

PRESS RELEASE: Renewable fuels such as EU ethanol must play a role in the drive to CO₂-neutral-fuel cars

Europe cannot afford to ignore transport decarbonisation solutions that deliver immediate, proven GHG-reduction results – including sustainable biofuels

BRUSSELS, 28 March 2023 – EU energy ministers today adopted the trilogue agreement for the revision of the CO₂ emission standards for cars and vans after Germany secured the implementation of a work-around for vehicles running exclusively on e-fuels.

The Commission's work plan takes a narrow and counterproductive view of which fuels can be considered 'CO₂-neutral' to continue to be used in internal combustion engines after 2035, as it excludes all non-synthetic renewable solutions. But there is still time to ensure more flexibility for the use of renewable fuels such as ethanol along with e-fuels to make a real emissions-reduction impact for the long-term.

As EU policymakers set about determining the definition of CO₂-neutral fuels in the coming months, they should take into account the significant GHG-reduction score of EU renewable ethanol – 77% on average compared to fossil petrol and improving every year.

The proposal of the Commission supported by Germany to limit the scope of CO₂-neutral fuels to e-fuels arbitrarily restricts the range of solutions for drivers and car manufacturers. Renewable ethanol is blended today with petrol, displacing about 3.6 billion litres of fossil petrol in road transport each year in the EU and preventing the annual emission of almost 9 million tonnes of CO_{2eq}. The blending of renewable ethanol with e-fuels such as e-petrol will ensure compatibility and performance in thermic vehicles and provide a 100% renewable alternative to petrol cars in the current and future fleet.

Policymakers should also consider fuels and engine power trains on an equal footing, based on the full life-cycle of emissions from well-to-wheel and not just at the tailpipe. [A recent French study](#) found that hybrid vehicles running with up to 85% renewable ethanol (E85) are just as climate-friendly as electric vehicles if the full-life-cycle – including the European electricity-generation mix – is taken into account.

“As several EU Member States argued in the negotiations, Europe still needs more than one solution to achieve meaningful transport de-fossilisation,” said David Carpintero, Director General of ePURE, the European renewable ethanol association. *“Even in the future, the EU should take advantage of important synergies between renewable fuels and synthetic fuels delivering emissions reductions in the cars that Europeans will continue to drive for many years to come.”*

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