



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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Fluorinated greenhouse gases and air conditioning in motor vehicles

On the day of the official opening of conciliation between the Council and the European Parliament regarding the draft Regulation on certain fluorinated greenhouse gases and the draft Directive on emissions from air conditioning systems in motor vehicles (yesterday), both institutions succeeded in reaching agreement in the Conciliation Committee¹.

The agreement must now be endorsed by a majority of votes cast within the Parliament and by qualified majority within the Council.

¹ The Conciliation Committee has 50 members: 25 members of the European Parliament and 25 representatives from the Council. The meeting was co-chaired by Prof. Antonios TRAKATELLIS, Vice-President of the European Parliament and Josef PRÖLL, Austrian Minister for Environment.

P R E S S

The draft legal acts are intended to be significant elements of the first phase of the European Climate Change Programme, which was established in June 2000, by introducing cost-effective measures aimed at reducing emissions of fluorinated greenhouse gases (FGG) so as to contribute to the achievement of the European Community and Member States commitments within the framework of the Kyoto Protocol, while preventing distortion of the internal market.

To that end, the Regulation, as redrafted in conciliation, addresses the containment, use, recovery and destruction of the FGG listed in Annex A to the Kyoto Protocol. It further regulates the labelling and disposal of products and equipment containing these gases; the reporting of information on those gases; the control of uses of sulphur hexafluoride; the placing on the market prohibitions of products and equipment containing, or whose functioning relies upon, FGG; and the training and certification of personnel and companies involved in activities provided for by the draft Regulation.

The draft Directive applies specifically to FGG emissions from air conditioning systems fitted to vehicles. It establishes a gradual system of elimination of air conditioning equipment with a global warming potential higher than 150.

Regarding the regulation, the agreement reached at the conciliation stage includes, in particular:

- redefinition of the objective of the regulation: to contain, prevent and thereby reduce emissions of the fluorinated greenhouse gases;
- introduction of the definition of "stationary application or equipment";
- for containment purposes, inclusion of the circuits of refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump equipment into the list of stationary applications;
- replacement of the word "inspections" by the word "checks" (article 3);
- for the producer reporting purposes, the addition of two categories of applications to be identified : solvents and fire protection;
- operators of the applications containing 3 kg or more shall maintain records of the relevant information specifically identifying the separate stationary equipment;
- labels should indicate that the product or equipment contains FGG covered by the Kyoto protocol and their quantity, while instruction manuals should provide more information on the FGG contained in those products and equipment, including on their global warming potential;

- placing on the market prohibition: stricter national measures adopted by 31 December 2005 may be maintained until 31 December 2012, subject to notification to the Commission, together with justification, and compatibility with the Treaty; the procedures set out in the Treaty would apply to the introduction of any new stricter national measures;
- a new item to be subject to review: the need for further action by the European Community and its Member States in the light of existing and new international commitments regarding the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions;
- introduction of a date – 31 December 2008 – for the Commission to present, if appropriate, legislative proposals relating to air conditioning and refrigeration systems reviewing this regulation;
- promotion of alternatives: Member States may promote the placing on the market of equipment which use alternatives to gases with a high global warming potential and which are efficient, innovative and further reduce the climate impact;

Regarding the Directive, the agreement includes:

- promotion of installation of air conditioning systems: Member States may promote the installation of air-conditioning systems which are efficient, innovative and further reduce the climate impact.
