

31 MARCH 2004: MIPIGGs said in response to today's European Parliament votes on the proposed f-gas (potent industrial greenhouse gas) regulation (1st reading):

Parliament Delivers Blow Against Environmental Solutions in F Gas

Votes ---- "By voting to remove the obligation to recover foams containing f-gases (eg from old fridges), placing no limits on the use of f-gases in stationary commercial, domestic or industrial air conditioning or refrigeration, and rejecting an environmental legal base for the law, the European Parliament has dealt a blow against environmental solutions and created a gaping hole in measures needed to protect the climate. This is a disastrous step backwards, weakening even what little the Environment Committee achieved on 16 March".

"Without controls that ensure the use of proven climate-friendly technologies (which the regulation does not) in the major housing and commercial sectors, Europe's towns and cities are going to vent HFCs into the atmosphere just as they leak CFCs - millions of consumers, retailers and office workers are being made unwitting polluters of the climate with powerful global warming gases thousands of times worse than CO2. HFCs will leak from old fridges just as they do from CFCs, where containment is a proven failure. On top of this, by rejecting the environmental legal basis, progressive action by countries like Austria and Denmark will probably be made illegal."

"On these key points the MEPs have surrendered to the wishes of the American-dominated HFC industry, and thrown away the promise for European environmental technology. Only the Council of Ministers meeting on 28/9 June now offer any real hope of remedying this serious setback for Europe's obligations under the Kyoto Protocol. The new European Parliament, heavily influenced by new accession countries, is unlikely to improve the regulation when it finally returns there for a Second Reading".

"On mobile airconditioning the Parliament has slid back even from the Commission's inexcusably relaxed date of 2009 to a phase out starting in 2011. This is totally irresponsible - you'd think that climate change didn't exist."

"The only real positives in the EP's votes are restrictions on SF6 and the requirement that car air conditioning will need to use gases with a global warming potential of under 50. If this measure survives the Council, HFC 152a will be eventually ruled out, effectively in favour of CO2 technologies. Ministers will need to resist pressure from the US car manufacturers on this."

"By this vote the Parliament has significantly undermined hopes for climate protection".

ends

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