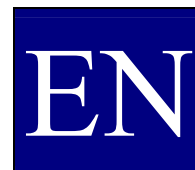




**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on Biomass

**2735th TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS and ENERGY Council meeting
Luxembourg, 8-9 June 2006**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council,

RESPONDING to the call of the European Council regarding the implementation of the Biomass Action Plan and the development of a long-term strategy for bioenergy beyond 2010,

WELCOMING the Commission Communication on a Biomass Action Plan (15741/05) and the Commission Communication on an EU Strategy for Biofuels (6153/06),

UNDERLINING that the use of biomass as an energy source should be increased,

CONVINCED that an increased use of biomass can contribute to the three main objectives of energy policy by:

- Enhancing security of supply through the diversification of energy supply sources and the reduction of dependence on external energy sources;
- Enhancing competitiveness through the development of new and efficient technologies and providing economic development and employment opportunities in rural areas;
- Promoting environmental sustainability through inter alia the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and an increase of the share of renewable energy sources, while respecting other environmental policy objectives;

RECALLING:

- The Council conclusions on renewable energy of November 2004, in particular the chapter on a biomass energy action plan (14314/04),

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- The importance of the following Directives for the use of biomass as an energy source:
Directive 2003/30/EC on the promotion of the use of biofuels or other renewable fuels for transport,
Directive 2001/77/EC on the promotion of electricity produced from renewable energy sources in the internal electricity market,
Directive 2004/8/EC on the promotion of cogeneration based on a useful heat demand in the internal energy market,
Directive 2002/91/EC on the energy performance of buildings,
Directive 2003/87/EC on a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community;

UNDERLINES the following general principles with respect to the definition of a biomass policy:

1. An integrated approach should be followed which takes account of sustainability, the impact on growth and jobs as well as environmental issues including biodiversity conservation and life cycle analysis as far as possible, in close cooperation with all relevant sectors including agriculture, forestry and waste management and addressing socio-economic, fiscal, trade and industrial policy questions.
2. The principle of subsidiarity should be respected, giving flexibility to Member States to:
 - develop their own specific policy approach and determine individual goals,
 - choose the type(s) of biomass and energy crops and the sectors in which biomass is used,
 - decide on the instruments for the promotion of bioenergy and on the instruments to achieve cost-effectiveness,
 - choose the tools for achieving the objectives of the Directive on electricity from renewable energy sources.
3. Cost-efficiency should be an important guiding principle, at national and at EU level, for an ecologically rational promotion of bioenergy, built upon an economically sustainable, long-term financial basis while maximising environmental benefits.
4. A balance should be sought between energy uses of biomass, non-energy uses of biomass and nature conservation, taking also national economic circumstances into account.
5. A balanced approach regarding domestic production and imports of biomass should be found, taking account of aspects such as competitiveness, security of supply and rural development;
6. The impact of relevant existing legislation in the energy sector should be assessed before revising such legislation; this requirement should not be seen as an obstacle to new legislative proposals.

IS OF THE VIEW THAT THE FOLLOWING ISSUES HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED AS PRIORITY:

7. Research, development and demonstration on biomass, regarding new and efficient technologies for generation and use of renewable fuels, including raw materials. This concerns in particular second-generation biofuels, bio-refineries, efficient boiler technologies, the impact of biomass fuel emissions on air pollution and market introduction aspects;

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8. Promoting the creation of well functioning, transparent and open markets for biomass at regional, EU- and global level as appropriate, taking into account environmental sustainability;
9. The removal of technical and non-technical (including administrative) barriers at EU and at national level,
10. Information campaigns targeted at farmers, forest owners, local authorities, the energy sector and consumers,
11. Increasing the use of biomass including waste for heating and cooling purposes, in particular for cogeneration and district heating,
12. Adoption of technical standards for biofuels, as well as a revision of the fuel quality Directive to allow higher blends of biofuels in petrol and diesel.

EMPHASISES:

13. The importance of promoting the cost-efficient and sustainable use of biomass in the three areas of heating and cooling, electricity production and transport and of taking action in this respect,
14. The role that public procurement can play for the promotion of biomass and its increased use, inter alia through the promotion of clean and energy-efficient vehicles and renewable energy generation in buildings,
15. The role of voluntary agreements which are a valuable alternative for the promotion of biomass use,
16. The importance of woody biomass in terms of size of the market and that it would therefore be useful to explore the development of European markets for inter alia pellets and chips, including spot markets, bearing in mind that from a national point of view regarding energy sources diversification the availability of biomass for internal use may be important,
17. In line with commitments made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the benefits that sustainable production and use of biomass can have for developing countries, and the importance of transferring energy technologies compatible with sustainable development to these countries.

WELCOMES THE COMMISSION'S INTENTION TO:

18. Bring forward a Forestry Action Plan,
19. Assess the Energy Crops Scheme and the possibility of extending it to those new Member States that are not currently eligible,
20. Examine how the total life cycle of biofuel use can count towards the CO₂ emission reduction targets under a global perspective,
21. Further encourage the development of an industry-led biofuel technology platform,
22. Review the existing standard EN 14214, inter alia with a view to including other forms of biomass, taking the relevance of climate conditions into due account, and to allowing ethanol to replace methanol,
23. Encourage the development of technical standards for solid, liquid and gaseous biofuels and for related equipment.

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URGES MEMBER STATES TO:

24. Link support to the achievement of high energy efficiency levels and tangible, cost-effective benefits for the environment and security of supply,
25. Achieve the already established indicative national targets for biofuels,
26. Create a favourable regulatory environment for investments in biomass production and the appropriate equipment and provide medium- to long-term stability and transparency for investors, also with regard to appropriate support schemes if a Member State chooses to have such a scheme.

INVITES THE COMMISSION TO:

27. Take account of the abovementioned priorities,
28. Initiate shortly a discussion about the sustainability of biomass - including by comparing different types of biomass - and to provide information about the compatibility of minimum sustainability standards for bioenergy with the Community acquis in relevant policy areas,
29. Provide information about all costs and benefits of the promotion of biomass production within the EU,
30. Bring forward proposals to encourage the cost-efficient and sustainable use of biomass for heating and cooling,
31. Establish efficiency and emission criteria for biomass installations, using inter alia the Eco-Design Directive, in particular for household biomass boilers,
32. In its ongoing review of the waste framework legislation, facilitate and further encourage the use of biomass and clean waste as fuel; review the animal by-products legislation with a view to encouraging the use of farming and food processing by-products as a renewable energy source. Such encouragement should however take into account other worthwhile uses of waste and animal by-products, including traditional uses,
33. Revise the vehicle emission testing procedure in order to take into account the use of biofuels as reference fuels for testing biofuel-powered vehicles,
34. Simplify administrative procedures for the production and use of bio-energies in the context of the CAP and assess the extension of the application of the Energy Crops Scheme to all Member States,
35. Explore the issue of simple and cost-effective measures to guarantee that biofuels are produced in a sustainable way, inter alia certification, in respect of environmental, social and technical standards, and applying to internal production as well as imported biofuels; in doing so, no technical trade barriers should be created,

INVITES

36. Member States to develop or update National Biomass Action Plans in response to the present conclusions,
37. The Commission to carry out an assessment of the implementation of relevant Community legislation in the Member States and of the actions undertaken as follow-up to these conclusions and in particular points 27 to 35, including in the light of their contribution to the achievement of the three main objectives of European energy policy, and report to the Council by the end of 2008."

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