

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002417/24
to the Commission**

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(5 November 2024)

Subject: Principle of technology neutrality for maritime transport fuels

The principle of technology neutrality for fuels is an essential pillar in ensuring a fair and sustainable energy transition in the maritime transport sector. It demands that all innovative technologies have equal opportunities for development and deployment, thus fostering research and investment in various low-emission solutions. In particular, biofuels and biogas constitute viable alternatives for the medium term, being as they are more affordable technologies than expensive synthetic fuels. These fuels can make a decisive contribution to reducing CO₂ emissions, while at the same time providing maritime operators and Member States investing in them with a greater range of choice without impinging on their unique characteristics. They should this be subsidised from ETS income.

In view of this:

1. What does the Commission intend to do to enforce the principle of technology neutrality for fuels in the maritime transport sector, thus ensuring all energy solutions are treated equally?
2. How does it also intend to support and encourage the development and adoption of biofuels and biogas as sustainable transitional solutions in order to achieve the above objectives?

Submitted: 5.11.2024

Answer given by Mr Hoekstra on behalf of the European Commission

(20 January 2025)

The design and the rules of the extension of the EU Emissions Trading System to maritime transport (ETS Maritime) ⁽¹⁾ and FuelEU Maritime Regulation ⁽²⁾, are broadly based on the principle of technological neutrality.

Shipping operators are free to decide which fuels and technologies they use in their efforts to comply with these regulations. In addition, the use of renewable fuels, including sustainable biofuels, in maritime is incentivised under the Renewable Energy Directive ⁽³⁾.

The only restriction in FuelEU is on biofuels that are produced from food and feed in order to avoid indirect land-use impacts. The use of such biofuels is disincentivised by the regulation in accordance with the provisions included in the Renewable Energy Directive.

In line with the technology neutrality of the above-mentioned initiatives, the EU funding instruments covering targeting alternative fuels, like the Innovation Fund ⁽⁴⁾ or Horizon Europe ⁽⁵⁾, are covering all renewable and low carbon fuels regardless of whether they are of biological or non-biological origin.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2023/959>

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/1805>

⁽³⁾ https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/renewable-energy/renewable-energy-directive-targets-and-rules/renewable-energy-directive_en

⁽⁴⁾ https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/innovation-fund_en

⁽⁵⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en