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Agreement on reform for EU biofuels: Growth potential for bioethanol

The German Bioethanol Industry Association (BDB^e) hereby announces that on 14 April 2015 the Environmental Committee of the European Parliament declared it would accept the proposed compromise of the EU Council of Ministers from 1 April 2015 to reform the EU biofuel policy. Biofuels from residues such as straw and waste are also to be encouraged. A maximum cap of 7 per cent in relation to the energy content will be introduced for biofuels made from starch, sugar and vegetable oils. Taking into account indirect land-use changes (iLUC factors) as a penalty for European biofuels was rejected because of an insufficient scientific basis.

The BDBe sees the conclusion of the controversial discussion on EU biofuel policy as a first but still inadequate step towards clarifying the future legal framework for biofuel producers. One positive aspect is that the functional and legal arguments against introducing iLUC factors was taken into consideration. The now changed provisions of the EU Directives for Renewable Energies and Fuel Quality, however, are only valid until the end of 2020. No concrete resolutions have been made for the period after 2020. The result is that the necessary overarching conditions for investments in the production of biofuels, also from residues and waste, are lacking. The maximum cap adopted for biofuels from energy crops represents a market share of around 10 volume per cent bioethanol in petrol. Bioethanol therefore has considerable potential for growth at a current market share of 5.9 volume per cent in petrol.

Norbert Schindler, Member of the Bundestag and Chairman of the BDBe:
"This reform to EU biofuel policy is the result of a somewhat irrational

debate on biofuels. On a positive note, the EU did not bend to unjustified criticism about biofuels from some non-governmental organisations. They oppose biofuels for ideological reasons and call for the mixture of biofuels with fossil petrol and diesel as an integral part of the energy reform to be rescinded. A subsequent increase in petroleum consumption again can then be used as an argument to ban driving to the extent possible. For example, the goal is to reduce car traffic by 50%. This will mean nothing other than cars only for the wealthy and bicycles for the common man.+

Schindler emphasises: "The CO2 emissions of cars must be lowered. But the answer is not to ban driving cars. All available means including biofuels, electric vehicles and efficiency improvements must be used. Germany, with its ongoing obligation to lower CO2 emissions of fuels, is on the right path. This path also has to be enforced in the other EU member states."

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Bioethanol is the most widespread biofuel in the world and also an important component of sustainable mobility in Germany. The Bundesverband der deutschen Bioethanolwirtschaft (BDBe) represents the interests of the biofuel sector's member companies and associations, spanning agricultural production of the raw materials all the way to industrial production and processing of bioethanol and all by-products.