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PRESS STATEMENT

REPOWER EU: HOW THE SELF USE OF BIOMASS RESIDUES CAN SUPPORT EU ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

On 18 May 2022 the Commission published its REPowerEU Plan. It identifies the scaling up of biomethane as key to reducing EU reliance on Russian gas and reiterates the target set in March: 35 billion cubic metres of EU biomethane production by 2030. The plan lists a set of actions to achieve this goal: an industrial biogas and biomethane partnership; incentives to upgrade biogas into biomethane; and funding under the Cohesion Policy, recovery fund, and CAP.

CEFS Director General Marie-Christine Ribera said:

“Replacing fossil fuels used in factory processes today with bioenergy produced from agricultural biomass residues tomorrow will support EU energy independence. This goes for biogas but also for solid biomass fuels from sugar beet residues. Member States have an important part to play: their National Strategic Plans under the CAP should provide financial support for biogas production to decarbonise factory processes in the primary food processing sector.”

In the meantime, policy support is also needed. The Fit for 55 package must not raise new obstacles to sugar factories' use of biogas produced from residues. The Commission's proposal on the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) is incoherent with REPowerEU's targets to increase biogas production. In particular: the proposal to assign emissions factors to residues and wastes would prevent their use for energetic purposes. On 16 May the ENVI Committee took the right decision by voting against this proposal.

In its Communication the Commission asks Member States to consider tax measures to support REPowerEU's objectives. Unfortunately, the Commission's own proposal on the Energy Taxation Directive does quite the opposite. To take just one example: after a 10-year transition period, sustainable biomass fuels would be subject to the same minimum taxation rates as natural gas.

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