

Sustainable Bioenergy: Essential Gear of the European Green Deal

Brussels, 11 December 2019 - Bioenergy Europe welcomes the European Commission's efforts to put sustainability at the heart of its policies. The European Green Deal, presented today, is a well-balanced growth plan which will steer the EU's energy transition in becoming carbon neutral by 2050.

The message is clear: the way in which we produce, consume, travel, and how we heat our homes needs to change. It is, therefore, up to policy makers to send a clear signal to both EU citizens and businesses and to listen to the concerns that are brought by this challenge. It is necessary, now more than ever, that existing policy tools come together as pieces of the same puzzle: carbon price; energy taxation; renewables target; state aid policy; sustainability requirements and green financing and industrial policy strategy.

Sustainable bioenergy is ready to deliver what the EU needs in order to achieve climate neutrality - a clean, carbon neutral, reliable and innovative form of energy.

Europe's bioenergy sector is by far the largest renewable energy source, and employs over 700,000 people. In addition, it comprises of at least 45,000 businesses (for the majority small or medium-sized) with 75% of industrial equipment manufacturers for the bioenergy sectors being European.

Achieving a 55% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030, would adjust the trajectory for the EU to become carbon neutral. However, this is an arduous task. If Europe is to achieve this target, then the 2030 climate and energy framework must be adjusted to allow for a more rapid upscaling of renewable technologies, a clear plan for industry decarbonisation as well as an accelerated and robust fossil fuel phase out plan.

The European Green Deal embraces all these elements but worryingly neglects the heating and cooling sector, which represents half of the EU's energy consumption. Furthermore, the Communication fails to give clear guidance on how to achieve a price on carbon for sectors that are not covered by the EU ETS. An increase in GHG emission reduction targets coinciding with a holistic carbon price, to include both the building and transport sectors, would improve the competitiveness of both bioenergy and renewables and help towards reaching the climate goals of the EU. A fit-for-purpose Energy Taxation Directive will deliver on climate objectives and spark a transition to clean fuels and improved energy efficiency.

In 2017, thanks to bioenergy use, about 7% of the overall EU28 GHG emissions were saved (this figure represents the average annual emissions of Spain). Additionally, the use of biogenic waste and by-products from the forest-based and agriculture sectors will be advantageous in avoiding pollution and to foster circularity in industrial processes. In this regard, Bioenergy Europe, welcomes the support to the circular bio-based sectors mentioned in the Communication in the form of partnership between member States and industry.

Jean-Marc Jossart, Bioenergy Europe Secretary-General, said "Bioenergy Europe looks forward to the many policy initiatives that will be launched in 2020 and trust that the European Commission will tune the instruments to play in harmony".

Press contacts:

Giulia Cancian
Policy Advisor
cancian@bioenergyeurope.org

Claudio Caferri
Communications Officer
caferri@bioenergyeurope.org