



The Voice of European Air-Conditioning, Refrigeration and Heat Pumps Contractors

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 30th January 2009

RE: European Commission's Communication "Towards a comprehensive climate change agreement in Copenhagen"

AREA is the European organisation of air-conditioning, refrigeration and heat pumps contractors. Established in 1988, AREA voices the interests of 24 national members from 24 European countries and representing more than 9,000 companies across Europe, employing some 125,000 people and with a turnover approaching € 20 billion.

In its Communication "Towards a comprehensive climate change agreement in Copenhagen", the European Commission considers that the accelerated phase-out of HCFC refrigerants may lead to a rapid increase in HFC emissions. This assumption is then used as a basis for justifying a position whereby industry is actively encouraged to intensify research and deliver low GWP (global warming potential) alternative HFCs or non-HFC alternative gases.

AREA cannot accept this position as it fails to take into account the concept of Total Equivalent Warming Impact (TEWI) of many HFCs in use. The Communication later discusses low carbon technology, much of which is reliant on the properties of the fluorinated gases to realise their low carbon potential.

This position also fails to acknowledge the F Gas Regulation's impact on HFC emissions. The whole concept of the F Gas Regulation (EC 842/2006) is to reduce and minimise emissions of HFC refrigerants, among other fluorinated gases. The cost of additional training being carried out across the EU by professional Refrigeration & Air Conditioning contractors has been seen as a necessary expense in order to improve working standards and practices generally, thereby improving containment levels of refrigerants.

When gases are contained within refrigeration circuits the GWP is irrelevant. GWP figures are only relevant to gases released into the atmosphere. Where gases in a sealed system affect the GHG levels is through efficiency of systems. It has been demonstrated in many cases that HFCs are the most energy efficient refrigerants in practical use for small and medium sized applications – particularly for air conditioning systems.

Whilst supporting the Communication's overall objectives, AREA urges decision-makers to base their political orientations on a complete appreciation of all HFCs' uses and effects. Refrigeration and air-conditioning contractors are ready to assist and provide technical input for this purpose.

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