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The EU's renewable revolution: promoting bio-based products in public procurement a good start

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At the 'BioEconomyUtrecht2016', the European Bioeconomy Alliance (EUBA), an informal alliance of leading European organizations representing sectors active in the bioeconomy, called on the EU to lead a worldwide transition towards a renewable, low-carbon economy.

Europe has all of the means necessary to become a global leader in the bioeconomy, if its potential is realized and embraced by European policy makers.

The bioeconomy encompasses the sustainable production of renewable resources and their conversion into food, feed, fibers, materials, chemicals and bioenergy through efficient, innovative technologies. It is already worth €2 trillion annually and employs 22 million Europeans, but holds the potential to significantly further boost competitiveness and long-term economic growth. At a time when the pressure is on to deliver on post-Paris climate commitments, the bioeconomy offers a viable solution to today's fossil carbon equivalents and has the potential to save up to 2.5 billion metric tons of CO₂ per year.



European
Bioeconomy
Alliance

"Europe has, in abundance, the renewable resources, industrial base and know-how to lead its own bioeconomy revolution," said Jamie Fortescue, Managing Director of Starch Europe, a member of

the Primary Food Processors speaking on behalf of the Alliance. "What we now need, to attract more contributors and investment, is open and inclusive discussion underpinned by unwavering, cross-sectoral, political commitment. We want to look back at Utrecht in five years' time and marvel at what has been achieved in the interim."

In advance of today's conference – the fourth Bioeconomy Stakeholders' Conference that has taken place so far - EUBA members, together with other stakeholders in the growing bio-based community, produced a set of recommendations on how Europe can promote bio-based products in public procurement. The report outlines what needs to be done at EU, regional and national level to create dynamic new markets for home-grown, EU-sourced bio-based products. The benefits are reciprocal, emphasize the authors of the report.

As Peter Schintlmeister, Life Science Expert at the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy, Austria, and Chair of the Expert Group said:

"Public procurers get access to greener, more sustainable and fossil free products while the bioeconomy gets a boost by way of access to a market accounting for nearly 20% of all purchases in the EU".

The 15 recommendations include promotional campaigns targeting specific materials, regions and

sectors, the roll-out of standards and labels, benchmarking and goal setting, but also manifesto definition, targeted outreach and general communication, technical support to procurers, as well as intervention on legislation if and where possible. Each individual recommendation is driven by the overarching principle of transitioning to an ever more sustainable economy. The Expert Group identified multiple areas for action to help grow such a large and diverse sector and acknowledged that it will take time and effort to make a significant impact compared to fossil-based products.

Speaking on behalf of the EUBA, Pekka Pesonen, Secretary General of Copa and Cogeca commented: 'We are at a pivotal moment in the development of the European bioeconomy. The EU's strategy is currently being reviewed and we find that we have both great achievements to celebrate as well as some much needed new measures to put in place. Financial tools are needed to boost innovation and investment in existing and new bio-based value chains. In addition, boosting public procurement of bio-based products is one example of how Europe can develop renewable product markets and accelerate the move towards a circular bioeconomy.'

"The potential is there to be harnessed," added EUBA member EuropaBio's Industrial Biotech Council Chair, Stephan Tanda, "And, with the right support, Europe will lead the way in the development of a world leading bioeconomy."(KL)

<http://www.europabio.org/press>

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