

Germany: ongoing discussion about guidelines for the stimulation of measures on commercial refrigeration

Energy efficiency versus refrigerants

Brussels, 23 March 2009

Since last year, guidelines for the stimulation of measures on commercial refrigeration installations (Richtlinien zur Förderung von Maßnahmen an gewerblichen Kälteanlagen) have been introduced in Germany. Their main objective is the reduction of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. New and existing installations can be subsidized with 15% to 25% of the net investment cost. The criteria for awarding the subsidies, however, are disputed within the industry.

In the centre of the discussions are, as often the case, refrigerants: new installations can only be subsidized if they are operated with CO₂, NH₃ or non halogenated hydrocarbons. Existing installations can also be subsidized when running on fluorinated refrigerants however the subsidy rate only amounts to 15% of the net investment cost compared to 25% for installations running on “natural” refrigerants. In an interview, published in the German trade magazine “Die Kälte + Klimatechnik”, Michael Müller, Member of the German Parliament and Secretary of State at the Ministry of Environment BMU called this solution an “internal compromise”. This shows that even at the highest levels, the issue is being discussed controversially.

The €10,000 awards for highly efficient refrigeration and air conditioning technologies which are intended to be additional incentives for climate protection measures are closely linked to the disputed guidelines. Three prizes regarding “refrigeration components and systems”, “refrigeration and heating” and “networking and initiatives” will be awarded on 26 March in Berlin.

Industry representatives, such as EPEE, the European Partnership for Energy and the Environment are wondering, however, whether these awards really make sense, as they are based on guidelines which might not yet be completely finalized – at least this is how Michael Müller’s explanations in the above mentioned interview can be interpreted: “The special fund for the commercial refrigeration subsidies has mainly been created to support energy efficiency and this criterion should be maintained. If we require for new installations to be run on natural refrigerants to receive the subsidies, and if this requirement turns out to be an insurmountable obstacle for the efficiency criterion, then we must ask ourselves whether the conversion to natural refrigerants should be treated differently.”

If and how this is going to happen is still open. The 67 subsidy requests, however, which have been submitted up until now will, without any doubt, play an important role regarding the further design and possible modifications of the guidelines. The Federal Agency for Economics and Export Control, BAFA, is currently evaluating the requests.

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Relevant links:

[Link to EPEE Factsheet "Handling refrigerants responsibly"](#)

[Link to EPEE videos on the balanced benefits on refrigerants, promotion of energy efficiency and facts about HFCs](#)

[Link to the F-Gas Regulation Online Observatory \(Figaroo\) F-Gas logbook](#)

Notes to the Editor:

The European Partnership for Energy and the Environment (EPEE) is a group of businesses involved in the development and manufacture of cooling, heating and air conditioning applications, where energy efficiency and safety are important. It represents a broad-based group of responsible companies, national associations and European associations active in the European air-conditioning, heat-pump and refrigeration industry. It was formed in September 2000 to contribute to the development of effective European policies to reduce greenhouse gases from the use of refrigerants. Further information can be found on-line at www.epeeglobal.org.