Bioenergy – essential for climate mitigation and rural development

Brussels, 11 January 2022 - Bioenergy Europe is pleased to announce the release of the seventh and last chapter of its 2021 Statistical Report focusing on the bioenergy landscape as a whole and providing a comprehensive overview on the general EU energy mix and the different energy sources in the EU27.

The report highlights that despite significant growth of renewable energy consumption during the last decade, our energy system is still largely dependent on imported fossil fuels. Consistently with European and international climate mitigation scenarios, the penetration of clean alternatives like sustainable bioenergy needs to be accelerated to reach climate neutrality by 2050. Bioenergy has concrete environmental benefits, as it allowed to save 285 $MtCO_2eq$, equivalent to around 8,5% of the EU27 GHG emissions in 2019, which corresponds to Romania's annual emissions of the same year. The main savings were made in the heating sector with almost 160 $MtCO_2eq$, followed by bioelectricity and biofuels for transport.

In the EU27, bioenergy is the main renewable energy and accounted for more than 11% of the gross final energy consumption in 2019. Bioenergy contributes to all final usage forms of energy: electricity, heat, and transport. Thanks to its storability and dispatchability, it can deliver energy on request, especially in winter. Considering the current high of electricity and gas prices, bioenergy offers a smart and flexible solution for the supply of affordable energy and helps to tackle energy poverty.

With an import rate of only 3,4%, biomass represents today an important indigenous source supporting rural development and employment across the EU. In 2018, bioenergy employed 708.600 people and generated a turnover of €57,6 bn in the EU27 and the UK. This even slightly exceeds the turnover of wind and hydropower combined (€56,2 bn) in the same year.

In 2018, 74% of the global bioenergy suppliers were based in the EU 27 and the UK showing that Europe has become the leader in bioenergy technology development, manufacturing, and fuel production processes, and is a major exporter of advanced and innovative equipment and solutions. This contributes to making the industry more resilient to the disruptions of global value chains, supporting the EU economy, and creating jobs.

To reach the EU's climate objectives, the energy needs to be supplied entirely by renewable energy sources by 2050, and sustainably sourced bioenergy will play a crucial role in this. Instilling confidence in investors with a long-term policy design and strategy is the first step to achieve a carbon neutral future.

Bioenergy Europe's Secretary-General, Jean-Marc Jossart, highlights that: "*Bioenergy is the only sector with strict sustainability criteria. They need to be based on a consistent and solid policy framework to ensure a functioning market and prevent the discouraging of investments which would jeopardise the achievement of EU climate targets. On top of this, we need to benefit from all available solutions. Therefore, an appropriate framework to promote negative emissions technologies such as BECCS and biochar needs to be established.*"

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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 40 associations and 110 companies, as well as academia and research institutes from across Europe.
- Bioenergy Europe's Annual Statistical Reports provide insights on the developments of the European bioenergy market to support industry leaders, decision-makers, investors, and all bioenergy professionals to 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.