EU RENEWABLE ENERGY DIRECTIVE MUST PRIORITIZE SUSTAINABLE AVIATION FUELS

News / Airlines



The International Air Transport Association (IATA) welcomed the European Commission's revision of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) to incentivize sustainable fuels, and urged policy-makers to go even further in prioritizing their use for air transport.

The largest user of renewable fuels, the road transport sector, has increasing options to move towards electrification; however, aviation has no technological option but to continue with liquid fuel at the present time. Therefore, there is a strong case for sustainable fuel policies to prioritize air transport, in order to boost supply and reduce costs.

"Aviation is on a path towards carbon-neutral growth and ultimately to reduce emissions in half. Sustainable fuels are an essential element of our carbon-cutting strategy, with the prospect of an 80% decrease in carbon compared to traditional jet fuel. Policies to incentivize the production of such fuels have been successful in the United States and elsewhere. Europe has an opportunity to take the lead in sustainable fuel production if the revised RED contains the right measures," said Michael Gill, IATA's Director, Aviation Environment.

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The European Commission’s stated aim is for Europe to become the leader in renewable energy, and the revision of the RED offers just such an opportunity. The current challenge with sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) is to boost supply and cut costs. Greater production will help to reduce prices, and reduced prices will encourage greater demand, thus boosting production. To break into this virtuous circle, the RED must strengthen its policy framework to incentivize production of SAF.

“Airlines are absolutely committed to the highest sustainability standards for alternative fuels, to ensure no interference with biodiversity, food production, or clean water resources. We are ready and willing to invest in these fuels and the revision of the RED offers a unique opportunity for Europe to demonstrate what can be achieved when policy-makers and industry combine for a genuinely coordinated approach to climate action and business innovation,” said Gill.

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