



Substances that deplete the ozone layer

MEPs approved a compromise between representatives of the EP and Council on a regulation updating the EU law on substances depleting the ozone layer. The new law brings EU legislation in line with developments of the Montreal protocol aiming at protecting the ozone layer, but goes beyond it, so that the EU will continue to lead by example. The deal does not only cover the marketing ban of certain substances but also substances contained in refrigerators and insulation material in buildings.

The Montreal Protocol, set in 1987, obliged the signatory countries to phase out ozone-depleting substances according to a set timetable.

The revision of the regulation, the EU's main instrument for implementing the Montreal Protocol, aims at simplifying the current legislation. Despite the good results achieved in recent years in the recovery of the ozone layer continued vigilance is required, also taking into account the impact of climate change since most of the substances have high global warming potential and are contributory factor towards increasing the temperature of the planet. Many ozone depleting substances (ODS) are greenhouse gases.

The agreement reached between representatives of Parliament and Council strengthens the Commissions proposal and ensures that the EU can go beyond the Montreal protocol and lead by example.

The compromise achieved will not only help against the destructive effects of UV radiation, but also against climate change.

The revised regulation (the achieved compromise) will clarify some of its provisions, such as those on exemptions and derogations to the use of ozone-depleting substances, and the conditions under which they can be imported and exported. It aligns the EU law with latest international agreements, but goes in some parts beyond it.

Already under the existing EU legislation the production and placing on the market of the most damaging ozone-depleting substances is banned, while the EU is going further than the Montreal protocol by banning or setting limits on certain uses of these substances. Exceptions exist for the use of several ODS, which will be further limited according to the achieved compromise.

Deadlines for the phasing out of hydro chlorofluorocarbons

The phasing out of the production of hydro chlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) will be brought forward for 5 years and shall be achieved by the end of 2019. MEPs achieved that the production of HCFC's has to be further decreased during the period 2017-2019: it should fall to 7% in relation to 1997 levels.

Deadline for phasing our Methyl bromide

Press release

Further environmental and health benefits will be gained through a reduction and the ultimately phase out by 18 March 2010 of the use of methyl bromide (used as a pesticide), which until then can be used only for preventing the introduction and spread of pests through international trade (quarantine and pre-shipment applications)

Substances contained in refrigerators and buildings

Although most of the harmful substances are no longer produced and used in new equipment, thousands of tonnes are contained in existing refrigeration equipments and insulation material in buildings.

The compromise therefore lists responsibilities for undertakings to prevent the substances from being released into the atmosphere to prevent further damage to the ozone layer. It also tightens up the provisions on recovery and destruction of these substances

Furthermore, the Commission shall make available at the latest by the 1st of January 2010 a list of products and equipment which might contain or rely on controlled substances in order to reduce them and ultimately to phase them out.

Background

The ozone layer is a layer of gas in the upper atmosphere which shields life on earth from harmful ultraviolet rays from the sun.

In the 1970s scientists discovered that some chemicals could deplete the ozone layer and in the 1980s the so-called ozone hole was discovered above the Antarctic.

Increased UV radiation can damage ecosystems and have an adverse impact on human health, leading to skin cancer and cataract problems.

The EU regulation on the ozone layer is the European main instrument for the implementation of the provisions of the Montreal Protocol. It bans the production and placing on the market of the most damaging ozone-depleting substances and sets limits on certain uses of these substances.

191 countries have signed the Montreal Protocol.

The legislative report was adopted with 667 votes in favour, 13 against and 10 abstentions.

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