

Highlights CT4

Biomass mobilisation and sustainability

3rd CA-RES IV Plenary Meeting

9th-10th November 2022

Session 5: Sustainable forest biomass mobilisation

This session started with an update from DG-ENER on EU bioenergy policies with a comprehensive explanation of the forthcoming Implementing Regulation on the sustainability criteria for forest biomass and an overview of the newly adopted EC Guidance on biomass issues in the EU ETS. Difficulties in reporting on the use of sustainable biomass are to be expected in the short term.

The session continued with a presentation of a representative of the Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment who presented Finland's ambition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2030 and being carbon neutral by 2035, mainly based on bioenergy (80% of the renewable energy mix, mainly waste and residues from forest industry). This will be compatible with maintaining the Finnish forest as a carbon sink (better forest management and cascade use) and will be market-driven (no subsidies will be needed). Finland argued for more exchanges of information between Member States but also for a slowdown in harmonisation in order to take into account national specificities. Some evidence of compliance is still difficult to verify in practice (e.g. LULUCF at sourcing level) and uncertainties for economic operators are increasing due to the ongoing revision of REDII.

The session continued with an overview by DG TRADE about the current export restrictions on wood following the economic crisis and the Russian's invasion of Ukraine.

The session concluded by a panel discussion during which questions emerged about the sustainability criteria compliance if no subsidies are needed and for non-ETS sectors.

Session 9: Biomethane roadmap to 2030

The session started with an update from DG-ENER on the REPowerEU Action Plan for Biomethane and a presentation of the new Biomethane Industrial Partnership (BIP), a public-private partnership whose objectives are to steer cooperation and to address bottlenecks (issuing recommendations, guidance, etc.) in order to reach the 35 bcm target of biomethane by 2030.

The Danish Energy Agency presented the national target to cover gas consumption with 100% green gas by 2030 (10TWh) combined with a significant decrease (40%) in gas consumption. The increase in biogas production will be made possible by specific support schemes (feed-in tariffs and tenders) and

will require the adaptation of the Danish gas grid. The main biomass feedstocks will be manure and industrial waste. The Danish authorities plan to reduce the use of energy crops and ban the use of maize from 2025.

The session continued with the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy who presented the national program to reach 2 bcm (or more) of biomethane by 2030. To achieve this target, the Netherlands is tackling existing administrative barriers (e.g. permits) and is implementing a blending obligation for energy suppliers as from 2025. Inconsistencies have also been identified between EU ETS (GoOs do count), national inventory (GoOs do not count) and REDII targets.

The session concluded by a panel discussion during which concerns were expressed about the implementation of support schemes for biogas in transport sector. Portugal, Spain and Italy also presented the progress made in their respective national strategies for biomethane.

Session 15: Combined session CT4/ CT5 on supervision: supervision of certification bodies by Member States

A representative of the European Commission started this session with an update on voluntary schemes for forest biomass. Up till now 2 voluntary schemes are recognised by the Commission for forest biomass. Due to art 30-9 (REDII) and art 17 (Implementing Regulation) the role of Member States with regards to supervision of certification bodies is going to change. Main questions listed on this topic were: 1. Certification Bodies (CBs) can ask which Member State is the lead-supervisor. How to appoint the lead-supervisor between Member States? 2. Who is supervising the CB when controlling raw materials from outside EU? 3. How to deal with differences between Member States with regards to energy mix (import/export/feedstock etc.)? These questions were already further elaborated upon by a task force consisting of several Member States. Results of the task force were presented and discussed on the basis of the following questions: 1. Cooperate with REFUREC (group regulators of biofuels) on these issues? 2. What steps do require formal decision? 3. Who is the best party to do so? Participants concluded that cooperation between all Member States is preferred, for instance in CA-RES and via an EC Expert Group.