



Transport Committee rejection of RED II opinion shows Parliament strongly divided on crop-based biofuels

Brussels, 9 November 2017 – The European Parliament Transport Committee’s decision to reject the opinion put forward by MEP Bas Eickhout, and not to endorse the hard-line Environment Committee’s position on conventional biofuels, is yet another sign of the divisions over where EU biofuels policy should be heading – and comes at a time when support for transport decarbonisation is needed more than ever.

Today, the Transport Committee (TRAN) rejected Mr. Eickhout’s opinion on the post-2020 EU Renewable Energy Directive (RED II). Due to a lack of agreement on the outcome of the Environment Committee’s (ENVI) proposal on the phase-out of crop-based biofuels, TRAN had opted to vote on the *“Original text based on Rule 174(3)”*, *de facto* referring to the text initially proposed by the European Commission. In the end, reinforcing the divisiveness on this file, TRAN rejected the overall opinion with 30 MEPs voting against (and only 11 endorsing it).

Speaking on behalf of the eight associations representing the EU Biofuel Chain, Copa and Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen stated: *“the EU Biofuels Chain could not welcome TRAN’s endorsement of the Commission’s original proposal - entailing a phase-out of the use of biofuels by 2030 - since that would seriously undermine the EU’s climate and sustainability objectives. The rejection of the overall report, however, provides a strong political signal that the biofuels issue is complex, and that finding a common view among the different parliamentary committees, and at plenary level, will be extremely challenging.”*

Given the importance of this file for the EU transport sector, and the impact the European Commission’s proposal would have on EU climate goals and our industrial and agricultural sectors, it would have been appropriate to see the opinion of all involved MEPs and Committees equally considered. The outcome of today’s vote means a TRAN opinion will not be considered by ENVI, which has exclusive competence on the sustainability criteria (article 25) and treatment of conventional biofuels (article 7).

In the run-up to this vote, the EU Biofuels Chain had called upon TRAN to adopt a dedicated target for the use of renewable energy in the transport sector, and called for a halt on the proposed phase-out of crop-based biofuels, which are essential in agricultural sustainability and represent the most cost-effective and readily available solution to decarbonise the transport sector. These elements are crucial to create a policy framework which supports all sustainable forms of renewable energy and contributes to the reduction of fossil fuels’ use and protein feed imports.

The Secretary-General of the European Biodiesel Board Raffaello Garofalo concluded: *“Although TRAN and ENVI share the same rapporteur on RED II, today’s vote is contradictory and reflects the fragile position adopted in the ENVI Committee opinion. It clearly demonstrates the Parliament’s division on the overall file, and now the Parliament’s plenary will have the final word on the direction of the EU biofuels policy.”*

The EU Biofuels Chain includes:

FEDIOL is the European Association representing the **vegetable oils and protein meal industry**. The sector covers more than 180 facilities belonging to 35 companies in 17 countries and employs directly 20,000 people. Its members process oilseeds, refine and bottle vegetable oils.

The **European Biodiesel Board (EBB)** is a non-profit organisation established in January 1997. Today, EBB gathers close to 70 members across 21 Member-States, which represents 75% of the European output. Biodiesel is the main European solution to reduce emissions from transport and dependence on imported oil. 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.

The **European renewable ethanol association (ePURE)** represents the interests of European renewable ethanol producers to the European institutions, industry stakeholders, the media, academia and the general public. The organisation, established in 2010, promotes the beneficial uses of ethanol throughout Europe. Based in Brussels, ePURE represents 42 member companies, with 50 production plants in 16 member states, accounting for about 85% of the installed renewable ethanol capacity in Europe.

COCERAL is the **European association of trade in cereals, rice, feedstuffs oilseeds, olive oil, oils and fats and agrosupply**. It represents the interest of the European collectors, traders, importers, exporters and port silo storekeepers of the above mentioned agricultural products. COCERAL's full members are 21 national associations in 15 countries and 1 European association [Unistock]. With about 3500 companies as part of COCERAL national members, the sector trades agricultural raw materials destined to the supply of the food and feed chains, as well as for technical and energy uses. COCERAL has 1 associated member in Switzerland and 2 European Associations (EUROMALT and EUROMAISIERS). Gafta is an extraordinary member of COCERAL.

Founded in 2002, the **European Oilseed Alliance (EOA)** brings together the oilseed producing organizations from the main European countries (Germany, France, UK, Poland, Czech Republic, Finland and Belgium) and represents 90% of European oilseed production.

The **C.I.B.E.** is the international confederation of sugar beet growers. It represents the interests of beet growers vis-à-vis European Institutions and international organisations since 1927. CIBE is composed of national and regional associations from 18 European beet-producing countries. These include 140,000 growers from 16 EU countries (Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Sweden, the United Kingdom) and roughly 130,000 growers from 2 non-EU countries (Turkey and Switzerland).

CEPM brings together Professional and inter-Professional organisations whose mission is to represent and defend in their respective countries the interests of all or part of the maize chain: corn, maize silage, maize seed and sweet corn. To fulfil these objectives, CEPM carries out monitoring, lobbying and communication activities, and makes concrete proposals.

Copa and Cogeca are the united voice of farmers and agri-cooperatives in the EU. Together, they ensure that EU agriculture is sustainable, innovative and competitive, guaranteeing food security to half a billion people throughout Europe. Copa represents over 23 million farmers and their families whilst Cogeca represents the interests of 22,000 agricultural cooperatives. They have 66 member organisations from the EU member states. Together, they are one of the biggest and most active lobbying organisations in Brussels.