale use increases biomass imports and encourages the burning of whole trees. This has a detrimental impact on the world's forests and the climate. It is now up to EU Member States to stop new conversions of coal installations to biomass.” Linde Zuidema concluded.