

## PRESS RELEASE

# The EU and E20: European Commission confirms important role of higher ethanol blends in defossilising road transport, securing energy supply

*In a letter to MEPs, Ursula von der Leyen says the EU will consider authorising increased blending of renewable ethanol in petrol to reduce dependence on foreign oil*

BRUSSELS, 24 April 2026 – European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has confirmed to MEPs that the EU should consider allowing higher ethanol blending in petrol in order to defossilise Europe’s car fleet more effectively.

Von der Leyen specifically mentioned E20, a petrol blend with up to 20% renewable ethanol, as a viable alternative to fossil fuel with lesser amounts of biofuel, and suggested the Commission would look at updating the EU’s Fuel Quality Directive to authorise its use.

Across most of the EU, the current maximum ethanol blend in petrol is E10, with up to 10% renewable ethanol produced from multipurpose crops, waste and residues. Production and use of European renewable ethanol [reduces GHG emissions by 79% on average](#) compared to fossil petrol.

“The Commission confirms the role that higher biofuel blending can play in decarbonising existing vehicle fleets,” Von der Leyen wrote in a letter to three German MEPs, according to the [Bild newspaper](#). “As part of the revision of the policy framework for fuels, the Commission will consider authorising higher ethanol contents (E20), taking into account in particular any problems related to the suitability of engines in existing vehicles for this fuel, as well as the need to incentivise investment in advanced biofuels.”

This comes just as the Commission released its AccelerateEU [communication](#) aimed at assuring European energy security and reducing dependence on foreign oil, in which it also calls for increased domestic EU production of sustainable biofuels.

These are welcome signs that the Commission recognises the strategic importance of EU renewable ethanol biorefineries producing food, feed, fuel and biogenic CO<sub>2</sub> to help achieve Europe’s goals for transport decarbonization, energy independence, food security and industrial and agricultural autonomy.

These words should be followed up with urgent additional actions to unleash the potential of the domestic renewable ethanol industry for replacing fossil fuel, giving EU citizens access to cheaper renewable energy sources, boosting food and feed production and supporting EU agriculture and industry.

Bild quoted three German MEPs on the importance of approving E20:

- **Peter Liese (CDU), spokesperson for environmental and climate policy for the EPP Group:** “From an environmental policy perspective, it is clear: E20, in combination with bio-naphtha or other sustainable components, can reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from existing vehicles by just under 40%. Biofuels are also the most cost-effective option when it comes to fuel. This can be achieved immediately and without the need for new infrastructure. This is a concrete contribution to climate protection that directly affects millions of Europeans. The Commission’s announcement is a very positive sign. We expect the Commission to implement this announcement during the upcoming revision of the Renewable Energy Directive at the end of 2026 and the Fuel Quality Directive.”
- **Jens Gieseke (CDU), transport policy spokesperson for the EPP Group:** “The AccelerateEU plan confirms what we have been calling for for months: sustainable biofuels are an indispensable tool for decarbonising the transport sector quickly and in a socially responsible manner. For the automotive industry and consumers, E20 is a solution that is already working today. Manufacturers such as BMW, VW and Mercedes have been approving newer engines for several years. The revision of CO<sub>2</sub> fleet limits must now consistently reflect the contribution of biofuels to emissions reduction, so that car manufacturers also have planning certainty.”
- **Norbert Lins (CDU), Deputy Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development:** “This is a first step in the right direction: the Commission recognises that higher biofuel blends such as E20 can make an important contribution to decarbonising the existing vehicle fleet. This is the signal we have been waiting for. At the same time, E20 represents a real opportunity for the agricultural sector. Domestic bioethanol creates value in rural areas and strengthens Europe’s security of supply. The AccelerateEU plan demonstrates today that sustainable biofuels have now been fully integrated into energy policy. The Commission must now deliver on this when revising the Fuel Quality Directive.”

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Contact: Craig Winneker, ePURE Director of Communications: [winneker@epure.org](mailto:winneker@epure.org)