

To:

Ms Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

With copy to:

Mr Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal
Ms Kadri Simson, Commissioner for Energy
Mr Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner Environment, Oceans and Fisheries
Mr Janusz Wojciechowski, Commissioner Agriculture

May 5, 2022

Subject: REPowerEU must end support for bioenergy made from agricultural crops and forest biomass

Dear President von der Leyen,

We are writing to you regarding the Commission's upcoming release of the REPowerEU strategy. This letter complements the letter sent to you by the Green 10 on 8 April¹ on the broader implications of this upcoming strategy, and we would like to detail here our concerns and recommendations regarding the strategy's potential impact on nature and food security.

The undersigned organisations stand ready to help in efforts to reduce EU dependence on fossil fuel imports but call upon the European Commission to ensure that, in its final REPowerEU strategy, this doesn't come at the cost of fighting climate change, species loss and food security globally; costs that would be incurred by continuing or even increasing our reliance on crop-based biofuels, by opening up biodiversity set-aside areas for additional farming, or increasing pressure on our forests through more production of energy from burning wood.

We call on the Commission to support the following short-term measures in its RePowerEU strategy:

- **Focus on measures to cut energy demand across all sectors.**
- **End support for crop-based biofuels in the EU's fuel mix to alleviate pressure on food and feed commodities.** We welcome the Commission's 23 March statement² supporting countries that reduce 'the blending proportion of biofuels which could lead to

¹ [Letter to the European Commission calling for the REPowerEU plan to support a phaseout of fossil fuels and nuclear energy, 8 April 2022](#)

² [Communication on safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems, 23 March 2022](#)

a reduction of EU agricultural land used for production of biofuel feedstocks'. Support for these fuels must be fully ended, especially under the Renewable Energy Directive, the Effort Sharing Regulation and the State aid guidelines.

- **Restrict biogas production to biowaste and residue feedstocks.** The Commission has indicated its intention to increase ambition for 'sustainable biogas' production, but dedicated crops should be clearly ruled out on climate, biodiversity and food security grounds and caution is needed about the potential volumes of EU biogas production from biowaste and residues.
- **Reduce industrial animal farming.** By reducing the unsustainable need for feed crops, this will in return free up land for direct food production, carbon sequestration and nature restoration, and allow the EU to reduce its dependence on both fertilisers made from natural gas and on pesticides.

In parallel, the Commission also needs to support a rapid acceleration in renewable energy technologies that are low carbon and ecologically sustainable. This means:

- Accelerating the transition towards wind and solar power, district heating supplied by heat pumps, and all forms of energy storage.
- A faster transition away from internal combustion engine vehicles and the acceleration of vehicle electrification to reduce transport's reliance on oil, accompanied by modal shifts, promotion of public transport and other measures to reduce demand for transport
- Ensuring that bioenergy does not require any dedicated use of land or compromise the health and carbon sequestration function of the world's forests. EU support for burning crops and forest biomass must end as soon as possible.

We urge you to take these points into account as you prepare the strategy. Please don't hesitate to contact us for further exchange on these issues.

Yours sincerely,

Signatories

William Todts, Executive Director, **Transport & Environment**

Magda Stoczkiewicz, Programme Director, **Greenpeace European Unit**

Ariel Brunner, Deputy Director, Head of Policy, **BirdLife Europe and Central Asia**

Evelien van Roemburg, PhD, Head of EU Office, **Oxfam International**

Dr. Dagmar Pruin, President, **Brot für die Welt**

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Gabriel Schwaderer, Executive Director, **EuroNatur**

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