



OPEN LETTER

08 March 2023

To: Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)

Why do Norwegian taxpayers support an NGO that promotes the use of fossil fuels?

Associations representing the EU renewable energy and agriculture sectors ask the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) to reconsider its support to the non-governmental organisation Transport & Environment (T&E), which has led targeted and misleading campaigns against the use of biomass and sustainable liquid biofuel to reduce emissions.

NORAD states that its aim is to promote initiatives that reduce the impact of climate change. However, we are concerned that NORAD, an agency funded by Norwegian taxpayers, supports T&E, an organisation that attempts to discredit renewable energy sources such as biofuels and biomass that are important for the EU's climate change policy and energy independence.

We emphasise that the destructive activities of some environmental NGOs mostly benefit the use of fossil fuel, to the detriment of the rapid decarbonisation process that is taking place in EU countries aiming to achieve the ambitious goal of the EU Green Deal – to become a climate neutral continent by 2050.

Moreover, the funding NORAD provides enables T&E to lobby directly against adopted EU policies in this regard, as EU lawmakers have repeatedly confirmed their support for the use of sustainable biofuels to displace fossil fuel. In its most recent vote on this issue on 14 September 2022, the European Parliament ignored the onslaught of misleading claims about the sustainability of European biofuels, and instead supported a continuing role for this important renewable energy source in the decarbonisation of EU transport.

The organisations signing this letter underscore that NORAD is one of the main funders of T&E. According to publicly available [data of T&E](#), NORAD allocates NOK 9 million (approx. EUR 820 000) annually to fund T&E for the period from 2021 to 2025. This comes on top of other generous [donors](#) such as the European Commission or the German Ministry of Environment.

T&E seeks to discredit the use of sustainable liquid biofuel in the transport sector, ignoring the scientifically proven benefits of biofuel in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the transport sector and in achieving decarbonisation targets. T&E falsely claimed that every day [15 million loaves of bread](#) were burned in cars running on ethanol.

T&E and its supported organisations in other EU countries often disseminate negative and wrong information on biofuels, ignoring the information provided by authoritative institutions and scientists about the benefits of biofuels.

Worryingly, T&E aggressively promotes e-mobility as the only alternative to fossil fuels in the transport sector and calls for the abandonment of other renewable fuels from now on. T&E should be aware that, since the EU transport market is currently dominated by cars with internal combustion engines, abandoning biofuels would only increase the use of fossil fuels in the EU.

A concrete example is Latvia, where pressure from NGOs led to the suspension of the blending of biofuels into petroleum-based fuels last year. As a result, the share of petroleum and hence emissions in the transport sector have only increased, while the cost of fuel to consumers has not decreased.

Our organisations support the use of all renewable energy sources in the transport sector and call for adhering to technological openness in the pursuit of decarbonisation goals, without favouring or discriminating against any type of renewable energy.

Furthermore, we are concerned that some environmental NGOs also **advocate for non-recognition of primary wood as a renewable resource (i.e. biomass), thus supporting the use of fossil fuels in the heating sector.** The ultimate goal of the NGOs that actively support this position is the exclusion of biomass from the list of renewable energy sources from 2030. This would equate biomass with the burning of fossil fuels, essentially ruining the biomass sector, an important supplier of heat in many Northern and Eastern European countries.

In the Nordic countries' heating sector, biomass has successfully replaced such high-pollution fossil fuels as natural gas, coal or fuel oil. Norway has put in place blending mandates and incentives in support of biofuels. Therefore, the NGO's position on biomass reflects a superficial and short-sighted approach to the use of biomass and indirectly supports the interests of the fossil fuel industry.

It is important to emphasise that replacing biomass with electric heat pumps in the heat sector is not possible – the only alternative is natural gas. The same is true for biofuels – they are unlikely to be replaced by electric vehicles in the medium term. On the contrary, a reduction in the use of biofuels would lead to a significant increase in the share of petroleum fuels in the transport sector.

The signatory organisations have certain questions, and your answers would be highly appreciated.

- Why does Norway's state-funded NORAD support NGOs that do not support unlocking the full potential of renewables?
- Is the use of Norwegian taxpayers' money to support NGO initiatives in the EU contributing to the interests of the fossil fuel use instead of defossilisation of the EU transport sector?
- What criteria does NORAD apply in choosing which NGOs to support and how does it ensure that the supported NGOs objectively pursue the climate change objectives?

We would be grateful for your answers.

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1. Cooperative of Producer Groups „Polish Rapeseed and Cereals“
 2. European renewable ethanol association ePURE
 3. Latvian Biogas Association
 4. Latvian Biofuel and Bioenergy Association
 5. Latvian Renewable Energy Federation
 6. Lithuanian Association of Grain Processors' and Traders'
 7. Lithuanian Biogas Association
 8. Lithuanian Biofuels Association
 9. Lithuanian Biomass Energy Association LITBIOMA
 10. Lithuanian Confederation Of Renewable Resources
 11. Lithuanian Grain Growers' Association
 12. National Association of Rapeseed and Protein Crops Producers (Poland)
 13. National Council of Agricultural Chambers (Poland)
 14. Polish Agricultural Federation
 15. Polish Association of Oil Producers
 16. Polish Chamber of Biofuels
 17. Polish Coalition for Biofuels and Protein Feed
 18. Polish Food Industry Federation
 19. Swedish Bioenergy Association SVEBIO
 20. Union for the Promotion of Oil and Protein Plants
 21. Verband der Deutschen Biokraftstoffindustrie e. V.
 22. World Bioenergy Association
 23. Žaliosios politikos institutas