



PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, July 20, 2016

European oilseed producers advise the Commission against the phase-out of first generation biofuels

In its Communication on a European Strategy for Low-Emission Mobility published today, the Commission considers a “gradual phase-out of food-based biofuels”, such as biodiesel, wrongly claiming their “limited role in decarbonising the transport sector”. This approach would threaten the survival of the EU oilseed production and slow down the transition to advanced biofuels in transport.

The demand for biodiesel has allowed the expansion of the EU oilseed production - therefore improving the supply of domestic protein meal for the food and feed market in the EU - and contributed to a lesser dependency on soybean imports. Rapeseed, the main feedstock of the EU biodiesel production, consists of 60% protein meal and 40% oil. Philippe Dusser, Secretary General of the EOA, stressed that “*biodiesel is a by-product of the oilseed industry mainly driven by the supply of protein meal for the animal sector, it guarantees, through a circular economy dynamic, an outlet for the oil contained in rapeseed which wouldn’t find a market otherwise. It also offers an alternative outlet to EU farmers*”. It is therefore essential to maintain the stability of the first generation biofuel’s sector to fight precariousness and provide additional revenues to farmers and their families in depressed rural areas.

Moreover, the phasing out of first generation biofuels would not only jeopardise the efforts done for 20 years to develop the European oilseed production and a domestic source of protein, but also significantly impact efforts towards the reduction of greenhouse gases in the transport sector. In its 2015 Renewable Energy Progress Report, the European Commission itself underlined that the use of renewable energy in transport led to a reduction of around 35 million tons of carbon emissions in 2013, most of these savings coming from the use of biofuels. Corresponding to Slovakia’s annual carbon footprint (UNFCCC, 2012), these emissions savings are hence key in decarbonising EU’s economy.

Finally, phasing out first generation biofuels would halt investments in advanced biofuels. Since the same companies are investing in both solutions to decarbonise transport fuels, policy coherence and long-term stability are essential to allow the phasing-in of 2nd and 3rd generations’ biofuels.

The European Oilseed Alliance therefore calls on the European Commission to maintain the existing targets on first generation biofuels and to look at the whole lifecycle of feedstocks when defining its forthcoming Renewable Energy Package and bioenergy policy.

The European Biodiesel Board (EBB) is a non-profit organization established in January 1997. EBB represents more than 50 European biodiesel producers and aims to promote the use of biodiesel in the European Union.

FEDIOL is the European association representing the vegetable oil and protein meal industry. The sector covers more than 150 facilities belonging to 35 companies in 17 EU countries and employs directly 20,000 people. Its members process oilseeds, refine and bottle vegetable oils.

Founded in 2002, the 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.