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EFCTC raises awareness of EU Automobile Service companies on the use of illegally imported HFCs

In response to rapid emergence of illegal traffic of Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs- or refrigerants) across the EU, and in order to assist the EU and Member States, the European Fluorocarbons Technical Committee (EFCTC) has launched a multi-level programme to fight against this illegal trade to raise awareness on this problem. As the latest stage, EFCTC has written to the main Automobile service companies and organizations in the European Union requesting that they make their dealerships aware of the situation regarding the illegal import of HFC-134a that is used extensively for the servicing of the existing automobile fleet.

In the letter, EFCTC asks that the companies and organizations, “through your contacts with these companies (the dealerships), to make them aware of the situation regarding the illegal imports of HFC-134a and that they are directed to seek assurance/guarantee that their suppliers can demonstrate that their HFC-134a is legally sourced from a holder of an annual quota.” The phase-down of HFCs has shown evidence that illegal imports of HFCs (in particular HFC-134a which is used in European automotive industry air-conditioning system) are perceptibly increasing and, as a consequence, are becoming a threat for implementation of the EU F-Gas Regulation and for the environment protection.

The letter also notes that sales of HFC-134a in disposable cylinders, which are banned in the EU, is increasing and stresses that the use of illegally imported product could cause a health and safety hazard. EFCTC states, “there is no guarantee that the cylinders of drums illegally imported actually contain the correct products - and may actually contain more hazardous or flammable products posing significant risks for their users as well as impurities that could damage the HVAC system in cars.”

The letter draws attention to the EFCTC “Action Line” that permits any individual to report alleged suspect HFC offerings confidentially to a trusted and independent contractor using a webform (in any language). The results of this programme will create a more detailed picture of the illegal HFCs supply chain, which can be then shared by the independent contractor with the EU/national authorities, for enforcement. The Automobile Service companies and organizations are requested to share the link with their dealers: <https://efctc.integrityline.org>.

The European FluoroCarbons Technical Committee is a Cefic Sector Group that monitors legislation related to HFCs (hydrofluorocarbons), and HFOs (hydrofluoro-olefins) in the EU and at global level. Fluorocarbons are used as feedstock, as refrigerants, as solvents and as blowing agents for insulation plastic foams.

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