



Press release

Benefits of European biodiesel recognised at Parliament debate on food security, animal farming and sustainable transport

Brussels, 21 June 2017 – The European biodiesel chain held a breakfast debate today with leading Members of the European Parliament to present the economic and societal benefits of sustainable biodiesel and highlight its concerns about the proposed phasing down of first generation biofuels by the Commission. A consensus emerged from the debate, with a number of key MEPs from different groups – Marijana Petir, Marc Tarabella, Jean-Paul Denanot, Anne Sander, Peter Jahr – acknowledging the crucial role of biodiesel in the EU's agricultural growth and protein independence.

Opening the event, MEP Gilles Pargneaux, Vice-Chair of the ENVI Committee, stressed the importance of the European biodiesel sector, which is too often underplayed, by stating: *"Europe has just rediscovered the path to economic growth and jobs, and is called to the world stage as an environmental leader to uphold the Paris Agreement Commitment. It would be a grave mistake to hit the sector by lowering the production of biofuels, as suggested by the European Commission."*

MEP Angélique Delahaye shared her thoughts on the importance of biodiesel for the EU's sustainability ambitions: *"The Commission proposal, in its present form, does not take account of the complementarity of the biodiesel and agricultural sector. The 3.8% cap by 2030, coupled with the lack of incorporation obligations for biofuels, would de facto result in their phase-out shortly after 2020. This situation would have disastrous consequences on the European production of proteins for animal feed. It is therefore important to stop thinking in silos and to continue to support the development of the rapeseed sector in Europe to ensure our protein independence while respecting and implementing a circular economy approach."*

European farmers also shared their concerns with the Commission's RED II proposal, which would lower the contribution of crop-based biofuels allowed in Europe. *"By focusing exclusively on supporting second – and third – generation biofuels, the risk for farmers is real, both in terms of jobs and revenues,"* said Arnaud Rousseau, Chair of the European Oilseed Alliance. *"We strongly urge legislators to maintain the existing 7% cap, and safeguard this key source of income for thousands of European farmers."*

Mr Rousseau asked policy-makers to consider a lesser-recognised benefit of biodiesel production in Europe: its role in EU's food and feed independence. *"Although traditionally seen in the context of transport and mobility, European oilseed crops are key to provide protein meal for animal farming,"* he explained. *"Today, the EU already imports 70 percent of all the high-protein meals it needs to feed its livestock. Without the outlet for oil provided by local biofuels, we would have to increase imports of substitutes such as soybean meal."*

The Commission's proposed cap on first generation biofuels does not fully take into account the challenges faced by the industry. *"Biodiesel is recognised as the only solution for heavy duty aviation and maritime transport in the short to medium term. It is crucial to ensure policy continuity after 2020 by not lowering the contribution of food-based biofuels. If this does not happen, the contribution of these biofuels will likely go down to close to zero as of 2021, undermining the EU's decarbonisation efforts and COP21 commitments,"* said Mr Stefan Schreiber, Vice-President of the European Biodiesel Board. He added *"The EU biofuel sector employs more than 220,000 people and is uniquely positioned to support the EU's agricultural, economic, and environmental ambitions, and is ready to do its part in decarbonising the EU economy."*



The **European Biodiesel Board (EBB)** is a non-profit organisation established in January 1997. Today, EBB gathers nearly 80 members across 21 Member-States, which represents 75% of the European output. EBB aims to promote the use of biodiesel in the European Union and is committed to fulfil International standards for sustainability in GHG emissions and sustainable feedstock. EBB is constantly working towards the development of improved and greener technologies.

FEDIOL represents the interests of the European vegetable oil and protein meal industry. With over 180 facilities in Europe, the sector provides over 20,000 direct employments. Its members process approximately 55 million tonnes of basic products a year for the food and non-food markets. Oilseed crushing produces vegetable oils and protein meals as co-products. While vegetable oils are used for food and technical uses, protein meals are used to meet the increasing global demand for meat and protein.

The **European Oilseed Alliance (EOA)** brings together the oilseed organizations of the major European producing countries (Germany, France, United Kingdom, Poland, Czech Republic, Finland, Belgium, Sweden). EOA members represent 90 % of EU oilseed production – EOA works in association with the European organizations representing the oilseed supply chain, producers, processors, and seed breeders: Copa-Cogeca, Fediol, EBB, ESA.

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