

## ZVEI

A member of CAPIEL, the European roof association of high voltage switchgear manufacturers.

### Press release

**F-gases regulation and climate change : a green light for SF<sub>6</sub> use in electricity distributing systems is the most reasonable solution.**

**Brussels, March 25, 2004** Ahead of the European Parliament's plenary vote of March 31 on the proposal of regulation on fluorinated greenhouse gases (F-gases), its Environment Committee adopted an opinion on the rapporteur's report.

Among these gases, *sulphur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>)* plays an essential role in electricity distribution systems, particularly as insulation gas for high and medium voltage switchgears. Since there is no real and safe alternative for these applications, the rejection of all proposed SF<sub>6</sub> use restrictions in these applications is welcomed as the most reasonable solution.

This decision is indeed a logic step since a study showed that despite its intrinsic high global warming potential (GWP), SF<sub>6</sub> is environmentally preferable to alternative technologies against four environmental criteria, including global warming” .

This has been confirmed recently in a Life Cycle Assessment based on the situation in Germany, covering medium voltage switchgear and networks between 1 kV and 30 kV ([www.zvei.org/energie](http://www.zvei.org/energie)).

The conclusions of the study, which was independently carried out and subject to critical review, underline that bans or use restrictions are "*not justified by ecological aspects*". Such bans would actually increase greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore it is stated that SF<sub>6</sub> from medium voltage switchgear accounts for a fraction of all electricity network emissions and just 0.005% of all German greenhouse gas emissions.

This demonstrates the need that regulatory decisions related to the use of F-gases in general, and on SF<sub>6</sub> in particular, should be based on the global environmental performance of their applications rather than on an intrinsic but misleading property like their GWP .

On the other hand, the European switchgear manufacturers are concerned about the decision to base the future regulation equally on the EU treaty's internal

market (Art 95) and environment (Art 175) articles, which could lead to market distortions by differences in control measures in the Member States.

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and

*[www.fluorocarbons.org](http://www.fluorocarbons.org)*