

# EPEE NEWS

JANUARY-MARCH 2009

*The European Partnership for Energy and the Environment is pleased to present its newsletter. Please note this version is designed for external use and its content has thus been reduced. The full version of the newsletter (including links to key documents, EPEE's comments/action points, calendar of events, "on the intranet" section and "Message from the Director General") is available for EPEE members only.*

*To receive additional information on EPEE and the benefits of membership, please contact the Secretariat: [secretariat@epeeglobal.org](mailto: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. EU Spring Summit: Financial crisis slows progress on climate change

Expected progress on climate change at the latest EU Summit in March has been slowed down by the economic crisis. Undoubtedly, this topic has slipped down the list of policy priorities for EU leaders. EU Heads of State and Government were supposed to agree on concrete financial mechanisms to help developing countries fighting climate change in view of the upcoming negotiations on a post-Kyoto deal in Copenhagen. Instead, the economic crisis remained on top of the agenda and further discussions on Climate Change were postponed until the 18-19 June European Summit.

Member States do not yet agree on the internal sharing of the financial burden and argued it was too early to commit the EU to any specific figure at international level while the US is still weighing up its options. According to European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, the European Union should make no commitment "*while other nations, notably the United States and China,*" are not doing the same.

The Council seemed more eager to move forward on energy efficiency and energy security. Linking it with the economic crisis as an opportunity to accelerate the change towards a more sustainable, resource-efficient economy, the Council asked the Commission to rapidly publish a revised Action Plan on Energy Efficiency. Energy security was also discussed and the need for new legislation on crisis mechanisms and improved solidarity and coordination was highlighted. Indeed, cost cuts and security were definitely the order of the day.

Nonetheless, as a run-up to the June Summit, an informal meeting of the EU's environment ministers will be held on 14 and 15 April in Prague during which the EU's negotiating strategy for the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference will be on the agenda. The Presidency is expected to distribute an updated progress report that takes account of the results of the first preparatory session held in Bonn, from 2 to 8 April, and the discussions

will focus on four aspects: mitigation measures in the developed countries, mitigation measures in the developing countries, financing and governance.

**Key documents:**

- European Council [conclusions](#), 19-20 March 2009

## 2. **Copenhagen: Commission publishes its proposed EU negotiating position**

*For EPEE members only!*

## 3. **ODS: EU Parliament adopts report on updating ODS Regulation**

On 27 March, the European Parliament, sitting in plenary session in Strasbourg, has adopted by a large majority, 667 votes in favour, 13 against and 10 abstentions, the Report of MEP Johannes Blokland (The Netherlands, Ind-Dem) on the recast of the Regulation on substances depleting the ozone layer (ODS).

This report is updating the EU Regulation on ODS and brings the EU in line with developments of the Montreal protocol. The revised Regulation goes even beyond the protocol, so that the EU will continue to lead by example.

Main elements of the revised Regulation are: **clarification on exemptions and derogations to the use of ODS**, and the conditions, under which they can be imported and exported; **deadlines for the phasing out of HCFCs**: the phasing out of the production of HCFCs will be brought forward for 5 years and shall be achieved by the end of 2019. The production will have to be further decreased during the period 2017-2019; and **substances contained in refrigerators and buildings**: the revised text lists responsibilities for companies to prevent the existing substances from being released into the atmosphere.

EU bans will be introduced on the use of methyl bromide in "quarantine and pre-shipment" crop fumigation from **March 2010** and on the production of HCFCs from **2020**.

EU chemical industry and green NGOs are warning that the illegal market for HCFCs could be boosted due to shortages as from 2010. Therefore, to reduce the risk of black market development, both industry associations and NGOs are calling for stricter border controls on imports of HCFCs within the EU.

MEP Hans Blokland (Independence/Democracy), who was EP's rapporteur on the review of the ODS Regulation, has recently stated that the Montreal Protocol has greatly helped reducing the production and use of ozone-unfriendly products by 95% since the peak in

1988. According to him, Arctic ozone levels are expected to recover by 2050 and Antarctic ozone hole will do the same between 2060 and 2075.

Mr Blokland also stated that the Montreal Protocol will avoid millions of fatal skin cancers and tens of millions of non-fatal cancers and cataracts worldwide. In terms of greenhouse gas emissions, the equivalent 100 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> will have been avoided between 1990 and 2010.

**Key documents:**

*For EPEE members only!*

**Key EPEE actions:**

*For EPEE members only!*

#### **4. Energy Efficiency: Commission announces another Action Plan on energy efficiency**

The Commission has renewed its commitments to reach the target of 20% energy efficiency improvement by 2020. During the Sustainable Energy Week, Matthias Ruete (Director-General of DG Transport & Energy) announced that current progresses were insufficient and that more measures were needed. According to him, there is still an important gap between political declarations and the reality of energy efficiency.

The Commission is therefore preparing a new “Action Plan on Energy Efficiency” which is likely to focus on the building and the transport sectors and should be published by the end of 2009. This Action Plan will present non-binding ideas but will not be accompanied by concrete legislative proposals – these should not come out before 2010.

Claude Turmes was also present at the event. He said that swift action on energy efficiency was even more important than on renewables and the Commission and the national governments should focus on five or six actions rather than on a wide package of measures.

**Key documents:**

*For EPEE members only!*

#### **5. EIA report: ‘Chilling Facts’ report biased, says industry**

The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) released on 1 February 2009 a supermarket survey to assess the use of HFCs and the action being taken to minimise their environmental impact.

The main finding of the survey is, according to the EIA, that industry is not making progress fast enough, with no UK supermarket group having more than four stores using HFC alternatives, stating that supermarket's response is "totally inadequate".

However, industry has hit back at the EIA and its survey, calling the attack on industry progress in the field of HFCs too simplistic. *"Leakage is totally unacceptable"* said Darcy Nicolle, spokesman for the European Partnership for Energy and the Environment (EPEE). *"Regardless of the refrigerant you use, a leaky system will have an impact on the environment because it won't be as efficient"*, said Mr. Nicolle in an interview with ENDS Europe on 24 February 2009.

The British Refrigerants Association (BRA) has also rebuffed the survey calling it *"limited and less than impartial"*. *"The wording and presentation of what is erroneously called a report was reminiscent of the worst of sensational tabloid journalism"* said BRA's Director General Cedric Sloan. Mr. Sloan further said that the report by EIA *"focused on the potential global warming impact of HFC refrigerants should they be released to the atmosphere, rather than the real benefits of using these safe and efficient gases to save carbon emissions in professionally designed and installed systems"*.

The report's author, Fiona Walraven, has stated that supermarket's failure to do much about the powerful greenhouse gases from their refrigeration systems was *"hugely disappointing"*.

Meanwhile, the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has pointed to the European Commission's forthcoming review of the F-as Regulation, *"in which it plans to take an active role"*, due to be completed by July 2011.

**Key documents:**

*For EPEE members only!*

**Key EPEE actions:**

*For EPEE members only!*

## **6. Swedish Presidency: "Difficult" EU Presidency on the horizon**

Sweden will again be at the helm of the EU Presidency from 1 July 2009 until 31 December 2009, a presidency which has high aspirations. However, the upcoming European elections and uncertainty about when the next EU Commission will be appointed will make the Swedish presidency "quite difficult", according to Swedish Minister for European Affairs Cecilia Malmström.

In addition to the institutional limbo, Europe is in the midst of one of its most serious recessions in modern times, and Ireland is planning to hold its second referendum on the Lisbon Treaty in October 2009.

In contrast to French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who does not think a new European Commission President should be appointed before the Irish vote in October, Ms. Malmström has expressed hopes that a deal can be reached *“with the other Member States to appoint a new President of the Commission already in June, after the European election...so that at least we have a President”*.

It has been no surprise that Sweden, with its long tradition of green politics, will put a strong emphasis on climate and on preparing a united front ahead of the Copenhagen United Nations conference on climate change in December, negotiations which Sweden will chair on behalf of the EU bloc.

The Swedish government has made it clear that Sweden is to take a leading role on climate change in the EU, and that the EU should take a leading role internationally. Among the highest climate priorities for the Swedish EU presidency are; to negotiate a new revised global agreement on climate change to replace the current Kyoto protocol; to build on the present momentum to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Europe by 2020; and to work out how the EU's climate change package agreed upon in December 2008 is to be financed.

#### **Key documents:**

*For EPEE members only!*

### **7. Energy Label: Energy labelling Regulatory Committee adopts new Energy label lay-out**

The eco-design and energy label Regulatory Committee approved on 31 March new energy labelling rules on the design of the label for household fridges and freezers (also for televisions, dish-washers, and washing machines).

The new label keeps the A-G scale but classes going beyond “A” will be applied a percentage rating in addition. Concretely a product labelled as “A-20%” will mean that its energy efficiency is 20% higher than a current “A” class model. For fridges, current A+ and A++ ratings will be replaced by A-20% and A-40%. The new label will be mandatory as from January 2011 but manufacturers will be allowed to use the new label one year before if they want to.

The label aims to be "language-neutral" – using pictograms only – so that suppliers can provide the label in one piece without having to bear costs for adapting to local language versions. This will also ensure that the full label is shown in shops (and not just the strip).

Before being formally adopted, the measure will be sent to the European Parliament for a 3 month scrutiny period. If the European Parliament does not oppose the proposed measures within the 3 months, they will be formally adopted and published in the Official Journal.

This new design should of course be extended to the other household products groups covered by the current Energy Label Directive, including domestic air-conditioners.

**Key EPEE actions:**

*For EPEE members only!*

**8. Environment: Commission and retail sector launches Retail forum to promote sustainable consumption**

On 3 March, the European Commission and the European retail sector launched a Retail Forum as part of their drive to promote more environmentally sustainable consumption patterns. The creation of the Retail Forum represents a significant contribution in the implementation of the EU Action Plan on sustainable consumption and production and sustainable industrial policy, as presented by the European Commission in July 2008.

The Forum aims to generate a better understanding of the practical measures needed to promote sustainable consumption and production. The idea is that over time the result should be greater availability of environment-friendly and energy-efficient products in the shops and better information to consumers on how to use their products in the most ecological way. Participants will share best practices, discuss how to promote sustainable consumption and tackle barriers that hinder it, and obtain scientific information from relevant bodies to help evaluate environmentally sound products.

Membership of the Forum is voluntary and open to all retailers who join the Retailers' Environmental Action Plan (REAP), and participation in the Forum is open to all relevant stakeholders wishing to contribute to its work, such as producers, suppliers and consumer and environmental organisations. The forum will be co-chaired by DG Environment and the two EU-level organisations representing the retail sector, EuroCommerce and the European Retail Round Table (ERRT).

The forum is to meet every quarter and held its first meeting on 1 April 2009. All documents and other material related to the Forum will be posted on DG Environment's Sustainable Consumption and Production page.

**Key documents:**

*For EPEE members only!*

**Key EPEE actions:**

*For EPEE members only!*

## 9. EU Sustainable Energy Week: The latest in sustainable energy

This year's third edition of the EU sustainable energy week (9-16 February) brought together numerous stakeholders from both the European and the international scenes to discuss the future of sustainable energy, and placed a clear emphasis placed on energy efficiency and the financing of green technologies.

As pointed out by MEP Mechtild Rothe (PES, Germany), Vice-President of the European Parliament, in her opening speech, "*the current economic crisis is a historical opportunity to create new and better energy*", underlining that a strong belief had developed that the Western world needs to leave its old ways and fossil fuel energy behind to face current economic and climactic challenges.

MEP Claude Turmes (Greens, Luxembourg) known for his work as Rapporteur on the December 2008 Renewables Directive, said investment in renewables and energy efficiency was they key to the EU 2020 target to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 20%, increase renewables by 20% and improve energy efficiency by 20%.

This year's EU sustainable energy week also launched the Covenant of Mayors, a document by which EU cities agree to develop and implement local schemes to cut carbon dioxide emissions by more than 20% by 2020. Mayors from more than 350 cities across Europe have signed the Covenant.

### **Key documents:**

*For EPEE members only!*

## 10. Renewables: Launch of the International Renewable Agency in Bonn

On 26 January 2009, the International Renewable Energy agency has been launched in Bonn (Germany) in order to promote renewable energies in the world.

The Agency gathers 75 countries in its founding treaty with the exception of Brazil, China, the United States, Japan and the United Kingdom which will probably join the Agency in the near future.

Its missions are mainly to help industrialised and developing countries to rapidly increase their share of renewable energies and to implement both regulatory framework and better financing mechanisms.

EU Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs expressed himself and urged all the EU MS to take part in the Agency. According to him, the Agency's annual budget of \$25 million could help EU countries to meet their target under their common objective of increasing the share

of renewable energies by 20% by 2020. MEP Claude Turmes, rapporteur on the report on Renewable Energy Sources, also welcomed the initiative.

The appointment of the management and the choice of location for its head office is expected for June. Several countries have already expressed interest in hosting IRENA such as Germany, Austria, Spain, Denmark, Kenya and the United Arab Emirates.

In the meantime, the German environment ministry announced that German subsidies for renewable heating will increase to €400m in 2009 and will aim at improving existing buildings.

However, some buildings are not eligible for funding which are the new ones which must have a renewable heating component under a renewable thermal energy law that entered into force in January 2009.

Solar heating systems as well as small biomass are the main beneficiaries of last year's subsidies. German government is willing to double the proportion of renewable energy used in heating up to 14% by 2020.

**Key documents:**

*For EPEE members only!*

**Key EPEE actions:**

*For EPEE members only!*

## **11. Eco-design: New eco-design requirements for household fridges and freezers (Lot 13)**

The Eco-design Regulatory Committee approved eco-design standards for household fridges and freezers (Lot 13). According to the text adopted, these will be tightened up in three stages. In July 2010, models with a current efficiency rating of class B and below will be removed from the market. Current class A models will be banned from 2012, and the requirements will be tightened further in 2014.

Before being formally adopted, the proposed measure will have to go through the scrutiny of the European Parliament for 3 months. If the Parliament does not reject it, the measure will be formally adopted at the end of the 3 month period.

Application date	Energy Efficiency Index (EEI)
1 July 2010	EEI < 55 i.e. equivalent to removing current classes B,C and below
1 July 2012	EEI < 44

	i.e. equivalent to removing current class A (current classes A+ and above will remain)
1 July 2014	EEI < 42 i.e. only current classes A+ and above will remain

## 12. Energy efficiency: EU Member States call Commission's greener building plans in question

Early February, the European Commission presented its plans for more energy efficient buildings to the EU Member States. However several governments expressed their concerns on some key measures as for example on the appliance of minimum national energy standards to all buildings undergoing renovations.

Furthermore, EU states also thought that some measures were too premature such as the mandatory EU-wide formula which will calculate the cost-optimal minimum energy efficiency standards from 2017, penalties for non compliance and finally regarding the inspections of heating systems and boilers. Concerning the calculation of zero or low CO2 buildings which use electricity for heating, they highlighted the practical difficulty of such a measure.

Finally, EU governments raised concerns regarding the proposal of the rapporteur Ms Silvia-Adriana Ticău which states that new public buildings should be low or zero emissions by 2015 and that public authorities should have to implement recommendations on energy certificates. Member States want to decide themselves how the public sector can lead on the issue.

The second-reading agreement is aimed to be reached under the Swedish presidency and a vote in the European Parliament for a first-reading is scheduled for April.

### Key documents:

*For EPEE members only!*

## 13. Biodiversity: New name for the Intergroup of the European parliament on sustainable development

On 11 February 2009 MEP Struan Stevenson (EPP-ED, UK), Chairman of the European Parliament "Intergroup on sustainable development", announced that the intergroup decided to rename itself the "Intergroup on climate change and biodiversity", ahead of the European elections.

The announcement has been made during a high-level round table debate at the European Parliament on the topic “European action plan for biodiversity. Counting down to 2010: State of play and post-2010 vision for Europe”. During the discussion Mr Stevenson said that the EU was unlikely to meet with its target of halting the decline in biodiversity by 2010. Therefore, he explained, a longer term objective has to be set urgently and that is the reason why the intergroup wants to re-name itself “to promote a vision of the future that can halt the loss of biodiversity”.

**Key documents:**

*For EPEE members only!*

EPEE Newsletter

## II. Calendar of events

*Upcoming events of relevance to EPEE members, including industry/RAC conferences, as well as institutional and EPEE-specific events*

*For EPEE members only!*

EPEE Newsletter

## III. On the Intranet

*Latest documents uploaded on EPEE’s intranet, with relevant weblinks for direct access*

*For EPEE members only!*