

European sustainable biodiesel is key to reducing fossil fuel imports and securing our food and feed supply

BRUSSELS: On 9 March, in response to the crisis in Ukraine, the European Commission published the RePowerEU Communication ⁽¹⁾, which aims to accelerate the EU's energy transition and reduce its massive dependence on imported fossil fuels. Gas and electricity production are at the heart of the Communication, but liquid fossil fuels must not be overlooked.

The EU relies heavily on imported oil. In 2020, the EU imported 23 million tonnes of oil equivalent (Mtoe) diesel and gasoil ⁽²⁾, as well as 440 Mtoe of crude oil. Together, diesel and gasoil represented 70% of all vehicle fuel consumed in Europe. In the same year, the EU used 13 Mtoe of biodiesel, the largest source of renewable energy used in transport ⁽³⁾, a sector still dominated by fossil fuels with a 93% market share ⁽⁴⁾.

The EBB fully endorses the statement of the Commission's First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, which made clear that the answer to reducing Europe's dependence on oil imports, *"lies in renewable energy and diversification of supply,"* and *"renewables give us the freedom to choose an energy source that is clean, cheap, reliable and ours."*

Mr. Xavier Noyon, EBB Secretary General, commented: *"the European biodiesel industry fits in the strategy perfectly. We deliver an EU-made green fuel that reduces diesel imports, while co-products from our biorefineries increasingly replace a range of fossil chemicals. Finally, let us not forget that our value chain produces animal feed, reducing imports and boosting Europe's food security."*

While a growing share of European biodiesel production comes from wastes and residues, the production of crop-based biodiesel underpins Europe's oilseed processing industry. Oilseed processing generates animal feed (60%) and vegetable oil (40%), meaning the EU's global leadership on biodiesel has significantly reduced Europe's protein imports without adverse effects ⁽⁵⁾. In fact, despite being a central pillar of Europe's oilseed crushing industry, less than 15% of the oilseeds consumed in Europe will be used to produce biodiesel. *"Sustainable biodiesel produced in the EU ticks all the boxes of the EU Green Deal and the Fit-for-55 goals: renewable, bioeconomy, circularity, and food security. You can count on us to RePowerEU!"*, concluded Mr. Noyon ⁽⁶⁾.

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¹ [COM/2022/108 final](#): REPowerEU: Joint European Action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy

² [EUROSTAT Energy Statistics](#)

³ [2020 EU RES Progress Report](#) (page 14)

⁴ [EUROSTAT Energy Statistics](#)

⁵ This is repeatedly confirmed by the European Commission in its annual Renewable Energy Progress Reports ([2020 EU RES Progress Report](#)), observing no correlation between food prices and biofuel demand, with any impact on food prices being minor compared to other dynamics in the global food market.

⁶ See [here](#) the EBB contribution to the ongoing Fit-For-55 legislative process.