



Doc. 11197
8 March 2007

Agriculture and renewable energy resources

Motion for a resolution
presented by Mr Evans and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

The Assembly recalls that consumption of fossil fuels (oil, coal and gas) is a key contributor to global warming and climate change, the effects of which are increasingly perceptible and worrying.

It considers that, among the alternatives to fossil fuels, renewable energies should be paid even greater attention, since, although they are emerging rapidly in some European countries, their potential is still largely underdeveloped on a continent-wide scale. At the same time, for geographical reasons not all states have access to resources such as solar or wind power, whereas agriculture can constitute a generally available energy source.

Among the renewables, biomass is of special interest. In its new multi-purpose role, agriculture can also produce less costly energy resources. Just as Europe is highly dependent on foreign energy supplies, its agricultural sector is no less highly developed and could be called upon to help reduce dependency by supplying biomass and biofuels.

There are many kinds of biofuels, ranging from firewood to modern fuels derived from plant crops such as cereals, vegetable oils, potatoes, beets, etc. Even some agricultural residues, such as waste of vegetable or animal origin, can be transformed into biofuels (bioethanol, biodiesel) or biogas.

Large-scale use of biomass energy could also open up new development prospects for rural areas. Promoting growth of biomass crops would lead to the emergence of a new economic sector, the development of new specific types of rural infrastructure and job creation in rural areas. It could also foster the re-use of degraded or abandoned land. For example, 30,000 hectares of land under cultivation could have a yield of 100,000 tonnes oil equivalent.

With modern technologies use of biofuels is a viable possibility. The main obstacle to their widespread use is the cost. This is because fossil fuel prices do not reflect reality (they fail to take account of the environmental cost) and remain low, which undermines the development of renewable energy sources, including biomass

The Assembly recommends to Council of Europe member states that they increase their efforts to guarantee the necessary support for the development of use of biomass, particularly biofuels, as a renewable, environmentally friendly energy source.

Signed (see overleaf)

*Signed*¹:

EVANS Nigel, United Kingdom, EDG
COŞKUNOĞLU Osman, Turkey, SOC
DORIĆ Miljenko, Croatia, ALDE
DUPRAZ John, Switzerland, ALDE
ETHERINGTON Bill, United Kingdom, SOC
HUSS Jean, Luxembourg, SOC
LENGAGNE, Guy, France, SOC
de MELO, Maria Manuela, Portugal, SOC
PADILLA, Julio, Spain, EPP/CD
PLATVOET, Leo, Netherlands, UEL
de PUIG, Lluís Maria, Spain, SOC
SCHMIED, Walter, Switzerland, ALDE
TXUEKA ISASTI, Iñaki, Spain, ALDE
VIS, Rudi, United Kingdom, SOC

¹ SOC: Socialist Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democratic Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group