



## **UPEI CONFERENCE Low carbon mobility – what's in the policy toolbox? 7 November 2019**

### **UPEI conference brings together thought leaders on low carbon mobility**

The conference “Low carbon mobility – what’s in the policy toolbox?” organised by UPEI, the voice of Europe’s Independent Fuel Suppliers, took place on Thursday 7 November. Panellists and participants discussed the policy instruments providing for the effective deployment of low carbon solutions in the road transport sector, while ensuring consumers’ acceptance.

UPEI President **Brian Worrall** opened the meeting stating that while there is a consensus on the need to act, the path to get to a carbon neutral society is not always clear. He then took the opportunity to share the independent fuel suppliers’ views on the matter (see [UPEI 2050 vision](#)), outlining short- and long-term recommendations for a climate neutral society.

UPEI vision promotes the use of existing technologies such as alternative fuels to reduce emissions immediately, while developing carbon neutral fuels to suit all needs and applications by 2050. Independent fuel suppliers can channel this transition, as critical elements of the connecting tissue that keeps the energy and mobility systems in operation. Finally, he emphasized on the size of the challenge of curbing emissions from the transport sector, requiring a deep societal change, confirming the importance of choosing the right policy action.

Setting the scene, keynote speaker **Alexandre Paquot**, European Commission DG Climate Action, referred to the latest figures published by the European Environment Agency in the [Climate Action Progress Report](#).

He also reminded the audience of the corpus of legislation currently in place, with the Mobility and Clean Energy Packages, as well as the need to focus on infrastructure to accommodate the growing number of new electric vehicles sales. He reiterated the commitment of the upcoming European Commission to the climate neutrality objective, and highlighted related opportunities for Europe.

During the panel discussion, panellists explored further concrete policy measures to incentivize the deployment of low carbon technologies in the mobility sector.



**Claire Depré**, European Commission DG Mobility and Transport, stated that we cannot wait for market demand and rather develop the infrastructure by anticipation, addressing both quality and quantity, while **Olivier Lenz**, FIA (International Automobile Federation), replied that drivers are confused because of the uncertainties around the availability of infrastructure, cost benefit, information and labelling.

As regards to technology, both **Nicolas Kurtsoğlu**, SNPAA (French Bioethanol Producers' Association), and **Kathrin Watson**, Bosch, said that all energies would contribute: a big role is foreseen for the internal combustion engine in the future, and emissions from the existing fleet also need to be addressed.

Alexandre Paquot stressed that, according to the projections carried out by the Commission for 2030, the internal combustion engine will still play a very important role in the EU fleet of new vehicles while Claire Depré referred to the need to think about use cases, "what is best for what".

The situation on the market is different today when compared with 2014, looking at vehicle sales, leaving a chance for Member States to further commit to the review of the Deployment of Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive, according to Claire Depré. The main issue is not the actual number of alternative fuels facilities, but rather their uneven spread over the European territory.

Upon a question regarding taxation and price signals, the European Commission confirmed that is watching developments at national level, e.g. new Emission Trading Scheme in Germany, while Olivier Lenz said price signals should be based on the emissions over the life cycle. Claire Depré underlined the limits of taxation, adding that mobility management plays a major role.

Nicolas Kurtsoğlu added that to ensure a smooth transition, motorists must be given options which are readily available on the market, citing the successful example of E85 deployment in France. When referring to Frans Timmermans' call for a socially fair transition, several speakers including Kathrin Watson raised concerns about European workers and SMEs.

Regarding a question on Member States announcements about internal combustion engines bans, Alexandre Paquot said that EU legislation is based on the principle of technology neutrality and reminded participants that, for the time being, these are political statements or policy objectives not enshrined in legislation. In case of actual restrictions, the European Commission will have to assess the draft rules against the legislation on the internal market. Olivier Lenz warned against disruptive policy changes, referring to yellow vests and citizens movements against low emission zones, adding that people see mobility costs rising but do not have access to the alternatives, for example in rural areas

In concluding remarks, panellists called for a life cycle assessment of vehicles emissions, on which the DG Climate Action has started to work, the proper consideration of liquid fuels potential in a decarbonised mobility, and the need to create a business case for e-fuels and advanced biofuels with the right incentives.

