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Joint Statement

From the EU Biofuels Chain on the European Commission Communication on food security

The European Commission has sent a welcome signal about the urgent need to strengthen EU food security – one that recognises the strategic importance of European agriculture, calls for an increase in production by using fallow land, and highlights the urgent need to reduce and diversify imports of resources such as energy, fertiliser and animal feed.

The EU Biofuels Chain – a coalition representing Europe's farmers and agri-cooperatives, vegetable oil production, renewable ethanol and biodiesel sectors – stands in solidarity with Ukraine and supports efforts to reinforce global capacity to deal with consequences of this crisis on food and energy markets. Our sectors are well-placed to play a major role, as we are at the crossroads of food and feed production, fossil-fuel substitution and European energy independence, GHG emissions savings and the domestic bioeconomy.

In the Communication's section dedicated to food security and affordability in the EU – and without relying on any formal national decisions or impact assessment – the Commission expressed its support for Member States' actions to reduce the blending proportion of biofuels. The EU Biofuels Chain considers this a contradiction of the Commission's own statements in the RePowerEU Communication about the importance of boosting domestic sources of renewable energy.

To achieve food security goals without sacrificing EU ambitions on energy independence and climate-change mitigation, we believe the Commission needs to take additional factors into account:

- **The EU biofuels industry makes a strategic contribution to Europe's food and energy security.** EU biofuels production creates food, feed *and* fuel, significantly strengthening Europe's strategic autonomy by offsetting the need to import animal feed and displacing the use of crude oil in transport. Our sectors are vital to ensuring that the EU has additional domestic sources of high-protein and cellulosic animal feed as they

23 produce critical renewable liquid fuels for the transport sector. There does not have to be a trade-off between the EU's food security goals, its climate goals and its independence objectives. Operators are diverting commodities from biofuels to food without public intervention. Our sectors and the market are able to readjust and reallocate commodities where needed. Supporting the reduction of biofuels blending sends the wrong signal, at a moment when European agriculture is being called upon to produce more while continuing to make progress on sustainability.

- **There is no correlation between biofuels and food affordability.** The European Commission regularly confirms that EU biofuel production is sustainable. Cultivation of feedstock used in biofuel production compared to total agricultural commodities availability in the EU is limited and related environmental impacts are low. As the Commission has stated, there is currently no problem of food supply in Europe, but rather of food affordability. With increased production, use of fallow land and continued domestic supply of animal feed, EU agriculture can rise to the production challenge as well as to the issue of global food security. The EU should avoid encouraging actions that create additional market instability.
- **Unilateral actions by EU Member States to reduce incorporation of biofuels have direct and indirect negative consequences.** A few EU Member States have announced they will suspend biofuel blending obligations in recent weeks – decisions driven by concerns not about food prices, but about fuel prices. Unfortunately, the Commission's communication expresses support for such actions, putting them into the context of food security in a way that is likely to seriously undermine Green Deal ambitions, jeopardize the internal market and food security, and hamper efforts to ensure Europe's energy independence. Suspending biofuels blending would create additional demand in Europe for fossil fuel, driving fuel prices up with potentially far-reaching social impacts. It would also threaten EU biofuels production capacity and investments at a time when such renewable fuels are important to achieving EU Green Deal goals – with an impact on longer-term capacity, including jeopardising the advanced and waste-based biofuels market.

The EU Biofuels Chain remains committed to delivering sustainable solutions to strengthen EU energy, food and feed independence, decarbonise the European transport sector, support European farmers, and contribute to the EU's long-term vision of achieving carbon neutrality by mid-century. Specifically, we urge the Commission to not encourage Member States to reduce their blending biofuels mandates, considering the negative effects this would have.

We look forward to working constructively with the EU and national governments to ensure that the issues raised by the current crisis are addressed taking into account our strategic importance.

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CEFS – represents European beet sugar manufacturers, cane sugar producers and refiners.

CEPM – represents the maize chain: corn, maize silage, maize seed, and sweet corn.

C.I.B.E. –sugar beet growers. It represents the interests of beet growers.

Copa and Cogeca – represents European farmers and agri-cooperatives.

European Biodiesel Board (EBB) – represents the European biodiesel industry.

European Oilseed Alliance (EOA) – represents European oilseed producing organizations.

European renewable ethanol association (ePURE) - represents the European renewable ethanol producers.

FEDIOL – represents the interests of the European vegetable oil and protein meal industry.

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