



BIOEAST AS A DRIVING FORCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL



High-level conference on deploying sustainable and circular bioeconomies in Central and Eastern Europe in the context of food, agriculture, natural resources and bioeconomy related policies

WHEN: 21st February 2020, from 9:00 a.m.

WHERE: Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic to the EU, Avenue de Cortenbergh 79, 1000 Brussels

BIOENERGY AND NEW VALUE ADDED MATERIALS

THEMATIC WORKING GROUP CONCEPT NOTE

Biljana Kulišić, chair

In light of the new position of bioenergy within bioeconomy, which shifts the focus from market based energy production to the climate benefits that a bioenergy project could achieve, such as GHG emission savings from the whole supply chain, generation of new value-added products from byproducts of bioenergy, sustainable intensification of agriculture, increasing soil carbon and organic matter, etc., this TWG focuses on two bioenergy related concepts:

1. Integrating the existing bioenergy plants within the bioeconomy by generating new value-added products from by-products of bioenergy (waste heat, ash, CO₂, digestate and nutrients...)
2. Developing new bioenergy plants that would either increase the competitiveness of the agro-food and forestry sector of the BioEast macro-regions or benefit from producing a range of bio-based products in biorefineries.

Lessons learned from the previous decade indicate that, although bioenergy demand is determined in the energy sector, the trade-offs are related with sectors where biomass supply occurs: agriculture and forestry. Bioenergy including biofuels represents about 1/5th of the biomass demand within the EU 28 bioeconomy. The material use including the chemical sector go up to 1/5th of the total biomass demand. Unfortunately, today in Central and Eastern European countries the public discussion concentrates only on food-feed and energy aspects. The broader, systemic approach of biomass supply and demand is needed. As such, it could make undesirable agro-food and forestry disturbances if well-rounded concerted policy is lacking. Bioenergy production did not achieve synergy with rural development policies, not because bioenergy itself but because of poor national policy framework. RED II¹ is minimizing the space for negative practice in bioenergy but it is up to the agriculture and regional policies to maximise the benefits from bioenergy production in rural areas. Moreover, the agricultural policy, also including rural

¹ Directive (EU) 2018/2001 of the European Parliament and of The Council of 11 December 2018 on the Promotion of the Use of Energy from Renewable Sources



development, should establish a strong influence of the biomass supply covering the food-feed, material-chemical use and energy-fuel demand.

A new approach is required, the biomass potential allows to produce food-feed and energy-fuel, but the value-added process and the sustainable use of the available bioresources requires the material use including the chemical sectors development. The benefit to the primary production sector cannot be achieved without the cascading use of the available biomass.

Synthesizing and building on the outcome of the 1st day high-level conference, the BIOEAST Thematic Working Group on Bioenergy and New Value Added Materials organizes a half-day thematic discussion. The discussions are planned to be organized in two consecutive panels: an open discussion and a closed section only for TWG members. The open session aims to introduce and inform the member states representatives into the future research and innovation priorities and funding schemes of the next Horizon Europe framework program with specific regard to bio-based industries including the energy sector. During the closed panel discussions, the TWG members will discuss the group's terms of reference, action plan in the context of the future BIOEAST Strategic Research and Innovation agenda.

The thematic discussion will focus on two challenges:

1. If not agriculture, which sector should lead in developing concerted policy on bioenergy (separate frameworks for liquid, gaseous and solid biofuels)?
2. How bioenergy production can increase the competitiveness of the traditional bioeconomy sectors in the BioEast macro-region? What are the expectations from the farmers' and food producers in contrast to their capacities?

