To:

- *Ilze Juhansone, Secretary General of the European Commission*
- *Kurt Vandenberghe, Director General of DG CLIMA, European Commission*

In copy:

- *Björn Seibert, Head of Cabinet for European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen*
- *Céline Gauer, Director General of DG ENER*
- *Edoardo Turano, Head of Unit, CLIMA.B.3 - Mobility (I): Road*
- *Jean-Louis Colson, Head of Unit, MOVE.C.1 - Land: Road transport*
- *Mark Nicklas, Head of Unit, GROW.I.2 - Decarbonisation, mobility, raw materials: Automotive, mobility industries*

Brussels, 9 June 2026

Subject: Open letter - E20 Ethanol Blends to Enable EU Transport Decarbonisation

Context: To meet EU decarbonisation targets, measures focusing only on new vehicle fleets will not be enough, and solutions for the existing fleet are urgently needed. On 7 November 2025, the EU standardisation body CEN has endorsed a technical specification enabling higher ethanol blends up to 20% (CEN/TS 18227). The specification and supporting technical report were published in December 2025; however, to implement this in EU countries, the Fuel Quality Directive (FQD) must be revised.

We call on the European Commission to prioritise the FQD revision in its 2026–2027 work programme. A revised FQD should increase the current ethanol volume cap from 10% to 20% and raise the oxygen mass limit from 3.7% to 8.0%.

Dear Ms Juhansone,

Dear Mr Vanderberghe,

On 21 April 2026, the President of the European Commission sent a letter to German MEPs Norbert Lins, Peter Liese and Jens Gieseke in which the role that higher biofuel blends can play in decarbonising the existing vehicle fleet was recognised. The President also indicated that the Commission would consider authorising petrol with a higher ethanol content ("E20") as part of the forthcoming revision of the fuels policy framework.

The signatories of this letter support a revision of the Fuel Quality Directive (FQD) to enable E20 and wish to share additional key points on the potential of E20 to further increase the use of renewable fuels in both new and existing petrol and petrol-hybrid light duty vehicles, with minimum recommendations on the changes required to the FQD to achieve this objective.

The EU sets a target of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 55% by 2030 (compared to 1990 levels) and aims to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. A total GHG emission reduction from road

transport of 86% by 2040 (vs. 2015 levels) is outlined in the Commission's 2040 Climate Target Impact Assessment which recommends an approximate economy-wide GHG reduction of 90%.

To achieve this, CO_2 **emissions must be reduced from both new and existing vehicles on EU roads.** While the Commission is preparing a revision of the CO_2 emission standards for light-duty and heavy-duty vehicles the current framework focuses primarily on reducing emissions from the new fleet sales through increased electrification. At the same time, there is an important opportunity to complement this effort by **addressing the continued and significant presence of internal combustion engine vehicles in the European fleet**.

Currently, **249 million passenger cars are registered in the EU, more than half of which run on petrol** (ACEA, 2025a). Although this numbers of new registrations is increasingly being complemented by hybrid and plug-in hybrid vehicles and the rapid growth of battery-electric vehicles, conventional and hybrid-ICE powertrains will continue to make up a substantial share of the fleet in the coming years. This potential from the current and developing EU fleet should be utilised to help meet future decarbonisation targets through an expanded use of renewable fuel blends.

Ethanol offers a practical pathway to achieve this. European renewable ethanol already delivers 81.6% average GHG reduction compared to fossil petrol (ePURE, 2026). **Transitioning from E10 to a reliable and consistent E20 could therefore lead to tangible reduction in CO_2 emissions from petrol vehicles** (CEN, 2020). With the review of the renewable energy legal framework post-2030 now ongoing, enabling higher ethanol blends as part of the future framework is a significant lever to achieve continued GHG reduction from road.

As petrol demand declines due to fleet electrification, higher ethanol percentages may be blended into the fuel pool without leading to additional demand, as shown in a 2019 study. Ethanol is a mature decarbonisation pathway that may be produced from a variety of feedstocks compliant with the sustainability criteria of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED), including maize, wheat, sugars, other cereals and starch-rich crops, and RED Annex IX-A and other feedstocks (respectively, 49.6%, 23.4%, 11.9%, 5.1% and 10% of European production as of 2024 - ePURE, 2025)

A sizeable share of vehicles recently put into circulation in the EU (and the UK) may be broadly functional with using petrol containing up to 20% ethanol (where the ethanol meets standard EN15376 and the petrol otherwise meets EN228). Further work is needed to complete the functionality and material compatibility assessment of the existing petrol fleet[1].

As the average age of vehicles in the EU continues to rise (currently 12.5 years - 2025 ACEA report) and more than half of cars still use gasoline engines (either ICE or hybrid – ACEA, 2025d), ICE and hybrid vehicles will remain a major share of the fleet despite electrification. Meanwhile, the EU risks missing its 2030 transport renewable energy target of 29%, with the 2024 share at just 11.2% (with

[1] At this time, and unless otherwise stated, manufacturers can give no guarantee regarding compatibility or any assurances regarding compliance with exhaust emission type-approval requirements in force at the time such new vehicles entered into circulation or periodic technical inspection requirements.

multipliers) and 7.4% (without multipliers; road and rail) (SHARES database, Eurostat, 2025). If such ambitious goals are to be met, all sustainable options under RED must be deployed without delay, ensuring that opportunities to enable consumers - by placing on the market technically approved fuel options with higher renewable content - are not missed. Enabling E20 would speed up fleet decarbonisation and allow both new and existing vehicles to contribute to emission reduction.

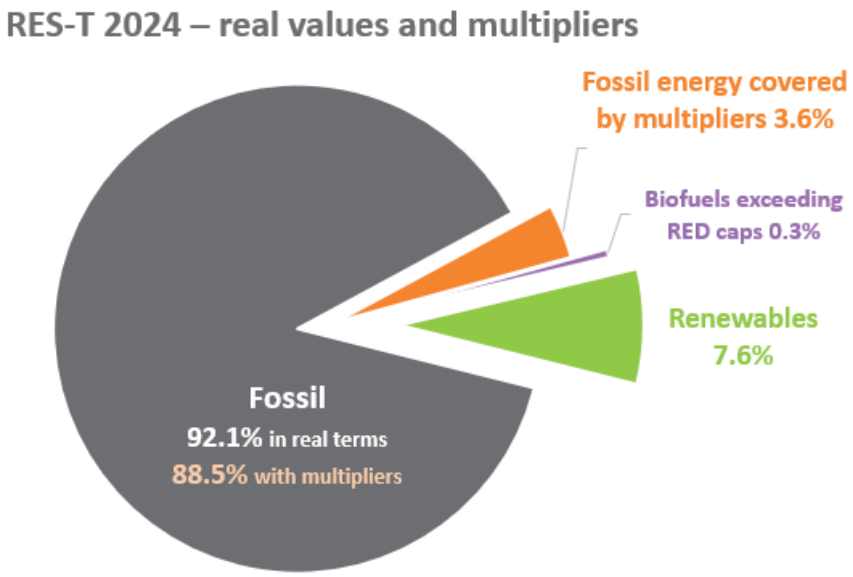
Our ask: In the revision of the renewable energy legal framework post-2030, the European Commission should **include a change in the Fuel Quality Directive without delay to enable the introduction and market availability of E20 fuels across the EU, ensuring alignment with technical specification CEN/TS 18227**. The revision should reflect a change to the ethanol limit from 10% to 20% and increase the oxygen mass limit from 3.7% to 8.0% in Annex I of Directive 98/70/EC, paving the way for the progressive rollout of E20 as the new European petrol blend.

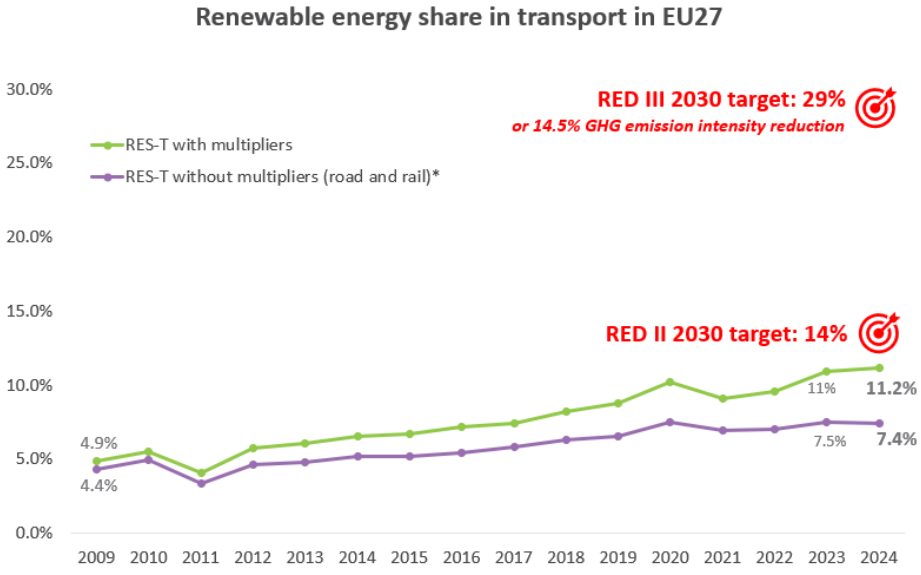
We trust these proposals will be taken into account in relevant legislative work and we remain at your disposal for any further exchange.

Sincerely,

The co-signatories

Annex





*Source: EC SHARES, 2026; *RES-T for road and rail, calculated by ePURE based on SHARES data*