



PRESS STATEMENT

Biotech industry supports 10% biofuels targets set out by the European Commission as being sustainable

Brussels, 17 April 2008

The European biotech industry strongly supports EU initiatives to promote the use of biofuels to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. Industry shares the concern of European leaders that the high use of energy stemming from fossil resources is irresponsible in the long term. It is the opinion of EuropaBio that the only feasible alternatives today to fossil-based energy for the transport sector are liquid biofuels. Biofuels will not replace fossil fuels, but are part of the solution to external dependency for energy and to greenhouse gas emissions.

In response to the European Environment Agency (EEA) statement recommending that biofuels targets be dropped from the Renewable Energy Directive, the biotech industry notes that the EEA's scientific committee's opinion is not based on any new scientific evidence.

“We share the concern that clearing tropical and subtropical forests for gaining agricultural land may be contradictory to sustainability issues. The monitoring problems pointed out by the EEA should stimulate the development of a credible and robust certification system” said Johan Vanhemelrijck, Secretary General of EuropaBio.

Urgent solutions are necessary to address GHG emissions from the road transport sector. Calculations of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission savings made by the Commission show that various forms of biofuels offer an advantage in GHG emission reduction compared to fossil fuels, and most of them already meet the requirements provided under the European Commission's proposal for sustainability criteria.(1) Sustainability criteria developed by the European Commission and the European Biotech Industry (2) are also intended for biofuels in developing countries, and aim to minimise any unsustainable production of biofuels that destroy protected biodiversity. “If Europe drops the 10% target, biofuel production will continue in other regions where it makes economic sense compared to fossil fuel but with the risk that focus on sustainability considerations will be reduced. The EU needs to be the driver of sustainability criteria rather than letting the rest of the world just get on with it.” said Kirsten Birkegaard Staer, Chair of EuropaBio's Biofuels Task Force.

Although the objective is the development and introduction of advanced generation more sustainable biofuels, the biofuel sector needs to be developed now to provide a bridge to

second generation technologies. Abandoning the biofuels target would bring the development of such technologies to a halt in Europe, and would exclude Europe in any future involvement both in the development of such technologies and in terms of reaping the environmental and wider societal benefits.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

(1) Renewable Energy Directive, Annex VII (p. 50)

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0019:FIN:EN:PD>

(2) EuropaBio environmental sustainability criteria for biofuels.

<http://www.europabio.org/documents/biofuels/Pospaper180108.pdf>

Background information:

For more information, please see:

http://www.europabio.org/Biofuels/documents/Press%20Response_EEA_final170408.pdf .

Get the facts on Biofuels: http://www.europabio.org/Biofuels/Biofuels_about.htm

EuropaBio's biofuels brochure and factsheets cover the following topics:

- 1) EuropaBio Biofuels brochure: Biotechnology: Making biofuels sustainable
- 2) EuropaBio Factsheet: Biofuels and land use
- 3) EuropaBio Factsheet: Biofuels and developing countries
- 4) EuropaBio Factsheet: Biofuels and food
- 5) EuropaBio Factsheet: Biofuels: Environmental sustainability criteria

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About EuropaBio

EuropaBio's mission is to promote an innovative and dynamic biotechnology-based industry in Europe. EuropaBio, (the European Association for Bioindustries), has 81 corporate and 5 associate members operating worldwide, 6 Bioregions and 25 national biotechnology associations representing some 1800 small and medium sized enterprises. More information on: www.europabio.org