

European policymakers, F-gas manufacturers and downstream users convene on new revisions to the EU rulebook

Brussels, 28 October 2022 – Following the publication of the European Commission’s [proposal](#) to revise the F-gas Regulation earlier this year, the European FluoroCarbons Technical Committee (EFCTC) organized a successful event to exchange views on the proposed changes to the Regulation.

Hosted at the European Parliament by MEP Stelios Kypouropoulos, Shadow Rapporteur on the file, the event brought together European policymakers, F-gases manufacturers and downstream users who discussed implications of proposed revisions to the F-gas Regulation, the vital use of refrigerant gases in household energy-saving applications and medical devices as well as the challenges faced due to illegal trade of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) into the European Union (EU).

MEP Stelios Kypouropoulos, Shadow Rapporteur on the F-gas Regulation file opened the event and set out his position and ambition for the revision, stating: *“F-gases are essential for many applications in our lives, including life-saving healthcare devices. Revisions to the F-gas Regulation should not be taken lightly. A holistic approach that focuses on technical feasibility, energy efficiency, and takes into account patients access to safe and reliable technologies is vital.”*

EFCTC representative and member Mary B. Walsh reflected on achievements to date and outlined key considerations for the current revision: *“The EU regulation on F-gases is highly regarded as the gold standard globally. The philosophy and thinking around it is to reduce and contain emissions which is the backbone of the EU rulebook. EFCTC is proud to have played a role in the success of the regulation to date. However, times have changed since the last review of the regulation. With stronger decarbonization ambitions and recent commitments to reduce our energy dependency under the RePowerEU plan, we need to look at the Regulation review in this new context.”*

Refrigerant and cooling gases vital for energy-saving applications and medical devices

In the current energy crisis, concerns were raised by representatives from the European Partnership for Energy and the Environment (EPEE) on the restriction of HFCs which are needed for the expansive and safe roll out of energy-saving heat pumps under EU’s new energy plan. A steeper phase-down of F-gases, as in the European Commission’s proposal for revision, may slow adoption of heat pumps and ambitions to roll out 80 million heat pumps by 2050.

Questions were also raised around the availability and safety of alternatives refrigerants to be used at scale while technology is still in development. In 2020 alone, only one third of EU households were suitable for installing heat pumps with flammable refrigerants such as propane, one of the HFCs alternatives.

MedTechEurope, who represents the medical technology industry focusing on medical devices, in vitro diagnostics and digital health, shared a healthcare perspective on the F-gas Regulation. Within the industry, F-gases are regarded as essential to the functioning of inhalers and anesthetic gases used in routine surgeries, pressured meter-dose inhalers and

the ventilation cooling of blood samples and vaccine storage. Emphasis was placed on the importance of the ability for healthcare professionals to choose the safest and most effective medical technology option for patients, where no one-size-fits-all.

Upskilling of technicians in Europe needed before large-scale rollout of low GWP refrigerants

AREA, the European Association of refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump contractors (RACHP), represents RACHP contractors and engineers who are the essential link between users and manufacturers of F-gases. While there are half a million certified technicians across Europe for these applications, a survey undertaken by the association in 2021 found that under 10% of certified personnel are trained on alternatives, indicating a clear shortage of contractors. The association also emphasized the importance for increased certification standards for technicians to safely handle alternatives such as CO₂, ammonia or propane given flammability and the renewal of servicing tools for alternatives needing to be fitted for new requirements.

Stronger enforcement proposed to safeguard against the illegal trade of hydrofluorocarbons welcomed

EFCTC responded to questions on the thriving black market for hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) in the EU, which appeared in 2018 due to lack of enforcement in a number of Member States of the original F-gas Regulation and phase-down quota-system. The industry itself has facilitated over 2,000 takedowns of illegal trade online and run more than 20 sessions with customs authorities across 22 markets as part of their campaign to combat illegal imports and sales of HFCs. New steps proposed by the European Commission to combat illegal trade of HFCs that include improving border controls and enforcement were welcomed.

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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Disclaimer: The present press release represents the views and opinion of the EFCTC Sector Group, not necessarily of Cefic as a whole.