



EFCTC NEWSLETTER

An update on fluorocarbons and sulfur hexafluoride

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HFC EMISSIONS 1% OF TOTAL GHG EMISSIONS, UNDER 2% BY 2010

F-gases account for only 1% of total GHG emissions, after a new [report](#) released by the European Environmental Agency, "Analysis of greenhouse gas emission trends and projections in Europe 2003 (Technical report N° 4/2004)". The three fluorinated gases involved show opposing trends: HFC emissions increased by 11% between 1995 and 2001, PFC emissions declined by 28%, and SF₆ emissions were 25% below 1995.

The global increase of F-gases emissions (98% compared to a low baseline in 1995), is the consequence of continuing replacement of [ODS](#) (ozone depleting substances) under the [Montreal Protocol](#). However, putting these numbers in perspective, CFC emissions represented in 1990 around 25% of total GHG emissions, while HFC emissions only account for 1% presently.

Despite the continuing replacement of ozone-depleting substances and the increase of air conditioning in Europe, the Report concludes that "*total EU [HFC] emissions will remain small*".

Even more, since the impact of a amount of HFC emitted is much less than the impact of the same emission of CFC, CFC substitution with HFCs is [beneficial for the climate](#) and brings a significant improvement in the climate impact of their uses (Note¹).

[EFCTC claims](#) following which HFC emissions would remain under 2% by 2010 are substantiated by country-by-country projections presented in the report.

(1) This is often not clearly understood, because CFCs, covered by the Montreal Protocol, are not included among "F-gases" in the Kyoto Protocol. The positive impact of decreasing CFC emissions is therefore not put in balance with the much more limited increase of HFC emissions.

F-GASES: COMMISSION ACTION UPON AUSTRIA AND DENMARK

The European Commission has launched a [legal infringement procedure](#) (based on article 28 of the EU treaty on the free movement of goods) challenging Austria and Denmark. Their unilateral national legislation to phase-out F-gases, anticipating an upcoming EU-wide legislation, was indeed seen as too restrictive. The Commission "*intends to respect its duty of striking the right balance between the need of achieving the environmental protection objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the Kyoto Protocol and the need of avoiding undue disruptions in the free movement of goods at EU level*".

The two national measures in question are the Danish Order n° 552 of 2 July 2002 and the Austrian Order n° 447 of 10 December 2002.

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The procedure follows [complaints by the European Partnership For Energy and the Environment \(EPEE\)](#), on the basis that the bans were disproportionate and in breach of EC Treaty obligations.

The Commission decision could result in Denmark and Austria having to cancel their unilateral F-gas regulation.

BETTER RESULTS FOR HFC CELL GASES IN APPLIANCES THERMAL INSULATION

When used as blowing agents for foam insulation of refrigerators, HFCs offer an advantage of 12 to 15 % in energy consumption, compared to the non-HFC blowing agents, when future EU disposal practices are used as reference.

This is the result of a recent LCCP ([Life Cycle Climate Performance](#)) study of current foam formulations for the [insulation](#) of a European type of refrigerator/freezer. It compared the climate impact of HFC -245fa as blowing agent with hydrocarbons like cyclopentane or pentane blends.

By far the dominant item in the LCCP analysis is the energy consumption of the appliance and the associated greenhouse gases emissions from the electricity generation system.

These results confirm [earlier comparative life-cycle analysis](#) (LCA) demonstrating that high-performance building insulation foams blown with HFC-365mfc had a better environment profile than foams using hydrocarbons or CO₂/water combinations.

Source: [Appliance Magazine European Edition November 2003](#)

EPA EXCLUDES HFC-227EA FROM VOC CONTROLS

[EPA is excluding HFC 227ea](#) from control as [Volatile Organic Compounds](#) (VOC), because "Scientific evidence demonstrates that these compounds are "negligibly reactive", meaning they contribute little or nothing to the formation of ground-level ozone".

EPA "expects the exemption to result in a drop in the use of more reactive and/or toxic chemicals" and to benefit public health due to decreased ambient ozone levels. [HFC-227ea](#) is used as propellant for [medical aerosols](#) and as [firefighting agent](#).

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NEW ON OUR SITE

The [Regulatory Page](#) has been updated with the latest developments on the “F-gases” Regulation, including the Political Agreement of the Environment Council.

The [EFCTC contribution](#) to the post-2012 stakeholder dialogue has been posted on the Commission’s stakeholder consultation forum on the future action on climate change.