EFCTC Position

European HFC Producers support action under the Montreal Protocol for a consumption cap and reduction of HFCs

Brussels, 14 November 2014

The European Fluorocarbons Technical Committee (EFCTC)[1] encourages Parties to the Montreal Protocol to move forward with a constructive dialogue to achieve an agreement for a global cap and reduction for HFC consumption on a GWP-weighted basis, building on the discussions in Paris in July 2014 at the 34th Open-ended Working Group of two proposals for an amendment to the Montreal Protocol to reduce the production and consumption.

The Montreal Protocol has played a critical role in successfully controlling consumption of CFCs and HCFCs and can provide the necessary expertise to effectively implement a similar system for HFCs. In addition, we believe that including provisions for controlling the placing on the market of HFCs under the Montreal Protocol would complement and strengthen the HFC emissions provisions of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol.

A clear long-term regulatory framework and time frame, as has been adopted recently in the European Union with the new F-gas Regulation, is needed for research, development and deployment to progress at the required speed and for manufacturers of equipment and products to undertake the necessary programmes to adopt lower GWP alternatives.

Encouraging progress is being made by HFC producers to find low GWP alternatives for a range of applications including technical aerosols, mobile air-conditioning, insulating foams and commercial refrigeration that deliver the same attributes in terms of safety, energy efficiency and favourable life-cycle costs as the current mainstream HFCs. Already an alternative fluid has been developed for mobile air-conditioning; it has a GWP of less than 1 compared to a GWP of 1300[2] for the HFC currently being used.

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1 A sector group of the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC)

2 GWP values taken from the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) - Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis, available through http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg1/

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It is estimated that the overall global warming impact of HFC emissions worldwide currently represents less than 2% of the total global greenhouse gases emissions. While HFCs are the preferred solution for many societal needs because of their safety and performance advantages, without action the demand for HFCs will grow due to the replacement of HCFCs as well as the increasing demand for refrigeration and air conditioning, especially in developing countries. Such growth would result in the use of HFCs becoming a more significant source of emissions in the future.

The proposal submitted by North American countries for a cap and reduction of HFC consumption on a GWP-weighted basis, in our opinion forms a good initial framework for a dialogue, recognizing that any final agreement needs to be realistic, balanced, flexible and fair, meeting the needs of Parties, and taking into account industrial planning timescales and the capacity of industry to invest in new lower GWP products and applications.

We consider that any final agreement should focus on consumption, which determines use leading to reduced emissions. On this basis, legislative control of production is not necessary as the consumption cap will maintain the required high level of environmental ambition. Furthermore, there should also be a requirement for production reporting from 2015. We recommend that the OEWG considers if it is appropriate to amend the proposal in such a way that developing nations commit to take on legally binding reduction targets by 2020 based upon the experiences gained during the transition to low GWP technologies.

We believe that this approach will allow HFCs to be used for their safety and performance where appropriate, encourage innovation for the use of lower GWP alternatives and applications, but without significant disruption to the industries that use HFCs.

We look forward to a constructive dialogue at the 26th meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol in Paris, November 17th – 21st, 2014.

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