INDUSTRY WELCOMES NEW CLIMATE CHANGE LAW FOR COOLING

Brussels, 4 July 2007: Keeping buildings like hospitals and offices cool, our food fresh and frozen - all need cooling technologies containing refrigerants like HFCs which are Fluorinated greenhouse gases and require particular attention to prevent them from leaking out.

On the 4th of July, the EU F-Gas Regulation came into force, marking a step change in obliging all those operating refrigeration and air conditioning systems containing HFCs to be carefully checked for leaks by qualified personnel.

EPEE Chairman Wolfgang Sandkoetter commented that *"This law is based largely on an existing system in the Netherlands that has successfully reduced emissions of HFCs from over twenty per cent to less than five per cent. The F-gas law now extends this system of responsible use and continuous monitoring to the whole of the EU and we are confident that it will deliver substantial emission reductions."*

The challenge for the industry is now to live up to its commitment and for national governments to ensure that the Regulation is properly put into place.

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 emissions. Further information can be found on-line at www.epeeglobal.org.

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For further information, please contact:
European Partnership for Energy and the Environment
Darcy Nicolle - (+32) 2 739 49 01
Friedrich Busch – (+49) 51 42 17 42
E-mail: secretariat@epeeglobal.org / Website: www.epeeglobal.org

Notes to the Editor:

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The central mission of EPEE is to contribute to the development of effective European policies to limit greenhouse gas emissions from the use of refrigerants. We believe that hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), hydrocarbons, ammonia water and CO_2 are all viable refrigerants depending on application and operational requirements. In all cases emission of greenhouse gases from refrigerant use must be minimised and full Life Cycle Climate Performance (LCCP) must be wisely considered when selection is made of what refrigerant best meets the unique application needs. In addition, each refrigerant property must be taken into account in the selection process.

In our view, any policy aimed at the reduction of the emission of greenhouse gases from the use of refrigerants should be based on the desire to minimise their Global Warming Impact. This approach takes into account the direct emissions of the refrigerant as well as the indirect emissions of CO_2 from the electricity used. Energy related emissions from the use of refrigerants in refrigeration systems represent on average 80 % of the total. Measures to promote energy efficiency should therefore be a prime focus of climate change policies.

Background to the F-gas Regulation

The F-gas Regulation (842/2006/EC) was published in the Official Journal in June 2006.

The Regulation and the subsequently adopted implementation measures feature strict requirements for the containment of F-gases and the personnel handling them, such as detailed leak check procedures, labeling provisions, and high standards for the training and certification of staff. The Regulation is foreseen to be reviewed in four or five years' time.

For more information, please refer to EPEE's Frequently Asked Questions document on the F-gas Regulation, which is available on our website www.epeeglobal.org.

What are Fluorinated gases?

The fluorinated industrial gases (Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), Perfluorinated Carbons (PFCs) and Sulphur Hexafluoride (SF_6)) are widely used in daily-life applications such as refrigerators, air conditioning, thermal insulation and medical sprays. The gases are fluorinated to confer on them distinct environmental and safety benefits (non-ozone depleting, low toxicity and low flammability) for every-day use.

However, the high Global Warming Potential (GWP) of these gases has raised environmental concerns and the three gases were therefore included in the basket of six greenhouse gases identified in the Kyoto Protocol, together with carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O).

Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) are a family of industrial fluorinated gases. They are non-flammable, energy efficient, recyclable and have a very low toxicity. HFCs are used as a replacement for ozone depleting substance such as CFC and HCFCs. They do not deplete the ozone layer because they contain no chlorine.

EPEE
14A, rue du Luxembourg, 1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel : +32-2 732 70 40 / Fax : +32-2 732 71 76
E-Mail : Secretariat@epeeglobal.org / www.epeeglobal.org

Why are HFCs used in refrigeration and air-conditioning?

HFCs are widely used as a refrigerant because of their safety, energy efficiency and low toxicity which make them suitable for use in a range of applications. As compared to the existing alternatives, they offer – depending on the application – energy efficiency, which counterbalances their higher global warming potential. In addition, other refrigerants have specific characteristics that constrain their use, such as ammonia which is highly toxic and is mainly used in large out-of-town cold stores; or hydrocarbons such as propane which are very flammable and are used only in small amounts in products like household fridges.

Who is affected by the F-gas Regulation?

The domestic and commercial refrigeration and air-conditioning sector, food retailing sector, health care sector, the car industry (manufacturers and part suppliers), international transport industry, semiconductor industry, electrical grid operators, the fire fighting industry, the magnesium smelters, aerosols manufacturers and the building construction sector.

Is there a perfect refrigerant?

The perfect refrigerant does not exist. To choose the best refrigeration, users must balance the different properties of each refrigerant. The major factors are health, safety, environmental requirements, energy efficiency as well as economic and technical feasibility. The optimum choice of refrigerant may therefore vary case by case.

EPEE
14A, rue du Luxembourg, 1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel : +32-2 732 70 40 / Fax : +32-2 732 71 76
E-Mail : Secretariat@epeeglobal.org / www.epeeglobal.org