Beat: Politics

EP approved new rules to minimize emissions from powerful greenhouse gases

In line with EU and global climate goals

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USPA NEWS - On Tuesday, the European Parliament approved new rules to minimize emissions from powerful greenhouse gases, in line with EU and global climate goals. With 457 votes in favour, 92 against and 32 abstentions, MEPs endorsed a deal reached with the Council to further cut emissions from fluorinated gases.

The text foresees a total phase-out of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) by 2050, including a trajectory to reduce the EU consumption quota between 2024-2049. It introduces strict requirements that prohibit placing on the EU market products containing F-gases and specific phase-out dates for the use of F-gases in sectors where it is technologically and economically feasible to switch to alternatives that do not use F-gases, such as domestic refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pumps.

The deal on reducing emissions of ozone-depleting substances (ODS) was adopted with 538 votes in favour, eight against and 13 abstentions. The law introduces requirements to recover and recycle such substances in building materials during renovations (found in particular in insulation foams), which is the main source of remaining ODS emissions in the EU. It also introduces strict exemptions for their use as feedstock (to produce other substances, for example in the pharmaceutical or chemical industry), as process agents, in laboratories and for fire protection.

Rapporteur Bas Eickhout (Greens/EFA, NL) said: “Putting an end to F-gases is crucial, not only because these gases are extremely harmful for the climate, but we are also providing clarity and investment certainty for industry. European companies are already at the forefront of developing clean alternatives to F-gases, so this law will be good for the climate and the European economy."

Rapporteur Jessica Polfjärd (EPP, SE) said: “The prevention of emissions from ozone-depleting substances is key in preventing adverse health and environmental effects resulting from a damaged ozone layer and contributing to greenhouse gas savings in line with the Union’s climate target.” Following the final votes in plenary, the Council will now have to formally endorse the texts before their publication in the EU Official Journal.

Fluorinated greenhouse gases, such as hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulphur hexafluoride and nitrogen trifluoride (used in refrigerators, air-conditioning, heat pumps, fire protection, foams or electrical switchgear equipment) and ozone-depleting substances, such as halons (used in fire extinguishers), methyl bromide (to control pests) and hydrochlorofluorocarbons (used in fridges and air-conditioning systems) are man-made greenhouse gases (GHG) with high global warming potential. Emissions from these gases must be reduced further in order to contribute to EU climate objectives and comply with international agreements (the Montreal Protocol and the related Kigali Amendment).

In adopting this report, Parliament is responding to citizens' expectations for the EU to support the shift to a sustainable and resilient growth model and promote greener production processes, as expressed in proposal 11 of the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

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