

EPEE NEWS

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2007

The EPEE Secretariat is pleased to present its bimonthly newsletter. Should you have any comments, questions or suggestions, please send us an e-mail at secretariat@epeeglobal.org.

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Message from the Director General

For EPEE members only!

I. Monitoring & recent events

Key recent events of significance to EPEE members

1. F-Gas Regulation: F-Gas Implementing Measures Adopted

On 12 October 2007 the F-Gas Regulatory Committee adopted 4 implementing measures for the F-Gas Regulation. The adopted measures are related to Labelling, Reporting and Leakage Checking for stationary refrigeration, air-conditioning and heat pump equipment and Leakage Checking for Fire Protection systems. The implementing measures on Minimum Qualifications should be discussed during the next Regulatory Committee meeting scheduled on 7 December 2007.

Key documents:

For EPEE members only!

EPEE's action points/comments:

For EPEE members only!

2. EU Reform Treaty: Environment gains some ground in EU Reform Treaty

On 19 October the EU Reform Treaty was approved by the Member States at the Lisbon Summit. The Treaty has kept the major features of the proposed Constitution in terms of institutional functioning: a stable Presidency of the Council elected for two and a half years, a Chief of Foreign Affairs, a double majority system and a reduced Commission of 20 Commissioners. The voting distribution in the Council has also been modified, resulting in a reduced influence for Poland.

Of particular interest to EPEE is that from an environmental perspective, the new Treaty is marking a step forward. A new paragraph is dedicated to an EU Energy Policy, where the main goal will be to promote energy efficiency, energy saving and the development of new and renewable forms of energy. Key environmental principles have remained, such as the need to integrate green considerations in all areas of the EU policy and the primacy of the

precautionary principle with regards to environmental policies. Finally, in its external actions towards third countries, the EU will have to ensure that sustainable development remains a central point.

The Treaty will be formally signed by EU heads of State on 13 December, where after the document will need to be ratified by the European and national Parliaments. If adopted in all the Member States, the new treaty will enter into force in 2009.

From an environmental perspective, it is interesting to note that the 27 EU Heads of State will first travel to Lisbon to sign the treaty on 13 December, before travelling to Brussels where the opening ceremony of the European Summit will be held. It is calculated that the carbon footprint of this travel will account for up to 15 tonnes of CO₂!

Key Documents:

For EPEE members only!

3. Climate Change: Environment Council adopts conclusions for the EU's mandate in Bali

On 30th October 2007, the Environment Council in Luxembourg unanimously adopted conclusions on stepping up the fight against climate change after the Kyoto protocol comes to an end in 2012.

The Council once again underlined the EU's determination to play a leading role in climate protection and attached high importance in its conclusions to the latest findings reported by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The Council welcomed the awarding of the 2007 Nobel peace prize to the IPCC and Al Gore, and stated to be "encouraged by the recent decision on the accelerated phase out of HCFCs under the Montreal Protocol".

The Council further stressed the EU's ambitions to reduce its emissions by 20% by 2020 compared to 1990 levels, if other developed countries would commit to mandatory emission reductions under an international agreement. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that the US, which is rejecting the idea of mandatory limits on GHG's, would sign up for such an agreement.

Key documents:

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4. Climate Change: Temporary Climate Change Committee meets to discuss Europe's position in the lead up to Bali

The European Parliament's temporary Committee on Climate Change met in Brussels on the 4 October, and again in Strasbourg on 22 October to discuss and vote on the Satu Hassi report on 'Limiting global climate change to 2 degrees Celsius – the way ahead for the Bali Conference on Climate Change and beyond'.

The report sets out the Parliament's targets for the upcoming UN Conference on Climate Change on 3 to 14 December this year, including the setting up of binding emissions targets for all industrialised countries, a global 'cap and trade' system to be put in place and a 50% cut in greenhouse gas emissions by the middle of this century. The report was adopted with 40 in favour, nine against and one abstention.

At the earlier meeting in Brussels a number of key state representatives took part in proceedings, including representatives from the US, China and Japan. During these proceedings it became clear once again that the US is taking a much different path in tackling climate change, and is a much bigger advocate of voluntary agreements, consisting of national commitments written into national legislation. The EU, on the other hand, is much more in favour of creating binding commitments. Members of the Committee also visited China from 5-7th November in the hope of building a consensus ahead of the Bali meeting.

The draft Satu Hassi report will be voted in the first plenary session in November in Strasbourg.

Key documents:

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5. Climate Change: The Clinton Foundation Climate Change Initiative

The Clinton Foundation Climate Change Initiative (the CCI), which was founded in August 2006 by former US President Bill Clinton and which aims to reduce barriers for a more rapid expansion of the use of energy efficient applications as well as renewable energy, announced on 1 November its partnership with the US Conference of Mayors. This partnership will make it possible for an additional 1.100 US cities to gain access to volume discounts on energy-efficient and clean-energy products and technologies through the CCI.

In his speech to the Conference of Mayors, former President Clinton argued that the fight against global warming is a chance to create jobs and to give an economic boost to the middle class by saving cities and residents money with improved energy-efficiency.

The CCI has so far negotiated discounted prices on energy-efficient products of 25 manufacturers including companies such as GE, Philips Lighting, 3M Company, BASF Polyurethane Foam Enterprises, Scania, Siemens and VOLVO.

During a business conference in October, Bill Clinton stated that he was convinced that the next US President will move the US to the forefront of the global environment movement, will put a ceiling on carbon emissions and will introduce a carbon trading system.

Some background on the CCI:

In August 2006 the William J. Clinton Foundation, a charity foundation set up by former US President Bill Clinton, entered into a partnership with the Large Cities Climate Leadership Group and thereby created the Clinton Foundation Climate Change Initiative (CCI). The aim of the CCI is to provide resources to help participating cities to develop and implement a range of actions that will accelerate greenhouse gas emissions reductions. The foundation focuses on cities as they make up for around 75% of all GHG emissions whilst comprising only 2% of land mass.

Key documents:

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6. HCFCs: Global Speed up of HCFC phase out following Montreal Conference, while rich nations must lead by example, declares UN chief

In a historic agreement thrashed out in Montreal, on the 20th anniversary of the Montreal Protocol, both industrialised and developing countries have agreed to phase out hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) ten years ahead of the previous target date, whilst also freezing production as from 2009.

Under the amended timeline, the final phase-out of HCFC will take place in developing countries by 2030 and in developed nations by 2020. All 191 members were in agreement that an earlier ban of HCFCs would help reduce ozone depletion and fight against global warming.

Meanwhile, developed countries must cut their 'unacceptably high' greenhouse gas emissions and provide real incentives for poorer nations to follow their example, the UN Secretary-General told a meeting of more than 80 Heads of State and Government, meeting on climate change on 24th September.

The meeting was the biggest gathering of Heads of State and Government to talk about climate change, and Ban Ki-Moon used the occasion to agree on broad principles in the run up to the UN conference on climate change in December. The current provisions of the Kyoto Protocol expire in 2012, giving urgency to negotiations on a potential successor.

Key documents:

For EPEE members only!

7. HFCs: UK opposition party would ban HFCs if in power

The UK Conservative party launched a report in September under the title 'Blueprint for a Green Economy' which in over 500 pages sets out the current opposition party's views on climate change and social unease.

The report was published by the 'Quality of Life' committee, set up by Conservative leader David Cameron to consider issues of the environment, rural life, food, farming, fishing and the marine environment, transport, energy, waste, and water. The committee is chaired by John Gummer and Zac Goldsmith, the so-called 'green millionaire'.

Under the proposals that have been put forward, the banning of HFCs is included, with the report urging for the EU to take action in the Montreal Protocol so that a ban can be in place by 2010.

The report received a lukewarm reception from senior members of the Conservative party and from the UK press. Many of the ideas have come across as politically unacceptable and even silly. Nevertheless, the committee is influential and could be a signal of potential policies that could emerge under a Conservative government.

Key documents:

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8. Renewable Energy: First meeting of High Level Nuclear Safety Group

The first meeting of the High-Level nuclear safety group took place on 12 October, where a discussion on the division of efforts – commonly known as burden sharing – between the 27 Member States, in relation to renewable energies, took place.

The burden sharing relates to allowing renewable energies to reach the binding objective adopted by the European Council last March of 20% as a proportion of total (primary) energy consumption of the EU between now and 2020.

The safety group was established by the Commission in July this year and is composed of senior officials from national regulatory or nuclear safety authorities. The Commission stated that it would develop a common understanding that will identify priority safety issues, as well as advise the Commission in progressively developing European rules regarding the safety of nuclear installations and the safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste.

The main point of the discussion was how improvements in energy efficiency will be taken into account in the calculation of national contributions. The Commission is to table its proposals for the burden sharing on **5th December**, taking into account the current level of renewable energy, the energy package and the potential of each Member State.

Key documents:

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9. Eco-design of EuP: Consultation Forum on Lot 6

For EPEE members only!

EPEE action points/comments:

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Key documents:

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10. Energy Efficiency: Japanese model back on EU agenda

According to various Commission and industry sources, the Japanese “top-runner” approach could possibly inspire a new generation of EU policies related to product energy efficiency. Under this approach, all manufacturers in a certain group of products are required to match best-in-class efficiency performance by a certain deadline.

Although this principle was not taken up for EuP, DG Environment and DG Enterprise are considering the opportunity of integrating it into their upcoming Action Plans on “sustainable production and consumption” and on a “sustainable industrial policy” which should both be released early 2008.

Key documents:

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11. Climate Change: IPCC and Al Gore win Nobel Peace Prize

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and former US vice-president Al Gore jointly received on 12 October 2007 the 2007 Nobel peace prize for “their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change”.

The awarding of the Nobel peace prize to these initiatives is perceived as recognition of the importance of the environment to peace and global security policy.

Key documents:

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12.Environment: ‘Environment for Europe’ conference held in Belgrade.

Belgrade was the host of the sixth ministerial conference on ‘Environment for Europe’, organised by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), from 10-12 October.

More than 1,200 representatives from 56 countries in the region gathered for this occasion, as well as delegates from more than 20 national and international intergovernmental organisations, including environmental NGOs, companies, unions and local authorities.

At the end of the meeting a declaration was made calling for efforts by member countries to make environmental cooperation “a pillar for sustainable development in the [UNECE] region.” The declaration also warned that air pollution, mainly due to fine particles, ground-level ozone and nitrogen oxides shorten the average life expectancy in the Balkan region by almost a year. The declaration highlights that energy consumption and resulting greenhouse gas emissions have been increasing in the pan-European region, despite energy efficiency improvements and increased use of renewable energy.

Key documents:

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13. Chemical leak: London’s O2 arena reopens after ammonia leak leaves 29 workers hospitalised.

On 29 October Emergency services were called to London’s O2 entertainment complex – the former Millennium Dome – after staff dismantling stage equipment was affected by ammonia which leaked from the ice rink plant room. 29 people were hospitalised. Fire crews isolated the gas supply and declared the area safe after monitoring the affected area with specialist equipment. The investigation into how the leak occurred is still ongoing.

Key documents:

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14. Renewable Energy: EU trading plan raises doubts and criticism

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Several voices from the renewable energy sector (Eref, Ewea, Eurfores) and the Member States such as Germany have urged the Commission to reconsider its plans to set up an EU-wide trading system of green certificates based on a system of pre-set quotas for EU Member States.

The European Commission was originally due to release a proposal by the end of the year, as a part of an overall legislative package laying out how Member States will ensure that 20% of their energy comes from renewable sources (see Renewable Energy Roadmap). Under such a proposal, if a country does not fulfil its quotas in terms of renewable energy production it will have to buy it elsewhere.

Germany and various renewable energy associations fear that this could undermine existing national support schemes and lead to a rise in prices for bio-energy, above the current fixed prices.

Although the Commission and the UK are advocating that green certificates are not incompatible with feed-in schemes, Commissioner for Energy, Andris Piebalgs, recently refused to confirm whether the commission will propose a trading system in its December package, saying the question was "premature".

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