Soaring energy prices: time to break with the structural instability and move to a resilient and affordable European energy block

Brussels, 09 March 2022 – Bioenergy Europe welcomes the vision of the European Commission to accelerate the deployment of renewables, while ensuring the affordability and security of EU energy supply by decreasing fossil gas imports from Russia.

The recent communication *REPowerEU: Joint European Action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy* sends a strong signal as energy prices soar across Europe and provides incentives to increase the pace of decarbonisation.

The post-pandemic recovery and current geopolitical instability in Europe remind us that more concrete efforts must be pursued to accelerate the penetration of renewable energy.

Bioenergy Europe reiterates the key contribution of biomass in achieving the EU's objectives and reducing and eventually terminating Europe's overdependence on Russian fossil fuels well before 2030. It is a matter of urgency to stop funding Putin's regime, which openly undermines the energy security of Europe.

Bioenergy is driving the ramp-up of renewable energy, offering reliable and affordable solutions fit to deliver on the EU objective to reach a climate-neutral economy by 2050.

Concretely, sustainable bioenergy already provides 16% of the final energy in the heating sector and 14% of the final energy for industry, being by far the largest renewable source in both segments. It can alleviate the impact on the energy bills of vulnerable consumers whilst guaranteeing the competitiveness of the European industry.

Considering the current events in Ukraine, the question is how Europe will cope with future high peak energy demand seasons. As a readily available source, sustainable bioenergy must be included among the key solutions to ease the pressure on EU Member States and to mitigate energy stability threats.

However, in the first semester of 2021, Europe depended 24,7% on oil and 46,8% on gas imported from Russia posing a major challenge, including to the EU's current infrastructure and value chains. Europe must act united and tackle this energy crisis in a structural way to ensure the operationalisation of a resilient, affordable, and independent European energy system.

Hannes Tuohiniitty, President of Bioenergy Europe stressed that "Europe must now finally take control of its full renewable energy potential. With appropriate incentives, existing bioenergy plants could reach this and generate up to 50 TWh more renewable electricity in 2022, as recognised by the IEA's latest report. It is in these very uncertain moments that Europe must be capable of mobilising all sustainable bio-based feedstocks with the coherent legislation and by ending artificial constraints".

Bioenergy Europe's Secretary-General, Jean-Marc Jossart underlined: "I strongly believe that all renewable sources have their role to play in this epochal change. However, the EU must now send a strong signal and stop hesitating on bioenergy's concrete contribution. Despite the uncertainties of the past months, biomass continues to be a strong asset for the EU with its prices remaining relatively stable. Swift implementation of existing solutions must be fostered to reassure short-term perspectives and to provide an affordable and renewable-based energy system".

Irene di Padua, Policy Director insisted that "Europe can no longer wait to step up its efforts for the decarbonisation of industries and residential heat demands. Energy prices will keep rising and their volatility will become structural impacting the EU's transition and the energy bills of European consumers. This action plan is very timely as now is the moment to act and fully support sustainable bioenergy which can replace natural gas usage in the particularly sensitive heating sector.

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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 42 associations and 135 companies, as well as academia and research institutes from across Europe.