

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

2007/2107(INI)

19.12.2007

OPINION

of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

for the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

on Sustainable agriculture and biogas: a need for review of EU legislation
(2007/2107(INI))

Draftsman: Adamos Adamou

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety calls on the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Believes that the use of biogas especially for heat and power production could contribute significantly to the binding target of 20% renewable energies in overall EU energy consumption by 2020;
2. Stresses that producing agrofuels from waste should not become a goal in itself; reducing waste should continue to be a priority in the environmental policy of the European Union and in that of Member States;
3. Stresses that animal manure, municipal sewage and agro industrial waste can contain substances, agents and organisms (bacteria, viruses, parasites, heavy metals, harmful organic substances) that can potentially be a threat to public health or the environment;
4. Urges the Commission to ensure that adequate precautions are taken to avoid contamination and spreading of these substances, agents and organisms and any diseases they induce, recognising that the heating process reduces the viruses only to a certain extent and that most organic contaminants are barely reduced and heavy metals remain intact;
5. Notes with deep concern an increasing competition in many Member States between energy use and use in the food chain for certain agricultural products like maize; underlines the fact that this competition, which has led to a considerable rise in feedingstuff prices, is mainly due to the lack of social and environmental criteria for agrofuel production and an overly centralised approach to biogas production;
6. Calls on the Commission to examine, on the basis of conversion cycle comparisons of various types of biomass in biogas plants, the sustainability of these types with respect to the volume of greenhouse gas emissions and their effects on air quality, biodiversity, including natural vegetation (forests, meadowland, marshland), land management and food production;
7. Stresses that there is no Community legislation specifically dealing with biogas; recognises that the implementation of related agro-environmental legislation, including the Nitrates directive, IPPC directive, Sewage Sludge directive, Water Framework directive, Birds directive, Habitats directive and the Heavy Metals legislation, is crucial for ensuring sustainable production of biogas;
8. Calls on the Commission to ensure cooperation and coordination between the Member States, including those who currently have no or just a few biogas plants, so they may learn about each other's best practices with biogas plants through knowledge and technology transfer;
9. Calls on the Commission to collect all relevant data on the production of biogas in the Member States, in order to have a clear picture of how the subject of biogas is advancing

in the European Union, taking into account that this data is necessary and helpful in formulating a relevant strategy to address the issue;

10. Urges the Commission to present as soon as possible a proposal for a biowaste directive, including quality standards; considers that biogas production must be weighed up against alternative uses for waste and livestock manure;
11. Urges the Commission to present a proposal for a certification scheme for sustainable biogas; this certification scheme should be based on a well-to-wheel approach, taking into consideration all the relevant social and environmental factors;
12. Invites the current and upcoming Presidencies to advance further discussions on how to promote sustainable biogas production; in this connection the sustainable promotion of biogas facilities should also include combined heat and power production.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	19.12.2007
Result of final vote	+: 40 -: 0 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Adamos Adamou, Georgs Andrejevs, Margrete Auken, Liam Aylward, John Bowis, Magor Imre Csibi, Avril Doyle, Mojca Drčar Murko, Anne Ferreira, Matthias Groote, Satu Hassi, Gyula Hegyi, Jens Holm, Marie Anne Isler Béguin, Christa Klač, Eija-Riitta Korhola, Aldis Kušķis, Linda McAvan, Roberto Musacchio, Riitta Myller, Miroslav Ouzký, Vladko Todorov Panayotov, Vittorio Prodi, Guido Sacconi, Carl Schlyter, Richard Seeber, María Sornosa Martínez, Antonios Trakatellis, Thomas Ulmer, Anders Wijkman, Glenis Willmott
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Kathalijne Maria Buitenweg, Bairbre de Brún, Karsten Friedrich Hoppenstedt, Miloš Koterec, Johannes Lebech, Miroslav Mikolášik, Alojz Peterle, Bart Staes, Marianne Thyssen
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	