

CITIZENS' SUMMARY

Reducing emissions of climate-warming fluorinated gases

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 2% of the EU's overall GHG emissions and **if their rapid growth is not addressed this share will substantially increase**.
- 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 DO WE WANT TO 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.
- **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.

WHAT ARE WE PROPOSING?

EU legislation, binding on all member countries, to reduce emissions of fluorinated greenhouse gases. If adopted, the proposed legislation would:

- **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.
- **ban the use** of F-gases in some equipment, such as household fridges, 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.

WHO WILL BENEFIT AND HOW?

- **Everyone** will benefit from efforts to prevent climate change from reaching dangerous proportions. Climate change is already happening and is likely to lead, for example, to more frequent and more severe extreme weather events such as heavy storms, floods, heatwaves and droughts.
- **The economy**. The more we reduce emissions today, the less our societies will have to spend on adapting to the adverse impacts of climate change in the future. Without action on F-gases, **other economic sectors would have to pick up the bill for reducing emissions**, at potentially higher cost.

- **Green growth companies and start-ups** producing alternative equipment, many of which are small companies, will find it easier to market their products.

WHY DOES ACTION HAVE TO BE TAKEN BY THE EU?

- Action at EU level will almost certainly be **more effective in environmental terms** than a collection of national measures.
- It is also easier for businesses if they face the same rules everywhere in the EU instead of dealing with different rules in 27 EU countries.
- Common action strengthens the position of the EU - the world's largest economy - in **pushing for global action** to phase down F-gases.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- The EU's legislative bodies, the Council and the European Parliament, will now consider the Commission's proposal, and will work towards an agreement on its content as soon as possible. Once they reach agreement and adopt the legislation, it will become EU law.