

PRESS RELEASE

CERESiS organized a Workshop on policy aspects of phytoremediation and biofuel production at the 30th EUBCE Conference

In the context of the 30th EUBCE Conference, on May 12 (2022), CERESiS organized a policy workshop entitled “Squaring the circle between phytoremediation and biofuel production”. The workshop was co-organized by 3 H2020 projects (CERESiS, GOLD, Phy2Climate) that have been funded under the topic “Combined clean biofuel production and phytoremediation solutions from contaminated lands”. The **aim of the workshop** has been to discuss the regulatory and policy framework at the intersection of contaminated soil management and biofuels areas and highlight existing gaps and blind spots, with a view to develop proposals to overcome such gaps. The vision is to facilitate the use of biomass grown in contaminated land for the purpose of phytoremediation to produce clean biofuels for the transport sector.

The Workshop was launched by Ms. Georgiadou on behalf of DG RTD who presented the European Green Deal Framework and highlighted critical European Climate and Energy Policy. Presentations and remarks from the three project representatives followed:

Prof. Athanasios Rentizelas, Assistant Professor of Sustainable Supply Chains at NTUA and **CERESiS project coordinator**, explained that the aim of CERESiS project is to develop, assess and validate integrated biofuel production pathways linking land decontamination to appropriate bioenergy crops and economically efficient production of advanced biofuels. He presented the three project pillars (phytoremediation pillar, technological pillar, decision support pillar) as well as the 4 trial CERESiS sites (Italy, UK, Ukraine, Brazil). He argued that “*the key findings so far on policy and regulatory issues indicate that soil protection and contaminated land management has not been subject to a specific legislative instrument at EU level*”. Finally, Prof. Rentizelas presented progress to date on what concerns the energy crop trials, the separation of biomass contaminants and the conversion to biofuels.

Dr. Efthimia Alexopoulou, responsible for the Energy Crops Unit at the Biomass Department of CRES and **GOLD project coordinator**, stated that GOLD project aims to produce clean low-ILUC biofuels by growing selected high-yielding lignocellulosic crops on contaminated lands. She presented the main project objectives and discussed the considered case studies focusing on the energy crop categories that were selected for pilot trials, the selected pilot sites as well as the phytoremediation strategies and practices that have been employed for the purposes of the project.





ContaminatEd land Remediation
through Energy crops for Soil Improvement
to liquid biofuel Strategies

ceresis@exergia.gr
www.ceresis.eu



Prof. Matteo Fermaglia, Assistant Professor of International and European Environmental Law at UHasselt, representing **Phy2Climate Project**, started by explaining that Phy2Climate involves the recovery of arable land through improved phytoremediation coupled with advanced liquid biofuel production. Specifically, he communicated that *“the key challenge is to generate biofuels and at the same time remediate soil in a sustainable manner”*. Prof. Fermaglia presented the pilot sites and the structure of the project, paying special attention to the preliminary findings of the regulatory analysis and the identified areas of law that could potentially constitute policy barriers in the uptake of phytoremediation and the conversion of biomass to advanced biofuels.

Following the project presentations, a **panel discussion**, chaired by Maurizio Cocchi (ETA Florence, Italy), focused on the role of relevant policy and regulation in Europe. The **key messages delivered by panel participants, who covered a wide spectrum of the respective policy ecosystem**, are summarized as follows:

- > The term marginal/contaminated land still lacks a definition consistent across all relevant policy sectors (agriculture, environment, bioeconomy)
- > Soils are important for people to live on but also for absorbing carbon dioxide, for providing resources for life (food) and the development of natural habitats
- > It is impossible for a project to make general conclusions only through case studies, due to the particular characteristics of each case study
- > We need policies but we also need empirical findings
- > Necessary information on contaminated land is not available in a standardized way
- > If phytoremediation means displacing the contamination maybe it is not the best solution
- > Reducing investment risk is critical to speed up the upscaling and market uptake of innovative technologies for biobased products
- > The biobased content in products must be clearly labelled and certified

The full workshop is available to watch here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WdVxa14LYxE>

About CERESiS project

CERESiS is a joint effort to tackle the indirect land use change (ILUC) risk while producing biofuels. The project aims to provide a win-win sustainable solution to both issues by facilitating land decontamination through phytoremediation, i.e. growing energy crops to produce clean biofuels. To reach this goal, CERESiS develops a decision support system for stakeholders and policy makers that will take into consideration all the critical parameters affecting the best choice of energy crops, the most appropriate cultivation and harvesting methods, conversion and separation technologies and supply chain design. The project, due for completion in 2024, consists of a consortium made up of partners from five EU countries, Ukraine, Brazil and Canada. More information can be found at: www.ceresis.eu



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