

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## PRESS RELEASE

### No clean mobility for all Europeans with the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy

**The strategy is a major setback for the vital decarbonisation  
of transport at an acceptable cost**

- Lack of support to renewable fuels will jeopardise transport decarbonisation and hamper climate-neutrality by 2050.
- An accurate zero-emissions approach to mobility should consider the carbon footprint of the vehicles across their overall lifecycle.
- Supporting expensive technologies that will not be affordable for many consumers any time soon will prevent equal access to clean mobility for all EU citizens.

*Brussels, 9 December 2020* – **The new Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy will not help the EU deliver the critical decarbonisation of transport.** The transport sector releases today 20% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions. A cost-effective and swift decarbonisation will be only feasible with the deployment of all renewable energies and technologies alike. In the clean mobility equation, all renewable alternative fuels and their corresponding technologies and infrastructures need equal support to drastically reduce emissions by 90% in 2050.

**Overlooking the essential role of advanced biofuels in driving a swift decarbonisation of transport, will hamper the development of renewable fuels.** This will put at risk one of the industries that is helping Europe reach climate-neutrality by 2050. It will also put an unnecessary burden on the future availability of green electricity to decarbonise the EU economy. Greening current electricity consumption is already a challenge. Instead, we could pick the low-hanging fruits by supporting alternatives already available. Finally, the current proposal will prevent access to affordable clean mobility for all Europeans, as cost-competitive options differing from renewable fuels will not be available any time soon.

**The decarbonisation of transport is key for the success of the EU Green Deal.** The Mobility Strategy should avoid any contradictions with other core policies of this plan to make the EU economy sustainable and reach climate-neutrality. It must be aligned with the implementation of a smart sector integration, as well as with the efforts to find circular and local solutions for decarbonisation.

**Despite claiming for a technology-neutral approach to decarbonisation, the Strategy clearly outlines electricity and hydrogen as priority option to decarbonise mobility.** In 2018, only 33% of EU electricity came from renewable energy. If the source of energy to power electric vehicles does not come from renewable sources, their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will be much higher. Hydrogen represents today, according to the European Commission, a modest fraction of the global and EU energy mix and is still largely produced from fossil fuels. It is far from certain that green electricity and hydrogen mobility will be able to answer to the different usages at an acceptable cost and ad-hoc servicing level in the long term.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *'A hydrogen strategy for a climate-neutral Europe'* European Commission, July 2020

**Renewable and low-carbon fuels, such as biomethane, are already available and fit for use within the existing transport infrastructure<sup>2</sup>.** Biomethane is already being used in light passenger vehicles as bio-CNG, but also in heavy transport as bio-LNG and bio-CNG. Bio-LNG is one of the very few viable options to decarbonise shipping. In rail transport, locomotives can replace the use of diesel by bio-CNG or bio-LNG. In addition, these renewable fuels are already complying with the strict criteria under the EU Renewable Energy Directive ensuring they are produced sustainably. In line with a circular economy approach, biomethane is additionally contributing to reduce emissions from waste management and agriculture. Those sectors are two major sources of greenhouse gas emissions, as recognised by the EU Methane Strategy presented last October. Europe should be proud of the merits of its local biomethane production.

**The most rigorous and truly relevant approach to the decarbonisation of transport should consider their footprint across the full lifecycle of the vehicles.** By measuring only tailpipe emissions, we overlook a whole range of emissions that are equally pollutant and dangerous for our environment. There is CO<sub>2</sub> emitted by a car and sent into the atmosphere even before it has been put in motion and when it is no longer in use. Increasing scientific assessments are pointing out that the life-cycle of electric vehicles can be extremely pollutant<sup>3</sup> due to the high carbon footprint of batteries. Transparent information about emissions related to battery production and recycling must be made available.

**ICE engines fuelled with biomethane have similar or even lower greenhouse gas emissions footprint than vehicles powered by green electricity.** Recently, EBA collected 11 comparative studies analysing transport emissions per type of fuel, which prove that biomethane is clearly one of the most climate-friendly fuel options able to reach even below zero levels of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. However, these benefits are not accounted for in the tailpipe approach. The EU needs an accurate life-cycle approach to promote only no-regret options.

**Supporting the higher deployment of renewable fuels will also contribute to make all transport modes more sustainable, available to European citizens in all geographies and at all income levels,** leaving no one behind. This intention of the Commission to “*make this new mobility affordable and accessible in all regions and for all passengers*” is clearly in contradiction with the push for electricity and hydrogen only which will not be affordable to all Europeans at any time soon.

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## About the EBA

The European Biogas Association is the voice of renewable gas in Europe since 2009. EBA advocates the recognition of biomethane and other renewable gases as sustainable, on demand and flexible energy sources that provide multiple knock-on socio-economic and environmental benefits. Supported by its members, EBA is committed to work with European institutions, industry, agricultural partners, NGOs and academia to develop policies which can enable the large-scale deployment of renewable gases and organic fertilisers throughout Europe, supported by transparent, well-established sustainability certification bodies to ensure that sustainability remains at the core of the industry. The association counts today on a well-established network of over 100 national organisations, scientific institutes and companies from Europe and beyond.

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<sup>2</sup> *'BioLNG in Transport: Making Climate Neutrality a Reality'* EBA, GiE, NGVA and SEA-LNG, November 2020

<sup>3</sup> *'Review and Meta-Analysis of EVs: Embodied Emissions and Environmental Breakeven'* Dillman et AL, September 2020