

EU Climate Change Policy affecting Products has to be based on internal market rules.

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Next week the European Parliament will vote on a draft law aimed at reducing emissions of fluorinated gases - so-called F-gases - which are widely used as safe refrigerants in hundreds of different types of products, like medical aerosols, fire fighting systems, and refrigeration and air conditioning equipment in cars, trucks, supermarkets, corner shops and homes. F-gases are greenhouse gases and to prevent their emissions, and subsequent greenhouse effect, they need to be systematically contained in equipment throughout their lives. The EU law was designed to ensure that the highest standards of "containment" are achieved across the EU and result in substantial and measurable emission reductions, while also ensuring an internal market, without trade barriers, for all the many products affected - an ambitious objective that has gained the support of industry.

We are amazed that in this debate, Connie Hedegaard, Denmark's environment minister (in FT letters of 18th October), is not only calling for a huge range of products that use F-gases to be made illegal, but also that Member States should be able to introduce their own policies without regard to single market rules - all this in the name of environmental "ambition". If realised, her ambition can only result in the most costly and market disruptive policies, to the detriment of European industry, European consumers, and ultimately the international efforts of the EU to encourage other countries to adopt climate change policies.

It is a shame that she cannot see the benefits of a common EU climate change policy based on promoting the responsible use of F-gases. Instead, she embraces the blinkered and outdated concept that environmental policy is only ambitious when you are banning something and disregarding the consequences. Unlike her, we hope the Parliament, as it did in its first reading last year, will support better regulation, with an F-gas law based on internal market rules with no arbitrary product bans.

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