



Cooling without climate warming: Parliament backs F-gas ban

Committees Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
Plenary sessions [12-03-2014 - 12:43]

The use of climate-unfriendly fluorinated gases should be banned in new air-conditioning appliances and refrigerators by 2022-2025, under draft rules approved by the European Parliament on Wednesday. These rules had already been informally agreed with EU ministers. Overall, the use of potent hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) greenhouse gases is to be reduced by 79% by 2030.

Following bans on chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in the 1980s to slow depletion of the ozone layer, the new draft legislation targets use of several other fluorinated gases that are harmful to the climate. "F-gases" can have a greenhouse warming effect up to 23,000 times greater than equivalent amounts of CO₂.

"This EU breakthrough sets the pace for a global phase-out of these 'super greenhouse' gases, which would otherwise account for 20% greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. F-gas emissions have risen by 60% since 1990 in the EU. Banning their use in refrigeration and air-conditioning equipment is therefore urgently necessary to reverse this trend", said lead MEP Bas Eickhout (Greens/EFA, NL).

"The EU will reduce F-gas use by almost 80% by 2030. Banning F-gases in new commercial refrigeration equipment from 2022 will spur innovation, to the immediate benefit of many innovative European firms, by stimulating demand for natural refrigerants" he added.

F-gas phase-outs

In negotiations, MEPs amended the Commission proposal to phase out the use of F-gases in several new sectors, where safe, energy-efficient and cost-effective alternatives are available.

The ban would apply to centralised commercial refrigeration equipment with a capacity of 40kw that uses HFCs. Small air-conditioning systems using HFCs with a global warming potential (GWP) more than 750 times that of CO₂ will be banned by 2025, and technical aerosols containing HFCs over 150 GWP would be banned from 2018.

Products such as extruded polystyrene and other foams using HFCs would be banned from 2020 and 2023 respectively.

The agreement also strengthened proposed provisions to reduce by-product emissions, and the legislation encourages member states to develop producer responsibility schemes for the recovery of all F-gases.

Next steps

The draft legislation was passed by 644 votes to 19, with 16 abstentions. The Council of Ministers is to vote on the file on 14 April.

Press release

Contact

Baptiste CHATAIN

BXL: (+32) 2 28 40992

STR: (+33) 3 881 74151

PORT: (+32) 498 98 13 37

EMAIL: envi-press@europarl.europa.eu

TWITTER: EP_Environment