



° COOLING POST



Refrigerant in illegal disposable cylinders has been openly sold on the internet in Europe.

End this illegal F-gas trade

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BELGIUM: Europe's leading air conditioning and refrigeration associations have called on the authorities to properly enforce the F-gas regulations and stop the illegal trade in refrigerants.

Responding to reports on the *Cooling Post*, EPEE, representing the European refrigeration and air conditioning industry, the HFC refrigerant producers group EFCTC, contractors body AREA and the French refrigerant group ADC3R – have joined forces to call for a better enforcement of the EU F-Gas Regulation. As a growing illegal trade in refrigerants is reported, the associations are also calling on all market players to only buy refrigerants from reputable sources in order to ensure the safe and efficient operation of HVACR equipment.

In a joint statement, the groups say: "Illegal imports and consequent commercialisation of such refrigerants do not only pose a reliability and safety hazard but also put at risk the achievement of the ambitious CO₂-equivalent reduction goals set by the F-gas regulation."

"There is no need for illegal imports", said Andrea Voigt, director general of EPEE. "Sustainable and lower GWP refrigerants and technologies are available today to contribute to meeting the requirements under the F-gas regulation."



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Much of the illegal trade involves imports of refrigerant in banned disposable cylinders

Olivier Janin, secretary general of AREA, added: “Authorities are ultimately responsible for the proper enforcement of the F-gas regulation and we call on all actors – including EU and national competent authorities – to also play their part in enforcing stricter controls at EU borders.”

According to the groups, the European Commission is working on this issue as a priority and the associations intend to work with them over the coming months to help accelerate progress.

There is also a concern that illegally imported refrigerant could present a major risk for the health and safety of installers and users and for the reliability of equipment.

“In case of accidents which may result from the use of unknown substances contained in illegally imported containers or cylinders, installers will ultimately be responsible,” the associations say in the statement.

“We have supported the F-gas regulation and the transition towards lower GWP refrigerants right from the start. We cannot afford such loopholes in the implementation and lack of coordinated enforcement, especially now as the world has agreed on a global phase-down of HFCs under the Kigali Amendment which will enter into force in those countries that have ratified it in less than three months,” added Andrea Voigt.

Over recent months, the *Cooling Post* has led with stories from across Europe of illegal refrigerant imports, much of it in banned disposable cylinders, sales of banned HCFCs and even CFCs, and examples of companies and individuals openly flouting the F-gas regulations.



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