



BioFuels & The Renewable Energy Directive

What EuropaBio is asking for

- EuropaBio supports the EU initiatives to boost the use of biofuels and in order to stimulate the transition towards second generation biofuels, advocates a stepwise approach, whereby fuels with a relatively low greenhouse gas savings threshold would be permitted initially, but that additional greenhouse gas reduction requirements would "increase through time".
- EuropaBio supports the development of a credible and robust certification scheme on an EU basis which can guarantee that biofuels are produced in an environmentally sustainable way.
- EuropaBio recommends that sustainability criteria are technology-neutral, transparent, and based on scientific evidence and on clear definitions

Purpose of this Meeting

EuropaBio hopes that MEPs will support Renewable Energy Directive during the discussion in Parliament

Indicative timing of the first reading in Parliament:

Rapporteur: Turmes (Lux-V) (shadow: B. Thomsen)
Committee: ITRE (Industry, Research and Energy)
Exchange of views in the Parliament 7-8 April 2008
Submission draft report to the Secretariat 10 April 2008
Consideration of draft report 6 May 2008
Deadline for tabling amendments 7 May 2008 (16:00)
Consideration of amendments 3 June 2008
Vote ITRE 26 June 2008
Vote Plenary July 2008

Introduction

The EU Commission presented its Renewable Energy Roadmap as part of its "energy-climate change" package beginning of January 2007. The EU Council endorsed the Commission roadmap with a binding target to have 20% of the EU's overall energy consumption coming from renewables by 2020, with a binding minimum target for each member state to achieve at least 10% of their transport fuel consumption from biofuels in March 2007. The binding character of this target is "subject to production being sustainable" and to "second-generation biofuels becoming commercially available".

On 23 January 2008, the EU Commission published a proposal for a comprehensive Directive for Renewable Energy (framework directive), including an update of the biofuels directive.



Recommendations

The European biotech industry strongly supports EU initiatives to boost the use of Biofuels - such as bioethanol, biobutanol or biodiesel. However, it is important that the EU Commission include a broad set of separate sustainability criteria for biofuels in the overall Directive on renewable energy. EuropaBio supports the development of a credible and robust certification scheme on an EU basis which can guarantee that biofuels are produced in an environmentally sustainable way. EuropaBio finds that environmental and social criteria are equally important, and that, on a longer term perspective, criteria must be developed for both parts.

EuropaBio does not support any unsustainable use of plant material for biofuel production, and insists that the use of biomass for fuel purposes should not jeopardise European and third countries' ability to secure its people's food supply, nor should it prevent achieving environmental priorities such as protecting forests, preventing soil degradation and keeping a good ecological status of waters.

In order to avoid creating a competitive disadvantage for the European biofuels sector, EuropaBio recommends that sustainability criteria are developed, not only for the biomass used for biofuel production, but for all energy applications. It is very important that sustainability criteria are technology-neutral, transparent, and based on scientific evidence and on clear definitions.

EuropaBio would also wish to see the development of a road-map under which the qualifying criteria are reviewed with the objective of seeking to include criteria relating to social/labour standards and air, water and soil conservation when deemed practical.

It is the opinion of EuropaBio that the GHG savings threshold should be set at a level which would allow current technologies and production processes to be used. This is important to establish a market for biofuel as soon as possible in order to attract the necessary investments and to establish the infrastructure (production and logistics) in Europe. As an important measure in order to stimulate the transition towards (next generation) biofuels with higher GHG savings EuropaBio proposes a "stepwise approach" starting with a relatively low GHG savings threshold and increasing in time, or a system where a moderate threshold could be set as basis, coupled with an "incentivisation system" rewarding additional GHG savings.

For more information on these recommendations, please see the EuropaBio position paper:
<http://www.europabio.org/documents/biofuels/Pospaper180108.pdf>

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