



Environment Committee backs switchover to advanced biofuels

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A draft law to cap the production of traditional biofuels and accelerate the shift to alternative sources, such as seaweed and waste, was approved by the Environment Committee on Tuesday. It aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that result from the growing use of agricultural land to produce biofuel crops.

"This has been an enormously challenging file. And at the same time a very interesting one. And it's complicated technically and technologically. I love this kind of political challenge and hope we will take it to a good result in the trilogues" said lead MEP Nils Torvalds (ALDE, FI) after the committee's amendments to the draft law were approved by 39 votes to 26, with 4 abstentions.

Cap first-generation biofuels

Current legislation requires EU member states to ensure that renewable energy accounts for at least 10% of energy consumption in transport by 2020. But in the draft law approved today, MEPs say that first-generation biofuels (from food crops) should not exceed 6% of the final energy consumption in transport by 2020.

Boost advanced biofuels

Advanced biofuels, sourced from seaweed or certain types of waste, should account for at least 1.25% of energy consumption in transport by 2020, MEPs say.

Reduce indirect land use change

Using farmland to produce biofuel crops reduces the area available for food crops. This adds to pressure to free up more land, e.g. through deforestation, to grow more food - a process known as indirect land use change (ILUC). But deforestation in itself increases greenhouse gas emissions, which may cancel out part of the beneficial effects of using biofuels.

Parliament called as long ago as 2008 for the ILUC factor to be taken into account in EU biofuels policy, which has a budget of €10 billion per year.

Next steps

Mr Torvalds received a mandate (46 votes in favour, 20 against and 2 abstentions) to start negotiations with the Latvian Presidency of the Council of Ministers for a possible second reading agreement.

Useful information

- Legislative observatory file:
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2012/0288\(COD\)&l=en](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2012/0288(COD)&l=en)
- Profile: Nils Torvalds (ALDE, FI):
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/114268/NILS_TORVALDS_home.html
- Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/envi/home.html>

Press release

Contact

Baptiste CHATAIN

BXL: (+32) 2 28 40992

STR: (+33) 3 881 74151

PORT: (+32) 498 98 13 37

EMAIL: envi-press@europarl.europa.eu

TWITTER: EP_Environment