

PRESS RELEASE

3 OCTOBER 2017

EU risks making a sour deal with Mercosur

Opening EU markets to Brazilian ethanol would hit Europe's farmers and work against its climate and energy policy

BRUSSELS – The impending trade deal between the EU and Mercosur for an annual quota of ethanol imports from Brazil would be a serious blow to Europe's farmers and ethanol industry unless measures are taken to ensure a level playing field.

“By agreeing to open its markets to Brazilian ethanol, the EU would contradict its own efforts to increase domestic renewable energy sources in transport, kill incentives to invest in new technology, and make life even tougher for Europe's already struggling farmers,” said Emmanuel Desplechin, Secretary General of ePURE, the European renewable ethanol association.

“It's a strange moment for Brussels to make this move, considering it is at the same time pushing to phase out crop-based biofuels – including both Brazilian ethanol and renewable EU ethanol produced from European feedstock. In essence, the EU is trying to shrink the market for a fuel that helps it decarbonise its transport sector and reduce engine pollutants in today's vehicle fleet, and then offering what's left of that market to Brazilian producers and sugarcane farmers. Excluding ethanol from the negotiations would be fully justified.”

“The EU needs to ensure a balanced approach with Mercosur. Instead of pushing an offer that would directly contradict the Commission's own policy goals, it should grow the European ethanol market and make a limited offer to Mercosur restricted to new biochemical applications.”

“Renewable ethanol is a better deal for Europe if produced domestically. Production in the EU benefits European farmers, who have a market for their feedstocks, and it also results in millions of tonnes of high-protein, GMO-free animal feed coproducts each year – reducing the need to import soymeal from Latin America.”

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About ePURE

The European renewable ethanol association (ePURE) represents the interests of European renewable ethanol producers to the European institutions, industry stakeholders, the media, academia and the general public. Based in Brussels, ePURE represents 39 member companies, with 43 production plants in 16 EU member states, accounting for about 85% of the installed renewable ethanol capacity in Europe. The organisation, established in 2010, promotes the beneficial uses of ethanol throughout Europe.