Still insufficient progress in making transport fuels more climate friendly, latest EEA data show

The European Union is behind its objective to reduce the greenhouse gas emission intensity of fuels sold for road transport to 6 % below 2010 levels, as set out in the EU's 2020 climate and energy targets.

According to the EEA's fuel quality data indicator, the emission intensity decreased by 3.7 % between 2010 and 2018, mostly due to the increased use of biofuels. The emission intensity of fuels sold in the EU actually increased between 2017 and 2018, when considering the effects of indirect land use change due to the increased use of oil crops as feedstocks.

Transport is responsible for more than 25 % of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions and is a major contributor to climate change. Cutting emissions from transport is pivotal to realising the ambition of having net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, as set out in the European Green Deal. To support a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from transport, the EU's Fuel Quality Directive sets the target that fuel suppliers should reduce the emission intensity of fuels sold in the EU by 6 % by 2020, compared with 2010. In 2017, the average emission intensity of fuels in the EU was 3.4 % lower than in 2010, thus failing to meet the indicative target of a 4 % reduction by 2017. By 2018, the average emission intensity was 3.7 % lower than in 2010.

More progress needed

Finland and Sweden are the only Member States whose emission intensities decreased by more than 6 % according to the data. This is because their road transport fuel mixes have relatively high proportions of biofuels (8 % in Finland and 23 % in Sweden) and, on average, the biofuels used have relatively low emission intensities.

The two Member States that reduced their emission intensities the least between 2010 and 2018 were Croatia (0.1 %) and Estonia (0.9 %).

Background

The EEA's fuel quality data reporting complements the annual report on the Fuel Quality Directive published by the European Commission, which was also released today. EU Member States report annually on the volumes, energy content and life cycle greenhouse gas emissions of fuels used in road transport and non-road mobile machinery, in line with their obligations under the Fuel Quality Directive.