



The Voice of European Air-Conditioning, Refrigeration and Heat Pumps Contractors

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 8th November 2012

Publication of the European Commission's proposal for a revision of the F-gas Regulation: European contractors pleased... and concerned!

AREA, the European association of refrigeration, air conditioning, and heat pump (RACHP) contractors, welcomes the publication of the long-awaited proposal for a revision of the F-Gas Regulation. If the inclusion of mandatory certification for HFC alternatives and the ban on pre-charging are supported, AREA is concerned with other measures, such as mandatory training and bans.

AREA is very pleased to see that the ban on pre-charging of non hermetically sealed systems, which featured in the draft proposal leaked in September, remained in the final proposal. Graeme Fox, President of AREA, said: *"we have promoted a ban on pre-charging since the beginning of the Regulation's review, simply because it is the most efficient measure from both an environmental and policing point of view. We are delighted our proposal was taken on board by not just DG CLIMA but the entire Commission despite the pressure of these last few weeks."*

Similarly, AREA welcomes the provision on mandatory certification for HFC alternatives. Natural refrigerants have issues on safety, flammability, toxicity and high pressure, which must be properly considered when handling those refrigerants. Mandatory certification ensures that contractors manipulating these refrigerants do have the required knowledge to operate safely. The proposal for mandatory training to acquire certification and have it renewed however came as an unpleasant surprise. Graeme Fox explains: *"what matters is proper knowledge, whether it comes from experience or training, and this is what certification proves. Training should only be compulsory when certification cannot be achieved otherwise, as it is now the case under the current Regulation. Providing mandatory training every 5 years would represent a disproportionate recurring cost for our contractors, the vast majority of which are very small companies."*

Finally, AREA is concerned with the proposed bans related to commercial refrigeration and to the use of HFCs for servicing & maintenance. As Graeme Fox points out: *"Our members are worried that these bans may negatively impact on the service they provide. Our general feeling is that a phase-down is sufficient to achieve the Regulation's objectives"*.

AREA will now analyse the proposal in details and prepare a comprehensive position for the decision-making process ahead.

AREA is the European organisation of air-conditioning, refrigeration and heat pumps contractors. Established in 1988, AREA represents the interests of 20 national members from 17 European countries with a membership of more than 9,000 companies across Europe, employing some 125,000 people and with a turnover approaching € 20 billion.

Contact: olivier.janin@orgalime.org / www.area-eur.be

www.area-eur.be