

The CO₂ Heavy-Duty Vehicles proposal fails to recognize renewable fuels contribution to transport's decarbonization

Brussels, 15 February 2023 – On the 14th of February, the European Commission published its proposal to review [Regulation EU 2019/1242](#) setting CO₂ emission performance standards for new heavy-duty vehicles, such as trucks and buses, in the EU. This piece of EU legislation is fundamental for the decarbonization of the heavy-duty segment and for supporting the development of all the technologies contributing to the shift towards zero- and low-emission mobility. EBA welcomes the increased ambitions of the proposal and calls on the European Parliament and Council to provide a level playing field for the deployment of all clean technologies.

As acknowledged by the European Commission¹, the decarbonization of the transport sector will have to rely on multiple and complementary solutions to reduce its GHG emissions while responding to all mission profiles. Sustainable and renewable fuels, such as biomethane, are part of the current alternatives to cut down emissions, given their readiness and compatibility with existing vehicles and refuelling infrastructure.

EBA prides the increased ambitions of the proposal, but regrets the choice of the Commission not to recognize the contribution of renewable fuels, including biomethane, to the decarbonization of the sector. The EU executive body has missed the opportunity to provide a strong positive signal to the biomethane value chain by setting stringent targets at tailpipe without providing a mechanism to factor in the contribution of renewable fuels in reducing overall CO₂ emissions across the vehicles lifecycle. Transport operators and vehicle manufacturers should be provided with a legislative framework that encourages them to consider cleaner fuel alternatives to fossil fuels immediately available today.

Biomethane can play an important role to de-risk the uncertainties linked to the development and uptake of other transport technologies. This renewable gas is essential to promote and preserve the EU strategic autonomy in the energy sector and its technological leadership, all activities creating sustainable jobs in Europe.

“While only accounting for 2% of the vehicles on the road in Europe², the heavy-duty sector alone generates around 6% of total GHG emissions in the EU: a major contribution to climate change. The use of biomethane for transport provides a sustainable and readily available and scalable alternative to fossil fuels, being a key player in the transition towards a climate-neutral economy.”, explains Giulia Cancian, Secretary General of the European Biogas Association.

¹ In the first Pillar of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, the European Commission stated the need to boost the uptake of low- and zero-emission vehicles as well as renewable fuels for road transport. The Strategy also underlines the necessity to send a clear signal to fuel suppliers that sustainable renewable fuels must be deployed on a large scale without delay.

² ACEA (2022). Report – Vehicles in use, Europe 2022

As biomethane consists of the same molecule as natural gas, this renewable fuel can be directly used either in the form of Bio-CNG or Bio-LNG to serve as a transport fuel in gas vehicles and injected in the LNG and CNG refuelling infrastructure. This means that biomethane can concretely and immediately contribute to the decarbonization of the transport sector: first, the deployment of biomethane to replace fossil fuels does not require the investment in additional resources and time to develop new infrastructure. Moreover, recent studies show that Bio-CNG and Bio-LNG are the best performing fuels for decarbonising transport, outperforming even electric vehicles thanks to their potential to offer a negative carbon footprint when applying a “Well-to-Wheel” (WtW) methodology. Using a 40% bio-LNG mix with LNG will help reduce the CO₂ emissions from trucks by 55%, under the WtW perspective. When using 100% bio-LNG, the GHG emissions balance can even be negative.

The upcoming discussions within European Parliament and Council will be a precious opportunity to provide a level playing field for their further deployment of all technologies and renewable fuels. EBA counts on the co-legislators to pursue this agenda.

About biogas and biomethane

***Biogas** is produced from the decomposition of organic materials. These residues are placed in a biogas digester in the absence of oxygen. With the help of a range of bacteria, organic matter breaks down, releasing a blend of gases: 45 – 85 vol% methane (CH₄) and 25 – 50 vol% carbon dioxide (CO₂). The output is a renewable gas which can be used for multiple applications.*

***Biomethane** – purified biogas – is a renewable alternative to natural gas. Its multiple applications include heat and power supply for our buildings and industries, and renewable fuel production for the transport sector.*

About the EBA

The EBA fully believes in the future potential of renewable gas in Europe. Founded in February 2009, the association is committed to the deployment of sustainable biogas and biomethane production and use throughout the continent. EBA counts today on a well-established network of over 200 organisations covering the whole biogas and biomethane value chain across Europe and beyond.

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