



Climate campaign newsletter: Issue 35 - July 2010

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GREEN EYE ON THE EU'S CLIMATE EFFORT

EU carbon tax back on the agenda...kind of

EU commissioners have [discussed a proposal](#) from taxation commissioner Semeta to revise the current energy taxation directive, with a view to including a carbon tax element among other things. While the idea got broad support, any possible legislative proposal has [been delayed](#) by calls for an impact assessment. (see [our blog](#) for more detail and [our press release](#))

Proposed EU rules on biofuels riddled with loopholes

The European Commission [presented](#) a long-awaited communication on [how](#) 'sustainability criteria' for biofuels should be applied in the EU. The proposal cleared up one major issue by [making clear](#) that fuel from palm oil plantations, which were created through the environmentally-damaging conversion of existing forest land, would not be eligible. However, the communication sets out implementation guidelines that are riddled with loopholes and would allow environmentally- and climate-damaging fuels to get the all clear in the EU. (see [our blog](#) for more detail and [press release](#))

Deal agreed on banning illegal timber from EU market

The EU is to ban the placing or making available of illegally harvested timber on the market, following [an agreement](#) between the European Parliament and Council. The deal represents a major victory for the Greens/EFA group, particularly former MEP Caroline Lucas who was legislative draftsman until she was replaced by Satu Hassi after her election to the UK parliament. (see [press release](#))

Finland set to build new nuclear reactors, as ITER nuclear fusion project hits trouble

The Finnish parliament gave the go-ahead to plans to build two new nuclear reactors in spite of ongoing problems with the development of a reactor at Olkiluoto3. Green MEPs criticised the decision, which ignored evidence against the proposals and the dubious approval process. (see [press release](#))

Meanwhile the ITER nuclear fusion project is [facing serious funding difficulties](#) after it was revealed that the EU is reluctant to continue financing the ballooning ITER budget.

EU debating rules on CO2 emissions from vans

Proposed EU legislation to introduce CO2 emissions limits for vans is [currently under debate](#) in the European Parliament. The legislation, which aims to complement similar [legislation for passenger cars](#), was [already watered-down](#) prior to being proposed by the EU commission under industry pressure, and MEPs are under further pressure from industry to make the legislation even less ambitious despite the proven benefits of stronger emissions limits. (see [our blog](#) and [press release](#))

Greens call for stronger rules on offshore oil drilling in the EU

Green MEPs have called for a moratorium on offshore oil drilling in the EU in response to the insufficient regulation of safety and liability for offshore drilling in Europe. The call came as EU energy commissioner Oettinger began [meeting with industry representatives](#) to discuss whether new EU legislation is needed. (see [our press release](#))

Fossil fuel subsidies to be extended under EU Commission proposal

The European Commission is set to propose [extending state aid for coal](#) for 12 more years. The proposal comes in spite of a stronger than expected [commitment by the G20](#) group of major economies to phase out fossil fuel subsidies. (see [our blog](#))

ROUND-UP - CLIMATE NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Divisions renewed, amidst limited progress at UN climate talks in Bonn

The [first full negotiating session of the UNFCCC](#) in 2010 ended on 11 June with renewed [divisions on the negotiating text](#). It was [not all bad news](#) however, and some [progress was made](#) on the issue of monitoring and verifying emissions reduction efforts in emerging economies. The talks were dogged by [disputes on pledged climate aid](#) for developing countries, with [revelations by Oxfam](#) that some of the promised funding would come in the form of loans and not direct aid (see [press release](#)).

Oil spill affects US energy and climate bill debate

The ongoing environmental disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, due to the continuing Deepwater Horizon oil spill, is influencing the debate on the US energy and climate bill. In response to the spill, polls have indicated [greater support](#) for the proposed legislation and US president Obama has [met with key senators](#) with a view to getting the bill passed.

Climate legislation back on the agenda in Japan, Australia and New Zealand

New Zealand [launched](#) an extensive emissions trading scheme (see [overview](#)), with a view to supporting its pledge to cut emissions 10-20% below 1990 levels by 2020. Japan [has reaffirmed](#) its plans to pass a proposed climate bill by the end of the year. Meanwhile, the new Australian prime minister [vowed to revive](#) proposed climate legislation, which had previously failed to pass in senate.

Global and EU emissions and global temperatures in this month's climate science round-up

[New research showed](#) that global CO2 emissions remained steady in 2009 for the first time since 1992. The emissions reduction due to the economic recession in western economies was counter-balanced by emissions increases in China and India, leading to concerns about renewed emissions growth once the recession ends. [Official figures](#) from the European Environment Agency confirmed the impact of the recession in reducing EU emissions and showed that the EU is already [over halfway to its 2020 emissions target](#). Emissions from shipping and aviation [dropped](#) for the first time in two decades. Meanwhile, new research confirmed indications that the year 2010 is on track to be the [hottest year on record](#), while Arctic sea ice reaches record lows.

WHAT'S ON

11-13 July [Informal council of EU environment ministers](#) (Gent)
2-6 August [Meeting of UNFCCC](#) in Bonn