

(EU) EU/BIOFUELS: European biodiesel producers wants to maintain binding 10% target in renewables directive

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Brussels, 10/09/2008 (Agence Europe) - In the run-up to the European Parliament energy committee on the report by Claude Turmes (Greens, Luxembourg) on the renewable energy directive, the European Biodiesel Board (EBB) called for the binding 10% biofuels target to be maintained by 2020 in the total consumption of fuels for the transport sector for each EU member state. The EBB denounces the idea defended by the Council to split the 10% target into two parts, with quotas for first generation biofuels, second generation biofuels and also hydrogen and electricity. "This is misguided", says EBB General Secretary Raffaello Garofalo, who explains that "hydrogen and electricity are not renewable per se, much less sustainable", as electricity in cars is difficult to trace.

"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. (...) We should not lose sight of the fact that the aim of the new directive is precisely to promote renewable energy sources, not electricity as an energy carrier. A 10% binding target for renewable energy for transport - with stringent sustainability criteria - is the only way to enable industry to make the investments needed to supply a meaningful quantity of sustainable biofuels and develop new, improved technologies by 2020. Industry fully understands the need to be able to demonstrate biofuels' economic and environmental credentials. It is entirely committed to the development of a sustainability certification scheme that will enable biofuels to play a useful role in reducing fossil fuel dependence and tackling climate change", EBB President Bernard Nicol explains. Although the EBB recognises the international concern regarding green fuels, it rejects the cause and effect relationship established between the rise in the production of biodiesel and the surge in food prices and oil prices. Although world production of biodiesel clearly rose in 2007, the price of foodstuffs (soya, maize, corn) and oil fell from the end of the 2nd quarter 2008. The EBB wonders therefore whether over-strict sustainability criteria are justified. "We are not against these criteria, as long as they are defined to avoid deviation such as deforestation and not to stifle the biofuels industry", Mr Garofalo said, accusing BP and Shell of putting pressure on legislators to impose very strict criteria aimed at discouraging the production of green fuels. (E.H./transl.jl)