

Energy

Biodiesel industry fears weakened 10% biofuels target

By Dafydd ab Iago | 3 September 2008

The European Biodiesel Board (EBB) has called on MEPs not to water down the current 10% target for biofuels in transport proposed in the European Commission's January 2008 Renewables Directive (RES). With an Industry Committee vote scheduled for late September, numerous amendments have been made calling for the disputed 10% target for renewable energy in transport to be cut into pieces with separate shares for biofuels, electricity, hydrogen and other. The EBB called such ideas "misguided". Parliament is expected to vote on the proposed RES Directive in plenary in early October, leading to political agreement on the final act still under the French EU Presidency in December.

"Dictating that up to half of the targets be met by electricity and hydrogen would mean transforming 40-50% of the transport obligation back into fossil energy on the pretext of addressing concerns about biofuels' sustainability," argued EBB President Bernard Nicol on the same day, 3 September, that the EP adopted a Commission proposal for the type approval of hydrogen cars. Hydrogen and electricity, as energy vectors, are not per se renewable or sustainable even if they avoid polluting emissions in urban transportation. "To be labelled 'renewable', they would need to be produced using exclusively renewable energy sources and not fossil energy, as is the case for more than 80% of EU electricity and hydrogen today," noted Nicol.

The only solution, he added, is opting for renewable energy sources such as biofuels to displace fossil energy use. The EBB, founded in January 1997 and now counting 66 member companies and associations, accounts for some 80% of biodiesel produced in the EU and some two-thirds of worldwide biodiesel production.