Biogases: sustainable and ever-growing energy carriers

Achieving the EU’s ambitious target of 55% CO₂ emission reductions by 2030 will require fundamental changes to the energy sector. It is of paramount importance to promote energy system integration and renewable energy carriers such as biogases. Biogases are enablers of significant CO₂ emission reductions, helping to close the circular economy loop and improve EU energy security.

On 21 June, Bioenergy Europe released its 2023 Statistical Report Biogas in collaboration with the European Biogas Association (EBA). The report dives into the recent trends for consumption and production of biogas and biomethane in Europe. Its accompanying Policy Brief presents the most relevant legislative recommendations for promoting the biogas sector as a key player in the EU’s energy transition.

Biogas is a versatile, renewable fuel that can be used to decarbonise heating and electricity. When upgraded to biomethane, it can also be injected into the existing gas grid or used as a renewable fuel in transport. Anaerobic digestion provides a solution to waste management and reduces methane emissions from manure, landfilling and wastewater management. The utilisation of digestate in soil reduces the dependency on synthetic fertilisers and improves soil quality. In 2021, the European biogas market continued its growth path, with biomethane growing 20% year-on-year and reaching 15.075 ktoe in terms of gross inland energy consumption of combined biogas and biomethane. Despite significant differences among EU27 countries, this corresponds to an average share of 10% of total bioenergy gross inland consumption. Though in 2021 the main share of biogas went towards electricity generation, considering current growth patterns and policies, upgrading to biomethane will become the norm in the future. Indeed, it’s worth noting that production has never been higher than in 2021, even if concentrated in the biomethane sector: most of the newly installed anaerobic digestion plants upgraded from biogas to biomethane, with a total of 18.4 bcm of biogases being produced.

While the deployment of new biomethane operations continues, coherent policies which ensure the renewability of all sustainable bioenergy solutions and which create a proper framework for solid biomass, biogas and biomethane are necessary in order to reach the REPowerEU biomethane target of 35 bcm. To achieve this goal, a mandatory target in the Gas Decarbonisation Regulation would send the right signal to investors.

“It is important to highlight the role of all biomass technologies in achieving a low-carbon economy. To this end, EU policymakers must ensure an adequate framework and avoid closing the door on decarbonisation opportunities” says Jean-Marc Jossart, Secretary General of Bioenergy Europe.

Giulia Laura Cancian, Secretary General of the European Biogas Association, also stresses that “more than ever, to strengthen EU energy security and achieve climate mitigation objectives, policies should offer a clear and coherent pathway to scaling up biogases. As a first step, the EU should reverse the production vs. end uses paradox”.

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PRESS RELEASE

The voice of European Bioenergy

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Notes to editors:

- Bioenergy Europe is the voice of the European bioenergy industry. It aims to develop a sustainable bioenergy market based on fair business conditions. Founded in 1990, Bioenergy Europe is a non-profit, Brussels-based international organisation bringing together more than 41 associations and 143 companies, as well as academia and research institutes from across Europe.

- Bioenergy Europe’s Annual Statistical Reports provide insights on the development of the European bioenergy market in order to support industry leaders, decision-makers, investors and all bioenergy professionals to better understand the status of bioenergy in Europe. With more than 150 graphs and figures, readers can get an in-depth overview of the bioenergy sector in Europe.

- European Biogas Association (EBA) The EBA fully believes in the future potential of renewable gas in Europe. Founded in February 2009, the Association is committed to the deployment of sustainable biogas and biomethane production and use throughout the continent. Today EBA represents nearly 8,000 stakeholders across Europe, covering the whole biogas and biomethane value chain.

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