

A new opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee highlights the contribution of renewable and low-carbon fuels to sustainable, affordable and socially fair mobility

On 20 October 2021, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) approved Opinion CCMI 181 “The EU mobility strategy and EU industrial value chains: automotive eco-systems approach¹”.

FuelsEurope welcome the Opinion as a balanced and inclusive analysis of the challenges and of the possible solutions for the EU mobility to contribute to the 2050 climate neutrality objective, remaining at the same time affordable to all, technology-neutral and socially fair.

While the Opinion is mainly focused on the climate and digital transition of the automotive industry, it stresses the key contribution of sustainable and low-carbon fuels to the transition of EU transport.

The EESC affirms that not only all transport modes should become sustainable, but also that sustainable alternatives should be made widely available and accessible to EU citizens: “This objective can be achieved with a smart combination of powertrains that strikes a balance between environmental protection, efficient use of renewables, economic viability, and consumer acceptance, while respecting the principle of technology neutrality”.

In particular with reference to an individual mobility that is accessible to all, the Opinion states that “massive investments” are needed to develop and reduce the cost not only of

electric, hybrid and hydrogen drivetrains, but also of “de-fossilised fuels for conventional drivetrains that will still be present in the fleet for a long time. The pace of uptake of these powertrains and fuels depends on the enabling regulatory framework and the payback periods for these investments”.

Mentioning the EU’s Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, the EESC stresses that making all modes of transport more sustainable “requires the uptake of low and zero-emission vehicles as well as renewable and low-carbon fuels for road, waterborne and air transport”.

FuelsEurope highlighted a similar inclusive approach to decarbonisation of transport in its [Clean Fuels for All](#), and recommended measures for an enabling regulatory framework in its [Fit for 55 Recommendations](#).

The Opinion of the EESC also calls for a socially fair transition. A dramatic impact on the quantity of jobs in the automotive value chain is expected, and this will require appropriate labour market policies to leave no one behind. At the same time, new jobs will be created and a smooth transition to another job should be organised. Looking at the new opportunities, the Opinion mentions also alternative fuels and that “The potential progress in the use of sustainable biomass should be looked at closely, as there are also opportunities for the creation of new jobs here, with due regard, at the same time, to the need to stay within the ecological

¹ [The EU mobility strategy and EU industrial value chains: automotive eco-systems approach \(own-initiative opinion\)](#)

boundaries”. The recently published study of the Imperial College London Consultants for Concawe [“Sustainable biomass availability in the EU towards 2050 \(RED II Annex IX Part A/B\)”](#) is very relevant in this respect as it concludes that the availability of biomass – with no harm to impact on biodiversity or other environmental aspects and no competition with food, energy and bioproducts - is more than sufficient to support the production of

advanced and waste-based biofuels to fulfil a substantial part of the future demand of liquid fuels in all mode of transport.

FuelsEurope will continue contributing to the policy debate on the 2050 climate neutrality objective and to the appropriate shaping of the Fit for 55 regulatory proposals.

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FuelsEurope, the voice of the European petroleum refining industry

FuelsEurope represents with the EU institutions the interest of 41 companies operating refineries in the EU. Members account for almost 100% of EU petroleum refining capacity and more than 75% of EU motor fuel retail sales.

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