

## **Fluorinated greenhouse gases: EP Environment committee deadlines are unrealistic**

**Today, the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety committee of the European Parliament adopted the report on fluorinated greenhouse gases by Green MEP, Bas Eickhout, and voted for unrealistic deadlines as regards the entry into force of a service ban for refrigeration equipment. It also calls for an allocation fee system, which is overly bureaucratic. All these measures will result in increased costs for the commerce sector.**

The Environment, Public Health and Food Safety committee of the European Parliament has decided to strengthen the European Commission proposal on fluorinated greenhouse gases (F-gases). It brings forward, from 2020 to 2017, the deadline for a service ban for refrigeration equipment using F-gases with a GWP (global warming potential) above 2500. This earlier date is unrealistic. In addition, proposed exemptions, which allow the use of reclaimed or recycled F-gases until 2022, are also inadequate, as the price of F-gases will evidently increase. Users of refrigerants will not only have to pay for the retro-fitting of existing systems or the installation of new equipment, but will also face increased costs for the maintenance of their current equipment.

The Environment committee also proposed that placing F-gases on the market would carry an allocation fee. It is likely that this cost would be passed on by importers and producers of F-gases to retailers and wholesalers (i.e. the operators of equipment).

Christian Verschueren, Director-General of EuroCommerce commented, *"The commerce sector fully supports a shift to more environmentally friendly refrigerants. Some leading retail companies have already shown the way and committed to phase out F-gases as of 2015 for new installations, implementing the resolution of the global Consumer Goods Forum. However, before every store, large or small, from the Northern tip of Finland to the South of Spain, has been converted to more environmentally-friendly alternatives, more time would be needed. We ask the legislator to be mindful of the practical realities of finding and applying suitable alternatives."* As an example, putting in place CO<sub>2</sub>-based refrigeration systems is possible in Northern Europe, but technical solutions still need to be developed, tested, and scaled up for warmer climate zones.

Mr Verschueren added, *"This Parliament proposal will generate additional administrative burdens and result in the escalation of financial costs, especially for smaller companies. We, therefore, call on the European Parliament and Council to amend the position of the Environment committee. We are keen to have a constructive dialogue and are hopeful that a solution can be reached which will benefit industry and society as a whole."*

~ENDS~

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### **EuroCommerce and the commerce sector**

EuroCommerce represents the retail, wholesale and international trade sectors in Europe. Its membership includes commerce federations and companies in 31 European countries.

Commerce plays a unique role in the European economy, acting as the link between manufacturers and the nearly 500 million consumers across Europe over a billion times a day. It is a dynamic and labour-intensive sector, generating 11% of the EU's GDP. One company out of three in Europe is active in the commerce sector. Over 99% of the 6 million companies in commerce are small and medium-sized enterprises. It also includes some of Europe's most successful companies. The sector is a major source of employment creation: 33 million Europeans work in commerce, which is one of the few remaining job-creating activities in Europe. It also supports millions of dependent jobs throughout the supply chain from small local suppliers to international businesses.