

THE FRENCH BIOETHANOL INDUSTRY

Press release

Proposal to phase out first-generation biofuel

The European commission puts forward a project inconsistent with climate protection and economics, involving the use of less renewable fuel and more fossil fuel

Paris, 1 December 2016: The European commission has just unveiled its plans for a directive to develop clean energy between 2020 and 2030. With the proposal to cut the maximum share of first-generation biofuel by 7% in 2020 to 3.8% by 2030 in its drive to reduce the carbon footprint in transport and haulage, the Commission is demonstrating unjustified obstinacy in its stance against first-generation biofuel. The AGPM, AGPB, CGB and SNPAA protest the inconsistency of the Commission's proposal which stands to hamper the development of the bio-economy.

These French societies emphasise that since it is made from cereal, sugar beet and residues from starch and sugar processing, French bioethanol is not only needed for a smooth transition for fuel-based energy, but also opens up an extra market for the processing industries, as its by-products provide a source of animal feed. The aims of boosting energy and food sovereignty in both Europe and France, and creating jobs, seem to have been erased from the agenda in Brussels.

Cutting the 7% contribution of first-generation biofuel in half as proposed by the Commission, barely a year after this contribution was first implemented, and just as France has reached this goal, would force the closure of French bioethanol plants and would lead to less availability for French livestock of high-protein distillers grain. For these two markets are developing symbiotically rather than competing with each other, consolidating the industry as a whole.

Should support for first-generation ethanol be withdrawn, the alternative would be to use more petrol, leading to an increase GHG emissions, given that alternative technologies will not be ready to replace it for a long time.

This is why the AGPM, AGPB, CGB and SNPAA are asking France and Europe, via the channels of the **European Parliament and Council, to duly amend the Commission's proposal in-depth, as they did in 2015 by increasing first-generation biofuel contributions from 5% to 7% in the 2020 goal, and to set an overall goal for 2030 of at least 15% renewable energy in transport and haulage, of which 10% of first-generation biofuel from raw materials of European origin. This can be revised regularly for each member state, as in the United States, in order to safeguard industrial investment. This is the only realistic way to fight global warming by cutting GHG emissions in road transport and to safeguard and encourage industrial investment in the bio-economy.**

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