

**Doc. 11443**  
24 October 2007

## Growing food or fuel?

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 is concerned by the effects on agriculture and food that too much of an increase of crops grown for fuel production might have.

Consumption of fossil fuels is a key contributor to global warming and climate change. Among the alternatives to fossil fuels, agriculture is certainly of special interest, because it can constitute a generally available energy source in countries having no access to resources such as solar or wind power.

However, it appears that growing crops for fuel production on a too large scale, while contributing to reduce energy dependency and fossil fuel consumption, raises a different kind of concerns. For example, land newly devoted to agrofuel cultures is land taken from food production, and, as a consequence, the latter might be seriously affected.

The use of agrofuels may also increase the price of crops for human and livestock consumption, like it happened in South America, where access to food was affected by increasing food costs as the maize from people's diet was sold to produce agrofuel. Moreover, farmers choose to grow maize instead of wheat (because more profitable) and, as a consequence, wheat became scarce and its price increased in a spectacular manner.

The European Union has established at 10% the level of agrofuels among different fuels in 2020. It even considered suppressing fallows as it would increase cereal production of 10-17 million tonnes, which should contribute to a decreasing of the general price rising of agriculture products. According to the FAO, the world's cereal production in 2007 is estimated at 2 095 billions tonnes, which means an increase of 4,8% as compared to 2006, and this is due at least in part to increasing surfaces of crops grown for fuel production. But a great increase of food consumption in large emerging economies like China should also be taken into account.

Furthermore, since crops grown for fuel production may be fertilised with substances which are not allowed to be used for crops destined to food production, those substances – in particular if used in large quantities - might have negative effects on the environment. Agrofuels might therefore, by paradox, affect in a negative way both agriculture and the environment, increase demand on water resources, and, ultimately, even lead to deforestation, desertification and hunger in certain areas of the world.

In order to face such challenges, the Assembly recommends to Council of Europe member states, while increasing their efforts to guarantee the necessary support for the development of use of biomass, particularly agrofuels, to pay attention not to over-develop this new sector, which might represent a threat to the traditional role of agriculture – to provide food for all.

*Signed (see overleaf)*

Signed <sup>1</sup>:

EVANS Nigel, United Kingdom, EDG  
ANNEMANS Gerolf, Belgium, NR  
BARGETZE Rony, Liechtenstein, EPP/CD  
DUPRAZ John, Switzerland, ALDE  
ETHERINGTON Bill, United Kingdom, SOC  
FERNÁNDEZ AGUILAR Adolfo, Spain, EPP/CD  
HUSS Jean, Luxembourg, SOC  
JAKAVONIS Gediminas, Lithuania, ALDE  
KORKEAOJA Juha, Finland, ALDE  
MEALE Alan, United Kingdom, SOC  
MELO Maria Manuela, Portugal, SOC  
O'HARA Edward, United Kingdom, SOC  
OHLSSON Carina, Sweden, SOC  
PADILLA Julio, Spain, EPP/CD  
PEIRO Germinal, France, NR  
PRESEČNIK Jakob, Slovenia, EPP/CD  
RIVOLTA Dario, Italy, EPP/CD  
TULAEV Nikolay, Russian Federation, EDG  
TXUEKA ISASTI Iñaki, Spain, ALDE

---

<sup>1</sup> 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