



AVIATION SECTOR AND NGOS AGREE ON SUSTAINABILITY OF FUTURE FUELS

News / Airlines



Given that EU leaders have committed to achieving a net-zero-carbon economy by 2050, there is a growing focus on how to accelerate the transition towards climate-neutral aviation. As the European Union considers new policies to support sustainable aviation fuels, including via the ReFuelEU Aviation initiative, a group of aviation companies, research organisations and environmental groups have come together to advise EU policymakers on how to maximise sustainability.

The Fuelling Flight initiative was convened by the European Climate Foundation (ECF) and ClimateWorks Foundation (CWF) to provide recommendations on the sustainability aspects of the EU's policy design to support Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF). Technical advice was provided by the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT). Parties endorsing the Fuelling Flight initiative share the vision that ramping up SAF in Europe can only be done once and therefore must be done in the right manner. One of the key elements is a regulatory framework that guarantees future-proof sustainability requirements. This cornerstone is needed to build-up production capacity and organise feedstock value chains while avoiding investments that either fail to deliver emission reductions or cause unintended environmental impacts.

These guiding principles have been endorsed by the following organisations:



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“Europe must ensure that future policies only promote the most sustainable fuels for reducing the climate impact of aviation, and the EU needs to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past,” said Pete Harrison, Executive Director for EU Policy at the ECF. “The current Renewable Energy Directive does not ensure that fuels used in Europe meet the sustainability standards desired by civil society nor of leading airlines. In the Fueling Flight initiative, aviation companies, research organisations and environmental groups have now reached agreement on this important topic, and we propose shared guidelines on how to minimise environmental impacts. Policymakers should take this into consideration when defining a policy framework that is fair, affordable and meets the highest sustainability standards without compromise.”

Recommendations

The paper makes various recommendations, including:

- to prioritize e-fuels and fuels made from wastes and residues;
- exclude biofuels produced from dedicated cropland;
- to execute case-by-case assessments of local environmental impacts;
- and to support multiple technology pathways.

Next Steps

We will explore complementary aspects to ensure that truly sustainable SAF becomes available in Europe at reasonable cost and in adequate volumes. With this addition, we believe we will have

covered all critical elements to be considered by policy makers.

Pieter Elbers, CEO of KLM commented: "With the COVID-19 crisis, sustainability is even more of an issue on the airline's agenda for the future. At KLM, we remain committed to our 'Fly Responsibly' initiative, our sustainability ambitions, and The road ahead will therefore be strengthened. The rejuvenation of the fleet continues, and the increase in the production of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) are priority axes to achieve our carbon reduction objectives. 'Fueling Flight' initiative, we encourage European policymakers to define a legal framework that meets the highest sustainability standards. At the same time, we advocate affordable pricing for sustainable aviation fuel, coupled with equal demands for All parties. The path is thus cleared for a faster increase in SAFs, which will help us reduce our impact on the planet and accelerate our ambitions for sustainable aviation. "

Here is what Pete Harrison, European Policy Executive Director at the European Climate Foundation told: "Europe must ensure that future policies promote only the most sustainable fuels to reduce the impact of aviation on the climate, and it must avoid repeating the mistakes of the past." "As part of the 'Fueling Flight' initiative, airlines, research institutes and environmental groups have now reached agreement on this important topic, and we are proposing common guidelines on how to minimize the impacts Policy makers should take this into account when defining a fair and affordable policy framework to meet the highest standards of sustainability without compromise. "

A comment from Maarten van Dijk, Managing Director of SkyNRG: "To achieve aviation climate goals, it is essential to start rapidly increasing SAF production capacity, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, including governments and NGOs. Stable and long-term policy frameworks term are essential to allow the increase in capacity, and the explicit exclusion of raw materials and unsustainable supply chains is - in our opinion - an important element of a future policy. That is why we are proud to be one of the companies participating in this Fueling Flight initiative. We only have one chance to get it right. "

Andrew Murphy, Aviation Director at Transport and Environment (T&E) commented : "The aviation fuels policy that Europe is launching this year will be crucial in determining whether the airline industry is finally on the path to sustainability. Europe must avoid repeating the mistakes of the past by putting end support for biofuels from crops and instead supporting new fuels, especially e-fuels derived from additional renewable electricity. Today's statement is an important recognition of this need by a wide range of actors ".



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