The EU's biofuels policies and the impact of soy on local & indigenous communities in the Brazilian Cerrado & Amazon

Hosted by MEP Martin Häusling and MEP María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, together with Transport & Environment and the Rainforest Foundation Norway
AGENDA

- Introduction by MEP Martin Häusling
- André Campos from Repórter Brazil on soy farming in Brazil
- Valéria Pereira Santos from the Pastoral Land Commission on impacts of soy farming on local communities in the Brazilian Cerrado
- Jabson Nagelo da Silva, from the indigenous Serra da Maça community on how soy farming impacts the land of his people
- Prof. Larissa Bombardi from University of São Paulo on the impact of pesticides on local communities
- Laura Buffet from Transport & Environment on the state of biofuels related political process in the EU
- Q&A
- Conclusions by MEP Rodriguez Ramos
André Campos
Reporter Brasil

Repórter Brasil
SOYBEAN AREA IN BRAZIL
2000 – 14 million hectares
2020 – 37 million hectares

EU IMPORTS OF BRAZILIAN SOY (2020)
Main importer of soy meal
2nd largest importer of soybeans
DEFORESTATION DRIVEN BY SOY EXPANSION

• Direct land conversion, especially in the Cerrado

• Indirect deforestation (ILUC), especially linked to cattle expansion
WE DON’T HAVE TOOLS TO SEPARATE “CLEAN” SOY FROM “DIRTY” SOY, BECAUSE:

- Indirect Land Use Change (ILUC)
- Lack of traceability (especially for indirect suppliers)
- Fraud / soy laundering
Feed supplier to UK farm animals still linked to Amazon deforestation

Cargill, which had pledged to clean up its supply chain, sells feed for many of the billion chickens killed annually in UK

Food giants accused of links to illegal Amazon deforestation

Cargill, Bunge and Cofo sourced beans from companies allegedly supplied by a farmer fined for destroying swathes of rainforest
Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), Brazil
Cerrado Sacrifice Zone for Soy Expansion


The dynamic of the agricultural frontier’s expansion in the Matopiba region of the Cerrado has been different from the Amazon. In the plateaus covering western Bahia, southern Piauí and Maranhão’s border with northeastern Tocantins, the Cerrado has mostly been ravaged to give way to soybean plantations.

This has led to the creation in recent decades of the Cerrado’s own “arc of deforestation” in pace with the expansion of the Matopiba frontier.

75% of Brazil’s soybeans are exported, mainly to be consumed as animal feed.

Cerrado

The second largest ecological region in South America and the most biodiverse savanna, housing around 5% of the planet's biodiversity, the Cerrado occupies 22% of the Brazilian territory in a continuous area and is the birthplace of waters and of many peoples and cultures.
Cerrado “cradle of waters”

In the tablelands and plateaus, the deep roots of the typical Cerrado vegetation promote the infiltration of rainwater, constituting the most important water recharge area in the country, supplying even the largest hydrographic basins in the Amazon (the Parnaíba, the Itapecuru, the Tocantins, the Araguaia, the Tapajós, the Xingu, in addition to several tributaries of the Madeira River). This water power has earned it the nickname "cradle of Brazilian waters" and "Brazil's water tank". Under the Cerrado are the two main aquifers of the country - the Guarani and the Urucuia-Bambuí.
The Cerrado’s peoples are the true guardians and multipliers of this wealth, as diverse as the Cerrado itself and whose lives are intertwined in the trees and grasses, animals, plateaus, paths, valleys and waters of the region.

There are more than 215 indigenous lands of 83 different ethnic groups (such as the Xerentes, Apinajé, Xavante, Guarani Kaiowá and Terena).
More than 600 quilombola territories (such as Kalungas, jalapoeiro and hundreds of others throughout the Cerrado sertões)
Traditional communities

They are the babassu coconut breakers, rooters, geraizeiras, fundo e fecho de pasto, evergreen flower pickers, healers, retreaters, artisanal fishermen, vazanteiras and pantaneiras. They are also the land reform settlers and other peasant-based populations.
Violence against traditional Cerrado populations

Deforestation is part of the cycle that involves land grabbing - deforestation - pesticides - violations of human and territorial rights.

The expansion/invasion of agribusiness on traditional territories resulted, between 2011 and 2020, in the occurrence of 4,785 conflicts involving 1,715 communities of traditional populations.

The average is 13 conflicts per day involving about five locations.

Source: Comissão Pastoral da Terra Documentation Center - Dom Tomas Baldino
EU Biofuel Policy Contributes to Human Rights Violations
Jabson Nagelo da Silva
Macuxi Community, Roraima, Brazil
TERRAS INDÍGENAS DE RORAIMA
Distribuição geográfica das bases das Brigadas Indígenas
Prof. Larissa Bombardi
University of São Paulo, Brazil
(see separate presentation)
EU ends support to ‘high ILUC risk’ biofuels = palm oil


- ‘High ILUC risk’ biofuels will be phased out progressively of EU targets by 2030 - not a ban.
- Definition: ‘significant expansion (...) into land with high carbon stock’
- A delegated regulation specifies which biofuels fall in that category.
- EU countries can adopt more ambitious measures.

Delegated regulation on ‘high ILUC risk’ biofuels (2019)

- ‘Significant expansion’ - 10% or more of the expansion happened on high-carbon stock (HCS) > peatlands & forests.
- Report associates 45% of palm oil expansion with high HCS.
- Only 8% associated for soy.
- Exceptions to the phase-out.
Palm and soy phase-outs in Europe

- France: Palm 2021 & soy 2022
- Denmark: Palm 2021 & soy 2022
- Austria: Palm 2021
- Netherlands: Palm & soy 2022
- Sweden: Palm 2022
- Portugal: Palm 2022 (TBC)
- Germany: Palm 2023
- Belgium: Palm & soy 2023
- Italy: Palm 2023
- EU phase out: 2030
Palm oil will soon be out, why not soy?

Key EU countries are already doing it: France, Netherlands, Denmark.

Draft regulation on imported deforestation already labels soy as a commodity with high risk of deforestation.

Deadline for the data review by the Commission was June 2021.

- The EU Parliament and EU Council should ask for soy to be phased out asap.
- The Commission should review the DA on high-ILUC risk and include soy.
State of play

**European Parliament**
- ENVI Committee - soy likely to be tackled (TBC).
- ITRE Committee - ?

**European Commission**
- Delay in reviewing the report on crop expansion.
  - ‘Supports Member States in using possibilities to reduce the blending proportion of biofuels”

**Council**
- 3 member states phasing-out soy.
- Germany signaling the need to reduce crop biofuels.
- Final RED outcome unclear.
T&E recommendations

- Palm and soy based biofuels should be phased out immediately, not in 2030.
- The blending of crop biofuels should be suspended in the current context of a food crisis.
- Support is needed for cleaner alternatives: renewable electricity and renewable hydrogen/efuels in aviation and shipping.
Questions & answers