

INVITATION

BÖLL LUNCH DEBATE

Impacts of EU Agrofuel policy on Latin America and how to curb them

On March 27th the Commission launched a report following up on the Renewable Energies Directive of 2009. Whereas the report draws a positive picture, concluding that social and ecological impacts of EU agrofuel legislation¹ are rather small, it is strongly criticized by MEP Martin Häusling and several NGOs.

Agrofuel is made from soybeans and maize among other oil seeds and starches. A large share of these is produced by intensive agriculture in countries like Argentina and Paraguay. European demand for these crops increases the need for farming land, enhancing foreign investment by multinational companies and often abusing land use rights of local people. Hence, small scale farming is given up and food production is replaced by fuel production, raising food prices and resulting in rural communities' elimination, relocation, migration and growth of urban poverty belts as well as a huge threat to food security. Intensive agriculture also harms soil, water and biodiversity severely through monocultures and use of pesticides and fertilizers. Moreover, the reduction of CO2 emissions thanks to agrofuel, especially those made of food crops, is not evident since land use changes for intensive agriculture can increase CO2 emissions.

Although seen as a step forward in development by the EU and involved countries like Argentina, the beneficiaries are multinational companies instead of local communities.

The Commission's report admits, regarding international conventions on human rights and labour, that "(...) efforts across the board must continue to encourage countries to fully apply these conventions" What can EU legislation do to ensure better coherence between its renewable energy targets and human rights compliance and environmental protection in third countries? How should the Mercosur negotiating directives be redrafted in order to take into account these concerns? What do Latin American activists propose in terms of their own countries' legislation?

Date: May 7th 2013 from 12h30 to 14h30

Venue: Brussels, details will be communicated after registration

Speakers:

Ana Alvarez, Director of the NGO ASOCIANA, Northern Argentina, partner of Brot für die Welt

Ruta Baltouse, Policy Officer, Renewables and CCS Policy, DG Energy, EC.

Martin Häusling, MEP, Member of the Committee on agriculture and rural development

Chair: Bastian Hermisson, Director Heinrich Böll Foundation, EU Office

The debate will be held in English and German.

Please confirm your participation with the attached reply form to Paula.Land@eu.boell.org.



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¹ See: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/renewables/reports/doc/com_2013_0175_res_en.pdf