

Updated EBA position¹ on iLUC legislation September 2014

Biomethane can be either upgraded biogas from anaerobic digestion or cleaned syngas from gasification of biomass. It is a flexible and sustainable biofuel, 100% made in Europe, which can effectively advance the decarbonisation of the European transport sector. Ahead of the second reading on the iLUC dossier, European Biogas Association (EBA) asks the EU institutions to take the following issues into consideration:

Sustainability criteria and fossil comparator: As expressed in our initial position paper (dated 28 March 2014), EBA believes that sustainability criteria should be the main driver of the EU's biofuel policy. The increased criteria from 35% up to 50%/60% will eliminate the unsustainable fuels in an equal manner. However, we are very concerned about the institution's approach as regards the fossil comparators; biomethane seem to be penalised simply because the comparator used to benchmark their greenhouse gas performance is a low-carbon fossil fuel (natural gas). Biomethane indeed can replace natural gas and may be blended with the fossil gas at any proportion, but CNG (compressed natural gas) suppliers are not subject to the 10% renewable fuel obligation of the Renewable Energy Directive. Moreover, in practice, the introduction of biomethane contributes to increased application of gaseous fuels substituting fossil liquid fuels. Therefore, biomethane that is used as automotive fuel shall be compared to the diesel-petrol average.

iLUC factors and iLUC mitigation: Introduction of iLUC factors for biofuels – even only for reporting purposes – discriminates biofuels sector among other bio-economy based industries such as agriculture, animal husbandry, and bio-based chemicals and materials. All industries based on biomass have the same influence on the land use change as biofuels; therefore EBA believes that their effort in preventing iLUC in Europe and elsewhere should be equal to the one of biofuels industries. EBA supports the proposal of the Council (9659/1/14, Recital 11a) to consider iLUC mitigation through yield increases and crop rotation and would be happy to help developing such iLUC quantification.

The contribution of conventional biofuels to the EU's targets: EBA appreciates the Council's efforts to raise the cap from 5 to 7% while reminding the EU institutions of the multiple benefits of using conventional energy crops for biogas production: for example, integrating maize as a rotational crop for biogas with an existing cereal crop can help control black grass, reducing the need for expensive, environmentally harmful pesticides. Agricultural biomethane from energy crops and manure (co-digestion) has also been proved to be the most energy-efficient biofuel²: one hectare of land used for biomethane production allows a running distance of a gas vehicle longer than then with the production of any other biofuel including advanced biofuels. As a summary, conventional biomethane contributes to sustainable agriculture and revitalisation of European rural areas as well as promotes the development of biomethane from advanced feedstock by means of generated

¹ The original EBA position on ILUC was published on 28 March 2013: http://european-biogas.eu/wp-content/uploads/files/2013/10/EBA-Position-paper-on-iLUC_28032013.pdf

² <http://mediathek.fnr.de/grafiken/pressegrafiken/biokraftstoffe-im-vergleich.html>

innovation, research and revenues. Therefore *all* kinds of biomethane play an important role in the upcoming years in the decarbonisation of the European transport sector.

Promotion of advanced biofuels: EBA welcomes the Council's decision to remove quadruple counting of biofuels from advanced feedstock; a sub-target is clearly a stronger incentive to increase their production. The sub-target should become legally binding at the Member States level under 2020 framework and beyond. Furthermore, as biofuels are qualified as 'advanced' based on their feedstock, it is important to include perennial grasses (for example miscanthus), catch crops and grasses from permanent grassland in the list of Annex IX. These substrates help mitigating iLUC in accordance with the Recital 11a of the Council's text.

Anaerobic digestion (AD) as a method of recycling nutrients: EBA praises the Council for adding source separated biodegradable waste to the list of advanced feedstocks in Annex IX which incentivises both, production of advanced biofuels and higher rates of recycling. This measure is also in line with the EU's Circular Economy Package. Anaerobic digestion is a closed loop technology recycling thus the valuable nutrients in the food and garden waste back to the soil. Therefore, AD should be explicitly acknowledged as a way of recycling.

About European Biogas Association (EBA)

European Biogas Association aisbl (EBA) was founded 3 February 2009 as a non-profit organization based in Brussels aiming at promoting sustainable biogas production and use in Europe. EBA's membership comprises national biogas associations, research institutes and companies from all across Europe. EBA unites a large number of the most experienced biogas experts in Europe and has highly experienced and skilled staff providing policy advice, know-how and information to promote beneficial legislation and framework conditions in the field of biogas. For further information please visit: www.european-biogas.eu