



Fluorinated gas vote: Arbitrary proposals offer no environmental gain and damaging consequences for society.

Brussels, 12 October, 2005: The European Fluorocarbon Technical Committee (EFCTC) urges the European Parliament not to follow the Environment Committee's resolution that will have potentially damaging consequences for society, the environment and business.

On 11 October 2005, the Environment Committee of the European Parliament voted on a second reading report concerning the Regulation on Fluorinated Gases (F-Gas Regulation). On the face of it, the vote is intended to strengthen actions to protect the climate and the environment but this is not the case. EFCTC is very concerned that no account has been taken of energy efficiency, technological development and containment. The proposed extension of use bans are arbitrary since these are not justified by rigorous assessment of cost, safety and energy related benefits of alternative technologies and therefore will run counter to their intended aims.

The current Regulation proposal ("Common Position" of Member States) is the result of an extensive scientific and objective stakeholder consultation within the ECCP (European Climate Change Programme) process led by the EU Commission.

"Both the public and the Parliament deserve better than these proposals," said Nick Campbell, EFCTC Chairman. "Containment has been shown to work and was the basis of the Commission proposal and the Common Position but this has been sidelined by this Committee. Applying the proposed bans would be almost impossible to implement and certainly be counterproductive, where their effect on the environment and on business has not been worked out."

It is, of course, easy to assert that HFCs have a high Global Warming Potential (GWP) but this is simplistic and – more to the point – deceptive when used out of context, to an audience not familiar with the situation. It is important not to ignore the real impact of these gases and the specific features of their applications. The proposed bans for stationary refrigeration and air-conditioning and foam technology are made without regard to cost effectiveness, energy efficiency, containment and overall environmental impact.

In addition, some of the alternative solutions are toxic and/or highly inflammable, presenting serious safety risks that have to be managed to protect health and safety for the general public and technicians working with refrigerants, and these cannot be ignored.



“These are complex issues, which is why a review process was included in the Regulation to assess containment and technical progress. We would urge MEPs not to sideline the original intention of the Regulation, which was based on containment rather than wide ranging use bans, with an in-built review to assess progress” added Campbell.

Industry is calling for the application of practical and responsible proposals, which have already been proven to be effective. These are the control of HFC emissions in applications where those substances have demonstrated superiority, while retaining their value to society in applications essential to the wellbeing of the great majority of people.

“There is time between now and the plenary session vote to discuss the constructive and reasonable containment proposals that are already on the table, which would enable the Regulation to achieve its real aim of controlling the total emissions of all greenhouse gases. EFCTC and its associate organisations are wholly in favour of this approach”, he concludes.

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You can also visit the website: www.fluorocarbons.org

Note to editors:

To assess the total effect on climate of HF-Gases in their current and future applications (refrigeration, domestic and industrial air-conditioning, thermal insulation of buildings and transport facilities, etc.), the only scientifically reasonable and objective approach would be to consider the overall effect across their whole of their lifespan. A number of studies have already shown that, for the applications covered by the Environment Committee's decision (thermal insulation foams, commercial refrigeration and electrical insulation gases), the use of HFCs would, overall, have a lesser global effect on climate than some alternative solutions. This is due to the greater energy efficiency when using HFCs, resulting in smaller emissions of CO₂ related to the consumption of energy.