



Position Paper

Bioeconomy – a motor for the circular economy

The bioeconomy comprises the production of renewable biological resources and their conversion into food, feed, bio-based products and bioenergy via innovative, efficient technologies. In this regard, it is the biological motor of a future circular economy, which is based on optimal use of resources and the production of primary raw materials from renewably sourced feedstock. Developing ways to use our land and renewable raw materials in the most sustainable, efficient and productive way will be an essential goal for the future. Only by finding such solutions can we address the grand challenges facing Europe and the wider world of resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and of providing sufficient food, energy and materials for a growing global population.

The 7th EU Environment Action Programme to 2020 (EAP) sets out a pathway for Europe to move towards a more circular economy, where resource productivity is increased and waste virtually eliminated. The integrated biorefinery can play a key role in this transition. Biorefineries are 'factories' that valorise every component of the renewable feedstock to produce a wide range of everyday products made from renewable resources. In effect, the concept of biorefineries processing biomass is analogous to that of petrochemical refinery processes but biorefineries use renewable feedstocks rather than finite fossil carbon resources. Increasingly, they will play a vital role in developing and adding value to the principles of a truly circular bioeconomy and 'zero waste' society.

Europe now needs to implement an ambitious circular economy strategy, which provides clear, long-term policy signals, measures and incentives in order to engage stakeholders in the creation of smarter and more sustainable products, processes and partnerships. We must ensure the development of a coherent, holistic, supportive policy framework for the circular economy and for bio-based economy along the value-chain. Ideally, it should clearly reward industries using renewable raw materials rather than fossil carbon sources. The integration of the bioeconomy and circular economy policy into agricultural, forestry, industrial, regional, environmental, climate, trade, energy, waste and innovation policies is also crucial to ensure the transition to a renewables-based society.

To further enable our sectors to boost the transition towards a circular bioeconomy, the European Bioeconomy Alliance calls for the implementation of concrete measures and long-term support across the following four themes:

1. Fostering of investment

- Creation of a longer term predictability framework for investment and change, crossing all relevant policy sectors
- Promotion and facilitation of combined financing mechanisms for investments in logistics, infrastructure and innovative technologies to unlock the potential of agriculture and forest-based sector for the circular bioeconomy
- Establishment of financing mechanisms for the development of flagship and demonstration biorefineries through the simplification of rules and alignment of the basic funding principles of European and national support programmes (including Horizon 2020, European Structural & Investment Funds, European Investment Bank and national programmes)
- Prioritisation of industrial biotechnology not only in the Bio-Based Industries Joint Undertaking (BBI JU) but also in Horizon 2020 (e.g. under Leadership in Enabling and Industrial Technologies (LEIT) and Societal Challenge 2)

2. Facilitation of access to sustainable feedstocks

- Support and promote the increase of agricultural and forestry productivity and efficiency and the development of measures to increase biomass mobilisation, collection, harvest, storage and transportation of renewable raw materials, especially agricultural and forestry residues. The role of producers groups should be enhanced in this respect



- Promotion of separate collection of bio-waste and renewable raw materials in municipal solid waste at national and regional level
- Modification of the Landfill Directive to ensure a gradual phase out of landfilling and diversion of bio-based feedstocks towards biorefineries and organic recycling facilities
- Avoid the creation of legislative barriers for biomass from the food chain in other products and processes. Any agricultural raw materials and products that are not edible or that are not intended for human consumption should not be considered food waste, so as not to hinder the global resource efficiency of the food chain.
- Establish a harmonised and reliable definition and methodology to measure food waste to avoid the creation of legislative barriers for biomass from the food chain to be used in other products. Any part of the agricultural raw materials that is not edible or that is not intended for human consumption, should not be considered food waste, so as not to hinder the global resource efficiency of the food chain.

3. Open and transparent dialogue around the development of the circular economy in Europe

- Acknowledging the fundamental role of the bioeconomy within the circular economy and making strong links between the development of each through future policy
- Helping to communicate on the benefits of the circular economy and the need for it to be developed in a smart, sustainable and inclusive way which recognises and embraces regional opportunities, resources and specialisations
- Engaging with civil society, together with the whole bio-based value chain, to encourage the debate on shaping a more competitive resource efficient circular bioeconomy for Europe

4. Market creation measures

- Implementation of Europe-wide public procurement schemes and communications campaigns to raise awareness of the benefits of sustainable bio-based products and processes. Requirement or recommendation to give preference to bio-based products that are readily available on the market and are price competitive
- Continued development and application of clear and unambiguous European and international standards, which would verify claims about biobased products in the future (e.g. biodegradability, bio-based content, recyclability, sustainability)
- The monitoring framework for the circular economy with indicators on the market uptake of bio-based products
- Stable and coherent policy framework regarding the contribution of sustainable and renewable low-carbon fuels in transport, in the Renewable Energy Directive and the 2030 energy and climate package
- The implementation of the Lead Market Initiative recommendations on bio-based products
- Incentives for the use of renewable raw materials in sectors such as the automotive, coatings, construction, cosmetics, fertiliser, homecare, pharmaceutical and textiles industries
- Modification of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive to promote the use of bio-based (rather than fossil carbon based) materials
- Include biodegradability and compostability, where applicable, in upcoming product design requirements under the Ecodesign Directive.

About European Bioeconomy Alliance

The European Bioeconomy Alliance (EUBA) is an alliance of leading European organisations representing sectors active in the bioeconomy – agriculture, forestry, biotechnology, sugar, starch, vegetable oils, pulp and paper, bioplastics, renewable ethanol, and research & innovation.

Members of the European Bioeconomy Alliance:

Starch Europe European Starch Industry Association	EuropaBio The European Association for Bioindustries	CEPI Confederation of European Paper Industries
PFP Primary Food Processors	EUBP European Bioplastics	CEPF Confederation of European Forest Owners
FTP Forest-based Sector Technology Platform	ePURE European Renewable Ethanol Producers Association	CEFS European Association of Sugar Producers
FEDIOL The EU Vegetable Oil & Proteinmeal Industry	COPA-COGECA European Farmers and European Agri-Cooperatives	BIC Bio-based Industries Consortium