

Biofools [1]

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The EU Commission has [decided](#) [3] to increase the use of biofuels as part of Wednesday's €60 billion (0.5 percent of Europe's GDP) plan to 'save the world'. The goal is that biofuels will account for 10 percent of all European energy needs by the year 2020.

Given the extensive bad press that biofuels have received, this decision makes little sense. The environmental damage of biofuels is fast [becoming](#) [4] clear. It often takes more energy to create biofuels than they produce ? which means they create more emissions than they replace. They are also inefficient: the crops needed to fill the tank of a 4x4 with biofuels could feed someone for a year. Perhaps most importantly, biofuel production drives up food prices, worsening the plight of the world's poor.

The intransigence of the Commission in continuing to support biofuels in the face of the criticism is testament to its continued attachment to the European farm lobby, and its failure of it to engage with the outside realities of the world. This "Fortress Europe" mentality is also reflected in its protectionist decision to inhibit the likely response of industries wishing to move out of Europe to avoid excessive EU regulations.

In sum, the Commission's plan consists of limiting the opportunities for people in poor countries to work their way out of poverty, whilst continuing to undermine the possibility of Europe benefiting from free trade with them. Just as they are demonstrably damaging the environment they claim they are seeking to protect, the EU's member states are decreasing Europe's economic potential through excessive taxation (thus making technological advances less likely). Saving the world? No, quite the opposite...

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[4]

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