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*Committee on Development*

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**2012/2295(INI)**

28.5.2013

# OPINION

of the Committee on Development

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

on Innovating for Sustainable Growth: A Bioeconomy for Europe  
(2012/2295(INI))

Rapporteur: Isabella Lövin

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## SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Stresses that a bio-based economy, that relies on exploitation of biological resources instead of fossil energy, must be guided by a sound political framework that takes into account not only economic viability but also social and ecological sustainability factors;
2. Underlines that biodiversity and ecosystems deliver collective benefits and must be considered as common goods; recalls that, when properly managed and governed, biodiversity-based assets can yield significant economic benefits; laments, however, that many policy-makers see little economic gain from conserving or investing in biodiversity; stresses therefore the value of 'ecosystem services' and their contribution to economic and social development;
3. Stresses that no system for generating wealth can be sustainable if it degrades its resource base; underlines that, in parallel to its market-oriented functions, the bio-economy also sustains a wide range of public goods functions not currently rewarded by the market, that should be preserved, such as agricultural and forested landscape, farmland and forest biodiversity, water quality and availability, soil functionality, climate stability, air quality and resilience to flooding and fire;
4. Takes the view that the transition to a sustainable bio-based economy will only be successful if resource efficiency is made the pillar of the economy and if genetic engineering is not used as the driver of this economy;
5. Believes that any bio-economy strategy should adopt the guiding principle of a biomass hierarchy and support a 'cascade utilisation' of biomass, first directed to ensure basic services not rewarded by the market and then to high value applications like materials (rather than bioenergy which has a lower value);
6. Stresses that a sustainable bio-based economy must be built on modal transport; in particular, underlines that, in order to assess whether a specific bio-based process or product is reducing direct and indirect greenhouse gases emissions, all the stages from the extraction of the raw material to the end-use-state should be considered; stresses that the EU and national policies should promote clean alternatives to fossil fuels, such as vehicles that run on renewable electricity as well as solar and wind energy, instead of stimulating the shift to biomass in sectors where lower value is added to it (like in the production of biofuels and other bioenergy);
7. Notes that the amount of sustainable biomass from EU sources will never be enough to meet current energy demands and increasing and competing uses of biomass, and that the EU will therefore be increasingly dependent on imports from developing countries, where biomass exploitation represents a major challenge in terms of governance, as in the case of forest conservation and sustainable management of forest resources, thereby making it difficult to fulfil EU sustainability criteria and measures for imported biomass or to check

their implementation through monitoring and evaluation; stresses, in this regard, the importance of energy efficiency and saving measures to ensure that the EU does more with less, thereby reducing demand for biomass;

8. Insists that the EU has a duty to reduce its dependency on fish from developing countries for food, as well as for feed in aquaculture; stresses that, in the current reform of the CFP, priority should be given to measures that underpin an environmentally sustainable management of fisheries and the use of non-carnivorous species in aquaculture;
9. Notes with concern that rising demand for biomass, particularly wood, may spark widespread deforestation in developing countries, where greenhouse gas emissions are not accounted for under the Kyoto Protocol; points out that while this can impact on soil quality, water cycles and biodiversity, it increases strain on global agreements such as the CBD and UN REDD; fears equally that, considering that land governance systems are weak in many developing countries, rising demand for wood products may not only trigger off illegal logging and in return weaken Voluntary Partnership Agreements under FLEGT, but also increase the strain on global agreements such as the CBD and UN REDD;
10. Stresses the importance of mangrove, seagrass meadows, salt marshes and kelp forests as high-performing carbon sinks; warns of the rapid destruction of these coastal ecosystems due, *inter alia*, to increasing demand for seafood from aquaculture; calls for a marine equivalent of the REDD scheme to safeguard coastal and marine ecosystems as carbon sinks;
11. Calls for the EU to become an international research and innovation powerhouse in the area of bio-economy research; states that new products, processes and services based on renewable resources will enhance the competitiveness of European industry and make it an international front runner;
12. Recalls that ILUC factors for biofuels and bioliquids, as well as binding sustainability criteria for the use of solid and gaseous biomass, should be included in the Renewable Energy Directive and the Fuel Quality Directive; calls on the Commission to propose a Biomass Framework Directive covering all applications of biomass (energy, fuels, materials, chemicals) and introducing a biomass hierarchy;
13. Recalls that the protection of biodiversity is a key component to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (including Goal 1 on Eradication of Extreme Poverty and Hunger and Goal 7 on Ensuring Environmental Sustainability); in particular, stresses the importance of healthy biodiversity and ecosystems for primary production like agriculture, forestry and fisheries; accordingly, deems that production of biomass shall be analysed with respect to its impact on ecosystem services;
14. Fears that growing demand for biomass exacerbates food insecurity in developing countries through diversion of crops and lands away from food production, deprivation of land-use rights and impoverishment as a result of land-grabs and exacerbation of food price volatility; points out that the demand for biofuels is already one of the drivers for land acquisitions in developing countries, in particular in Sub-Saharan Africa; recalls that, due to these land acquisitions, indigenous people lose their access to land, and thereby

their access to food and water; also underlines that, while MDGs set a target of cutting by half the number of people without safe access to water by 2015, water-consuming bio-economy activities can aggravate water stress in developing countries and thereby contribute to widespread food scarcity; urges the EU to follow the recommendation of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food on agro-ecology in order to achieve food security, while addressing climate change;

15. Deems it crucial to develop international legally binding sustainability standards for all sectors of biomass usage, as well as binding sustainable forest management criteria; urges the EU to pursue the adoption of multilateral agreements and provide, especially for LDCs, related institutional and technical support for ensuring the sustainable use of biomass.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	28.5.2013
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 24 -: 0 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Thijs Berman, Corina Crețu, Véronique De Keyser, Charles Goerens, Mikael Gustafsson, Eva Joly, Filip Kaczmarek, Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, Gay Mitchell, Bill Newton Dunn, Andreas Pitsillides, Maurice Ponga, Jean Roatta, Alf Svensson, Keith Taylor, Ivo Vajgl, Anna Záborská, Iva Zanicchi
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Eric Andrieu, Kriton Arsenis, Philippe Boulland, Emer Costello, Isabella Lövin, Cristian Dan Preda