

The voice of European Bioenergy

## Biogas: the crucial puzzle piece to achieving EU energy security and enabling a green future

***Achieving EU ambitious target of 55% CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions by 2030 will require fundamental changes to the energy sector. It is of paramount importance to promote all sustainable fuels and their infrastructure. Biogas is a flexible, reliable and renewable energy carrier, an enabler of significant CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reductions and carbon removals.***

On 5 July, Bioenergy Europe released its [2022 Statistical Report Biogas](#) in collaboration with the [European Biogas Association](#) (EBA). The report dives into the recent trends of consumption and production of biogas in Europe. Its accompanying [Policy Brief](#) presents the most relevant legislative recommendations to promote the biogas sector as key player in EU's energy transition.

The biogas market grew steadily in the previous years, with a growth rate of 4% in 2019-2020. However, according to the most recent data, the EU still heavily relies on fossil gas. Latest trends show a persistent increase of use of natural gas since 2014. In 2020 natural gas was 22,21 times the amount of biogas used. These findings urge for a radical shift in policy design and investments to promote the penetration of renewables alternatives such as biogas and biomethane (also known as upgraded biogas) offering a stable and viable substitute to fossil fuels.

This was also recognised in the RePowerEU Plan - the European Commission's response to the energy market disruption caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. According to the strategy, not only must Europe correct its trajectory in order to become climate neutral by 2050, but it must also disentangle itself from imports from unreliable partners. Despite these positive steps forward in the recognition of the bioenergy sector, the EC strategy still lacks a clear target for solid biomass on top of those for biogas and biomethane. Given the current situation, the increasing energy prices and the EU's higher ambition to get away from fossil fuels, bioenergy as a whole must be recognised as one of the key solutions in order to increase EU energy security and promote a just transition.

Biogas is a versatile renewable fuel that can be used to decarbonise heat or electricity. When upgraded to biomethane, it can also be injected into the existing gas grid or used as a green fuel in transportation. Sustainable biogas production also reduces waste and methane emissions from manure and landfilling, and limits dependency on mineral-based fertilisers. This aspect is of particular importance today when considering recent fertiliser shortages and price increases.

Compared to EU fossil fuels, biogas can save up to 240% of GHG emissions and biomethane up to 202% because powerful greenhouse gases, such as methane, that would have been emitted through uncontrolled fermentation of organic waste and agricultural residues are eliminated. Waste and agriculture are the two most important sources of methane emissions today. Biomethane production has more than doubled in the past five years, and last year grew at an annualised rate of 25%. To reach the 35bcm target as presented in RePowerEU Plan, 5.000 new plants should start operation in the next eight years and the annual growth should be stable at 28%. More should be done to promote biogas and biomethane consumption as a complement to renewable electricity and recognise these saved emissions.

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Feedstock utilised in biogas generation varies greatly by country, with new plants increasingly employing manure and other residues, food waste, wastewater and sewage sludge. Starting in 2023, the EU will mandate separate collection of biowaste, which will increase the amount of food waste available for biogas generation. Member States must implement separate bio-waste collection as soon as possible and reinforce their strategies aimed at energy and materials recovery in their waste treatment. Higher quality waste streams will allow for increasing circularity in the bioeconomy, with environmental and socioeconomic benefits.

*“The EU should avoid retroactive changes in the Renewable Energy Directive sustainability criteria, allowing for legal certainty for operators”* says **Jean-Marc Jossart, Secretary General of Bioenergy Europe**. *“All EU policies should be aligned in the Fit for 55 Package to equally promote all sustainable fuels and their respective infrastructure”*.

**Giulia Cancian, Secretary General of the European Biogas Association**, also stressed that *“the European biogas market continues to scale up, with biomethane production growing by 25% in 2020. To reach our energy goals, we should anchor the 35bcm biomethane target to binding EU legislation, along with national indicative targets, and facilitate the injection of biomethane into existing gas networks”*.

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**Notes to editors:**

- [Bioenergy Europe](#) is the voice of the European bioenergy industry. It aims to develop a sustainable bioenergy market based on fair business conditions. Founded in 1990, Bioenergy Europe is a non-profit, Brussels-based international organisation bringing together more than 41 associations and 143 companies, as well as academia and research institutes from across Europe.
- Bioenergy Europe's [Annual Statistical Reports](#) provide insights on the development of the European bioenergy market in order to support industry leaders, decision-makers, investors and all bioenergy professionals to better understand the status of bioenergy in Europe. With more than 150 graphs and figures, readers can get an in-depth overview of the bioenergy sector in Europe.
- [European Biogas Association \(EBA\)](#) The EBA fully believes in the future potential of renewable gas in Europe. Founded in February 2009, the Association is committed to the deployment of sustainable biogas and biomethane production and use throughout the continent. Today EBA represents nearly 8.000 stakeholders across Europe, covering the whole biogas and biomethane value chain.

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