

UPEI DECISIONS FOLLOWING ITS GENERAL MEETING (7,8/04/2022)

Board elections and message on energy crisis impact on the sector

Following its Spring General Meeting, held on 7 and 8 April 2022, UPEI, the voice of Europe's independent fuel suppliers, is pleased to announce the appointment of two members of the Presiding Board.

- Johan Deleu (Brafco/VARO, Belgium) has been elected President until October 2022 (until UPEI Autumn General Meeting).
- Carsten Müller (MEW/Kuttenkeuler GmbH, Germany) has been elected Vice President for a three-year period starting immediately as of 8 April 2022.

They will serve alongside Vice Presidents Erik de Vries (NOVE, The Netherlands), Christian Heise (DCC, Denmark) and Ivan Indráček, (SČS, Czech Republic).

In the second part of its statutory meeting, the members of UPEI held a debate on the energy crisis prompted by the post-COVID-19 economic recovery and amplified by the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. They agreed that the crisis accelerated the need for the European Union and its partners in Europe to drastically reduce their dependency on fossil fuels imported from Russia and to maximise their pressure on the Russian regime to stop the invasion.

In this context, the members of UPEI stood ready to provide information, notably to the EU institutions, on the consequences of an embargo on Russian fossil fuels imports, a measure which is more and more seriously envisaged as the war in Ukraine tragically affects the civilian population. Indeed, the EU Member States would be very diversely affected by such an embargo, depending on their current import rates and their capabilities to rapidly adapt their energy infrastructures to diversify these imports. We believe it is very important to assess and address these differences.

Moreover, to accelerate this drastic reduction while at the same time move even faster towards a carbon-free energy system, UPEI and its members re-stated their strong support for a multiple offering of sustainable alternative fuels (such as biofuels including HVO, biogas, efuels), most of which can be quickly scaled up and offer immediate reduction of dependency while using the currently existing infrastructures. This requires for policymakers to come back to the technology neutrality principle and not to focus all legislative, policy or investment efforts on electricity, allowing for a maximum diversification.

UPEI is ready to and available for a discussion with the EU institutions on these strategic matters at this very moment, when the "Fit For 55" legislative package is under discussion in the European Parliament and the Council. In whichever format this discussion might take place, UPEI strongly believes that it should be held at European level and with all relevant stakeholders, to keep the coherence of the EU energy internal market.

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UPEI represents nearly 2,000 European importers and wholesale/retail distributors of energy for the transport and heating sectors, supplying Europe's customers independently of the major energy producers. They are the interface between producers and consumers, using their own infrastructure and flexibility to supply existing demand for conventional and renewable liquid fuels, as well as non-liquid alternatives as part of the energy transition. They cover more than a third of Europe's current demand. The organisation brings together national associations and suppliers across Europe.

Independent fuel suppliers bring competition to Europe's energy market and are able to respond rapidly to changes affecting supply, contributing to security on a local, national and regional level. They have developed and maintain a comprehensive infrastructure for the sourcing, storage and distribution of transport and heating fuels, with a commitment to delivering a high-quality service to all consumers, including those in remote areas.

Since 1962 UPEI has been advocating for a level playing field and fair competition to ensure an affordable, sustainable, and secure energy supply for Europe's consumers. Today, in the context of the transition to a low carbon economy, UPEI and its members are also addressing the challenges of adapting the product range and meeting consumer demand through market-oriented solutions.

With its strong track record in pioneering the supply of renewable fuels in the EU, UPEI's members remain committed to delivering and embracing new, cost effective solutions which further promote energy efficiency and reduce pollutants and emissions.