

## Commerce committed to action on F-gases, but warns of challenges ahead

**Brussels, 07 November - Today, the European Commission published its proposal on fluorinated greenhouse gases (F-gases). Companies in commerce have undertaken actions to better identify and control leaks, and have initiated voluntary agreements to phase out hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). Nevertheless, the proposals remain challenging, especially for smaller companies.**

The Commission's proposal to ban intentional and avoidable releases of F-gases is in line with what many companies are already doing or planning to do: identifying gas leaks and controlling them makes good economic and environmental sense. Leaks are not only detrimental to the environment, but also expensive for businesses.

Many companies, especially larger ones, have signed up to various agreements and anticipated the Commission's proposal. The best known and most ambitious voluntary agreement is the resolution of the Consumer Goods Forum (CGF), where leading retailers and FMCG manufacturers commit to "*begin phasing-out HFC refrigerants as of 2015 and replace them with non-HFC refrigerants (natural refrigerant alternatives) where these are legally allowed and available for new purchases of point-of-sale units and large refrigeration installations.*"

Christian Verschueren, Director General of EuroCommerce commented: "Commerce is committed to playing its part in addressing this environmental issue, and will work with policy-makers to make the legislative proposal implementable. Considerable efforts by retail and wholesale companies are already being made, but there are still many challenges ahead for us to comply: cost, time, safety concerns, and the availability of suitable alternative refrigerants. Putting in place alternative refrigerants will require expensive new installations. They will also demand additional safety measures, challenging in urban areas, because natural refrigerants often prove to be flammable, volatile and toxic. Natural refrigerants are also less effective in warmer climates. Most importantly, and whilst global retailers are leading the way with refrigerant manufacturers in developing solutions, time and cost implications need to be taken into consideration for SMEs, which will find the required changes extremely onerous."

~ENDS~

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