



Dr. Werner Langen, MEP

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Werner Langen (EVP/CDU):

Werner Langen criticizes the EU's double standard in regards to bio fuels

„Sustainably produced palm oil is not a high ILUC risk “

On March 18, during a debate in the ITRE committee on the delegated act on the use of palm oil in biofuels, the German MEP and Chair of the ASEAN delegation, Mr Werner Langen (EPP), called the new palm oil policy of the European Union “hypocritical and scientifically unjustifiable”.

As foreseen by the Renewable Energy Directive that entered into force at the end of last year, the Commission presented the delegated act on March 13, which specifies the criteria for the certification of bio fuels. Thereafter, palm oil is the only biofuel feedstock crop to be classified as high ILUC (Indirect Land-Use Change) risk, meaning that it cannot be counted towards renewable energy targets and has to be gradually phased out by 2030, contrary to soybean oil, which has not been labelled as high ILUC risk.

However, palm oil production per unit area is up to 10 times more productive than other biofuels. In addition, the two main producing countries have had a halt on deforestation for some time already and have started the certification process.

This classification in the delegated act, which would not withstand a scientific assessment, can be traced back to last year's vote of the European Parliament to ban palm oil completely from the European market. It was the result of the pressure by the public and the agricultural lobby, whom both want to exclude any competitors for their own produced domestic biofuels.

Werner Langen has been warning for some time of the complications that a ban on palm oil would cause for Indonesia and Malaysia. With this problematic delegated act, he sees his criticism proved true: “By classifying soybean oil as sustainable the EU's double standards become obvious. Soybeans are subject to different standards only to settle the trade disputes with the US. However, the climate footprint of soybean oil does not differ from palm oil.” Soybean imports will now fill the gap caused by the ban of palm oil, which will eventually lead to land-use changes especially in Latin America.

“This is not a sustainable policy but pure protectionism and a clear discrimination of the palm oil producing countries. They will now rightfully take retaliatory actions against European exports and address the issue in the WTO's arbitration tribunal”, concluded Werner Langen.

PS: The Commission presented the delegated act only four weeks before the last plenary session in April and thereby shortened the maximum consultation time arbitrarily from three to one month.

Responsible: Werner Langen (EPP/CDU)