

F-gas provisional agreement to push European consumers back to fossil fuels

Brussels, 5 October 2023 - After lengthy and turbulent negotiations, EU co-legislators came to a provisional agreement today on a comprehensive ban of F-gases. The phase-out will apply from as early as 2027 for some product applications, wiping off the market cutting-edge clean technologies including heat pumps, and leaving consumers with less efficient options.

The measure put forward by the European Parliament mandates the industry to invest millions of euros in developing new products, for which an impact assessment would only be carried out *a posteriori*. In other words, bans have been established before assessing whether cost-effective, technically feasible, energy-efficient and reliable alternatives exist which make the replacement of F-gas possible, in the very first place.

Consumers living in countries where affordable heating and cooling solutions are most needed, will be the first to pay for this decision. The removal of F-gas-powered, clean techs from store shelves will leave consumers with carbon-intensive and less economically convenient options, causing an overall loss in efficiency.

Almost 30 thousand different models of equipment, including energy efficient heat pumps, already present on the European market will have to suddenly shift to natural refrigerants. Which involves "the adaptation of production processes, but also the training of installers, as well as considerations on the safety and overall energy efficiency of these solutions, with an impact on the affordability of products," said Paolo Falcioni, APPLiA Director General. This comes at a time when Europe placed heat pump technologies at the heart of its flagship REPowerEU plan to ditch fossil fuels and many European companies are already at the forefront of this development.

Ramping up the timeline for phasing out F-gases at the same time as ramping up the targets for all types of heat pump technologies under REPowerEU is incompatible. Designing systems that operate as efficiently with new refrigerant alternatives requires time and research, which comes with financial implications for both manufacturers and consumers.

The provisional agreement reached today as a result of inter-institutional negotiations will now be subject to the final vote of the European Parliament and the Committee of the Permanent Representatives of the Governments of the Member States to the European Union (COREPER), before being published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) marking its entry into force.

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