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EFCTC welcomes options for proposed measures to improve the enforcement of the F-gas Regulation

Participating in the Stakeholder workshop held on 6 May, the European Fluorocarbon Technical Committee (EFCTC) welcomed the proposal for the revision of the F-Gas Regulation which will be released by the end of 2021. The detailed options of the proposal aim to enforce the current regulation and to combat the illegal trade in HFCs while making the transition to more sustainable alternatives in maintaining the societal needs for refrigeration, air-conditioning, insulating foam in alignment with the Montreal Protocol.

The European Fluorocarbon Technical Committee (EFCTC) welcomed the opportunity to take part in the 'Stakeholder workshop for evaluation and impact assessment for amending Regulation (EU) No 517/2014 on fluorinated greenhouse gases (F-gas Regulation)' that took place on 6 May 2021 organised by Ricardo PLC, Öko-Recherche, Öko-Institut and the European Commission.

The consultants for the review presented a large number of objectives and envisaged policy options for amending the Regulation. Sufficient time will be needed for industry stakeholders to carry out a full analysis of the potential impacts of these options on their sectors.

EFCTC supports the objectives and structure of the F-gas Regulation. Since 2015, the European market has demonstrated that the structure of the F-gas Regulation works in its current format, as it provides the market flexibility to make appropriate refrigerant choices while fostering the use of lower GWP refrigerants in combination with measures directly targeting the reduction of refrigerant related emissions. Indeed, the consultants acknowledged that the Regulation has been mostly effective in meeting its original objectives and the individual measures were found to work together to meet the objectives.

Dr Nick Campbell, Chairman of EFCTC noted, "We believe that the key focus of the F-Gas review process should be to ensure and improve the implementation and enforcement of the regulation, especially, in view of the European Green Deal and its goal of minimizing F-gas emissions, while also aligning the Regulation with the Montreal Protocol".

He added, "We are pleased to see that the many measures that we have been demanding to improve the enforcement of the current regulation and to combat the illegal trade in HFCs are in the options presented by the consultants in the stakeholder workshop. We look forward to these being included in the proposal for the F-gas revision from the European Commission that will be published towards the end of 2021".

The Briefing paper for the Stakeholder workshop includes options on detailed rules to empower customs and surveillance authorities and EU Member States and facilitate the use of the EU “single window environment for Customs” as well as minimum penalties for non-compliance. Requirements on T1 transit, identified by EFCTC as one of the major routes for illegal HFCs in the EU, new prohibitions on the transport, storage and use of non-refillable containers as well as limiting the market players to legitimate participants are also included.

Other policy options which are expected to generate considerable discussion by stakeholders include increasing the ambition of the regulation both before and post-2030, prohibiting F-gases in products and equipment where these gases are no longer needed as well as detailed measures to achieve alignment with the Montreal Protocol.

“Companies have planned strategies and invested in making the transition to lower-GWP alternatives whilst maintaining the societal needs for refrigeration, air-conditioning, insulating foam, solvents and medical aerosols based upon the current F-gas Regulation and its phase-down timetable,” stressed Nick Campbell, “any changes to the phase-down schedule will need a detailed discussion with the industry stakeholders to understand the full economic, technical, energy efficiency and safety impacts of these changes on European business.”

Based upon the report from the consultants and the on-going discussions with stakeholders, the European Commission will draft an evaluation and impact assessment for their proposal for the revision of the F-gas Regulation which will be released towards the end of 2021.

About EFCTC

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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