

Press release 14 September 2011

Deployment of innovative biofuels technologies, possible, but requires strong political commitment, say European biofuels stakeholders

The annual meeting of European biofuels stakeholders stressed that advanced biofuels technologies are now available and called for robust support to ensure their rapid and effective deployment in Europe.

Brussels – 14 September 2011 – At the Annual Stakeholder Plenary meeting of the European Biofuels Technology Platform (EBTP) on 14-15 September 2011, researchers, industry, academia, European Commission (EC) and environmental organisations gathered to focus on upscaling of the most promising technologies for advanced biofuels, and to discuss the best way forward for sustainability of feedstock production.

Demonstration projects highlighted by the conference have overcome many of the key technical challenges in converting waste and residues to advanced biofuels such as cellulosic ethanol, biomass to-liquid (BtL), hydrogenated vegetable oil (HVO), biojet fuel and BioDME (dimethylether).

Raffaele Liberali, Director, Directorate-General for Research & Innovation explained how the EC is supporting the development of innovative advanced bioenergy technologies through initiatives such as the European Industrial Bioenergy Initiative (EIBI), and NER300 which are financing instruments geared towards the demonstration of sustainable energy solutions. Looking at the future, he was confident that the forthcoming Horizon 2020 will provide further support across the full innovation cycle and strengthen the support for activities closer to the market.

The ongoing EC commitment to Research and Demonstration on a wide range of advanced biofuel technologies, was welcomed by Lars Hansen, Chair of the EBTP Steering Committee, who also stressed the need for policies that will support rapid deployment of sustainable biofuels.

"Europe is leading the way in many key areas of sustainable biofuels technology, and several advanced biofuels are now ready for commercial deployment," said Lars Hansen. "However a supportive regulatory framework is vital for these technologies to become cost-competitive and make a rapid and effective contribution to EU 2020 targets for renewable energy use in transport and greenhouse gas emission reduction. This will enable the European biofuels industry to compete globally."

The conference also highlighted the importance of feedstock availability, and the urgent need for clear and consistent guidance on sustainability issues across a diversity of biofuels production pathways.

The conference heard that, in particular, the ongoing debate about Indirect Land Use Change (iLUC), has dented the confidence of some bioenergy investors. To ease uncertainty, the EBTP called for a swift decision by the European Commission on iLUC policy.

"Reaching a consensus in this area has understandably proved to be challenging. Political courage is needed, now, to send strong signals to investors. Any decision should be consistent, easy to implement, and promote best performing biofuels and the rapid deployment of advanced biofuels," concluded Lars Hansen.

The proceedings and presentations of the Stakeholder Plenary Meeting and the update of the Strategic Research Agenda will be made available on www.biofuelstp.eu.

About EBTP

Founded in 2006, the European Biofuels Technology Platform is a public private partnership with the support of European Commission's Directorate General for Research and Innovation, and groups together all stakeholders interested in biofuels, from research, academia, civil society and industry across the supply chain.

Key activities of the EBTP have focused on guidance, prioritization and promotion of research, technological development and demonstration of advanced biofuels. Over the past five years, barriers to advanced biofuels have moved from technology to policy and financing. This shift in challenges is reflected in the EBTP which advocates stronger political leadership, ambitious targets as well as adequate financing and incentives to bring innovative technologies to the market.

Contact:

EBTP secretariat

Birger Kerckow

M: +49-172-1074764

secretariat@biofuelstp.eu