



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

MEMO

Brussels, 18 December 2013

European Commissioner Connie Hedegaard welcomes major step forward to reduce some of the most dangerous greenhouse gases

Today, the Council's Committee of Permanent Representatives has endorsed an agreement reached between the institutions on the Commission's proposal to significantly reduce emissions of fluorinated gases (F-gases).

In welcoming the agreement, Climate Action Commissioner Connie Hedegaard said: *"I am very happy to see that our proposal to limit fluorinated gases was unanimously supported by the Council. This legislation will substantially reduce emissions from these extremely powerful greenhouse gases, while spurring technological development and innovation in the European industry. I also hope that this agreement will give renewed political momentum to come to a global agreement on phasing down fluorinated gases under the Montreal protocol"*

Background

The new legislation on fluorinated gases (F-gases) will:

- **limit the total amount** of the most important F-gases that can be sold in the EU, and reduce this in steps to one-fifth of today's sales in 2030 ("phase-down" measure)
- **ban the use** of F-gases in some equipment, such as fridges in homes or supermarkets, in air conditioning, in foams and aerosols, for which less harmful alternatives are widely available today.
- **prevent emissions** of F-gases from existing equipment by requiring controls, proper servicing and recovery of the gases at the end of the equipment's life.
- **The ambition level proposed by the Commission has been fully maintained by the agreement reached between Council and Parliament.** The Commission's proposal can be found here: [IP/12/1180](#)

What's the issue?

- Fluorinated gases (F-gases) are a family of powerful **greenhouse gases**. Emissions of greenhouse gases are causing climate change. The warming effect of F-gases on the atmosphere is up to **23,000 times stronger than carbon dioxide** (CO₂).
- F-gases are **increasingly used in the EU and world-wide**, for example in equipment for refrigeration and air conditioning, insulation foams, electrical equipment, aerosol sprays and fire protection. F-gases leak into the atmosphere from production plants and from appliances they are used in – both during their working life and when they are thrown away.

- **F-gas emissions in the EU have risen by 60% since 1990** while all other greenhouse gases (GHGs) have been reduced. Today F-gases account for roughly 2% of GHG emissions world-wide, and will rise significantly if effective measures are not taken.
- Most of the common F-gases are relatively short-lived in the atmosphere, this means effective measures will make a substantial contribution to closing the mitigation gap. F-gas appliances have long lifetimes of up to 50 years. This is another reason why action is needed today if we are to prevent **emissions increasing for several decades** to come.

What will we achieve?

- **Reduce F-gas emissions in the EU by two-thirds** of today's levels by 2030. This represents a fair and cost-efficient contribution by the F-gas sector to the EU's objective of cutting its overall GHG emissions by 80-95% of 1990 levels by 2050 ("Roadmap").
- **Stimulate innovation, green jobs and growth** by encouraging the use of green technologies based on less climate-harmful refrigerants.
- **Facilitate a future global agreement** to phase down the use of F-gases under the Montreal Protocol. This agreement underlines the global leadership role of the EU as regards taking effective measures on F-gases.