

INDUSTRY TAKES ACTION TO CONTAIN F-GASES

As part of the process to understand the requirements of the F-gas Regulation, we have launched a new website. Hailed as a 'virtual workshop' on the application of the F-Gas Regulation, the website, figaroo.org (figaroo standing for the "F-Gas Regulation Online Observatory"), seeks to provide a national and international resource for all those who need and want to understand and comply with the F-Gas Regulation. Several trade associations, including the European Partnership for Energy and the Environment (EPEE), the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Industry Board (ACRIB), the Federation of Environmental Trade Associations (FETA), and the British Refrigeration Association (BRA) have contributed to what they view as an excellent initiative in promoting a clear understanding of the Regulation.

Since July 2007, industry has had to comply with the key requirements of new EU legislation on fluorinated gases. This marks a step change in the obligation of those operating refrigeration and air conditioning systems containing HFCs to have their equipment checked for leaks by qualified personnel.

Industry feels that in the new legislation, the EU has reached a fair balance between the energy efficiency of systems operating with F-Gases and the environmental impact of these gases on global warming. With this balance achieved after three years of negotiations, industry is taking the lead in enabling the F-Gas Regulation to fulfil its potential as a means to contain F-Gases as well as enabling continued production of energy efficient equipment.

The F-Gas Regulation contains new and far-reaching requirements which specify detailed containment provisions, particularly schedules for leak checking of equipment, staff training, and the certification of people working with F-Gases. It also details a mandatory reporting scheme for those producing, importing, exporting, and selling these gases, and also includes selective bans for emissive, low-societal value uses.

The challenge now for the industry as a whole - including anyone who uses F-Gas, from professional end-users or owners of refrigeration systems air-conditioning equipment and heat pumps, to contractors, installers, distributors, and producers - is to live up to its commitment and demonstrate that it can achieve real and continued emission reductions.

The website is still work in progress. However, with the support of the European Fluorocarbons Technical Committee (EFCTC), the intention is that this website will become an essential tool in ensuring the success of the F-Gas Regulation. It will also support industry's position at the forefront of the successful containment of F-Gases, producing energy efficient products and protecting the environment.

It is crucial to understand that the Regulation is indeed not set in stone. The review of the Regulation, planned for 2011, will assess amongst other factors, the effectiveness of containment measures and the state of technology. Based on this review, the Commission could propose more stringent measures.

