European Commission

European Commission - Speech

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Commissioner Roswall's address at the 2nd European Bioeconomy Conference

Brussels, 19 November 2026

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues, friends,

It is a huge pleasure to welcome you all to the second European Bioeconomy Conference.

Twelve months have passed since we launched the EU Bioeconomy Strategy.

It has certainly been an eventful year.

And everything that has happened – from real wars and trade wars to supply chain issues and extreme weather events – has reinforced the vital importance and massive potential of the bioeconomy.

So, I am excited by the expertise and energy gathered here today.

I am impressed by the progress we have made in the past year,

And I am encouraged by the momentum we are building for a competitive and resilient bioeconomy.

Let me start with two statements of fact.

First – our chemicals, plastics, textiles, construction products and fertilisers still depend on imported oil and gas.

We know how much of a threat this is to Europe's strategic autonomy and resilience.

And we know it needs to change.

Second – our biobased industries can reap the benefits of an economic transformation that is crucial for Europe's independence.

The EU's Bioeconomy Strategy was designed to drive this transformation.

And to ensure that biobased industries are in its vanguard.

First, it aims to create lead markets for bio-based materials that replace fossil-based ones.

And second, to deploy biotechnologies on the EU market – so that innovation travels from our labs to our factories and farms.

We are trying to build a modern, resilient and competitive economy that runs on renewable carbon, not fossil.

This is not only possible – it would benefit us all.

But direction is not delivery.

Member States are restricted by different biomass availability, land-use priorities, industrial baselines, and regional disparities.

So, the EU must do more than encourage; it must enable.

We have launched a dialogue with Member States and are aligning EU instruments with this very goal in mind.

We are building a regulatory environment to give certainty to investors.

And we are preparing legislation to streamline market access for biotechnologies.

For example, on 21 October, we launched a public consultation on bio-based plastics in packaging, under the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation.

We want your evidence and insight on environmental performance, requirements for biomass, and possible demand measures and targets.

I urge you all to contribute.

Another example is the future Biotech Act II that will unleash the untapped potential of industrial biotechnology and biomanufacturing.

Both initiatives can support a shift from virgin fossil feedstock that the EU is heavily dependent on toward more sustainable inputs, strengthening EU resilience, self-sufficiency, and progress toward climate targets.

There is an important point here.

Enabling access to renewable raw material for the bioeconomy has to go hand in hand with our climate and environment goals.

Europe wants – and needs – to scale up bio-based materials, products and technologies.

But to do so, we need to create demand.

That means connecting those who develop solutions with those who can buy and use them.

Because even the best innovation will not scale up without a market.

That's precisely the goal of the Bio-based Europe Alliance – which we launched last month, in Dublin, during the Global Bioeconomy Summit.

The Alliance is about connecting buyers, primary producers, suppliers, businesses and public authorities to provide clearer market signals.

The Alliance – and the Strategy more broadly - will turn innovation into market opportunities.

Reduce investment uncertainty.

And encourage the development of new production facilities.

I am delighted that more than 100 stakeholders have already joined the Alliance.

Together with participating members, the Commission will now design the Alliance's work programme and operational arrangements.

I encourage all interested stakeholders to join the Alliance and help us shape this work.

We are also mobilising funding – to make sure our ambitions have the support they need.

The next EU budget offers a key opportunity to finance the bioeconomy in order to step up the funding from R&I under Horizon to deployment and commercialisation under the European Competitiveness Fund.

And through the Bioeconomy Investment Deployment Group.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me share three more important points.

First – Our upcoming Circular Economy Act will help to deliver a bioeconomy that is circular by design and by function.

I am excited by the potential that comes with it.

Second – Our Strategy also looks outward.

Opening global markets to our bio-based technology and materials.

And working with our partners to make sure that leaving fossil fuels behind doesn't create new dependencies.

I am eager to hear your views on what this can – and should – look like.

And that brings me to my third, and final, point.

None of this is possible with you.

Without your expertise, insight, experience or innovation.

So I am excited to hear your views.

And I look forward to working with you all – towards a competitive and resilient bioeconomy.

Thank you.

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