

## Bioenergy Europe's SWITCH4AIR campaign battles better air quality for Europe



*The fight for better air quality is real and the bioenergy industry is a driving force in winning this fight.*

Brussels, 13 November 2019 - Air pollution is the single largest environmental health risk in Europe. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), it is attributable to a staggering 4.2 million premature deaths a year. Pollutants, such as particulate matter (PM), nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO) and benzo(a)pyrene, can harm human health when high levels of concentration are reached. It is, therefore, crucial to understand the sources of these emissions and tackle them effectively.

With 78.9% of the final energy consumption in the residential sector being used for heating (space & water heating), it is essential to cover this heat demand with decarbonised and clean energy sources. Whilst wood heating that comes from an existing stock of old and inefficient installations is responsible for some pollutant emissions, modern wood heating installations are quite the contrary. Having closed wood stoves, pellet stoves or boilers are today, highly efficient, with near-to-zero emissions being produced.

As a result, our industry is in the driving seat to not only decarbonise our heat demand but also to improve air quality from residential heating, substituting fossil installations and old wood installations with modern biomass heating.

To achieve this objective, four factors play a vital role to decrease emissions from wood heating:

- #1. Replace old appliances with modern ones.** A modern biomass stove pollutes around 278 times less than an open fire. It achieves this through an increase in efficiency and technological improvements. However, the transitions to these low-emission appliances must be fair for consumers and similarly must be supported by political initiative and financial incentives. This will, in effect, enable end-consumers to foster this crucial switch in appliances.
- #2. Improve fuel quality.** Feedstock characteristics such as water content have a big impact on combustion efficiency and air emissions. It is estimated that using wood with less than 20% moisture allows a reduction of emissions by 8 times (compared to wood with 30% of moisture content) and simultaneously increase efficiency while reducing the amount needed. More broadly, fuel quality standards and certification schemes like ENplus® are essentials to guarantee the lowest levels of air emissions.
- #3. Ensure installers are trained, regular maintenance performed.** Installers play a pivotal role in the energy transition and switch to domestic renewable energies. They are the ones in contact with end consumers and can increase awareness. In addition, installers and chimney sweepers ensure efficient functioning of biomass stoves via their maintenance and cleaning operations; but also instructing users on how to properly operate and clean the appliances leads to added efficiency. For these reasons, their knowledge on biomass appliances and their recommendations to final users on which appliance is more suited for their needs are key for increased efficiency and lower emissions.
- #4. Raise awareness among users:** Consumers' knowledge of proper burning techniques should be improved. Public awareness campaigns should be promoted at national and local levels.

## ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

The SWITCH4AIR [campaign](#) has been developed by [Bioenergy Europe](#) to **raise awareness on how bioenergy industry can contribute to the improvement of air quality**. Test your knowledge by taking our quiz and support our campaign by signing Bioenergy Europe's [pledge](#)! To improve air quality in Europe, we need all actors onboard, from policymakers to industry, from installers to consumers. The pledge includes a call for political action, to foster the technological development of low emissions appliances and to reduce emissions from end-users.

*Save the date!* On 12 December 2019 (11:00-12:30) we will host a webinar presenting the key figures of the sector and the benefits of low-carbon and low-emissions technologies to reduce domestic heating appliances greenhouse gas emissions. Register [here](#).

## PRESS CONTACTS

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