Climate change: fluorinated greenhouse gases, hydrofluorocarbons HFCs, perfluorocarbons PFCs, sulphur hexafluoride

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In adopting the report by Robert GOODWILL (EPP-ED , UK), the European Parliament made a large number of amendments to the draft Regulation on fluorinated gases. On the vexed question of imposing quotas on manufacturers for the use of fluorinated gases in new air-conditioned cars, Parliament supported its rapporteur and rejected the new quota system proposed by the Commission. Instead MEPs demanded the introduction of limits for car air-conditioning systems from January 2011 and the phasing-in by manufacturers of alternatives for HFCs, PFCs and sulphur hexafluorides (SF6). Whereas the Commission proposed banning gases with a global warming potential higher than 150 from 2009, MEPs wanted the limit to be tightened to 50 from 2011. For small-scale manufacturers, this provision would apply from 1 January 2013. From 1 January 2014, Member States should prohibit the sale or placing on the market of new vehicles fitted with an air-conditioning system using gases with a global warming potential higher than 50. Member States should also seek to promote the installation of air-conditioning systems using an efficient gas such as CO2 which had a global warming potential of less than 100. They should also be able to introduce fiscal or financial incentives for the conversion of existing vehicles in operation, provided that air-conditioning systems using gases with a global warming potential of less than 50 were installed. Another important amendment concerned the prevention of the leakage of fluorinated gases. According to this amendment, all measures which were technically and economically feasible should be taken to prevent and minimise emissions of fluorinated gases. This obligation should be applicable to more sectors and not just cover refrigeration, heating and air-conditioning but all sectors where these gases were used. Parliament also wanted to enlarge the scope of the Regulation by introducing measures concerning recovery and placing on the market of these gases, use of products and equipment containing these gases and reporting of data on these gases. In addition, it introduced a number of amendments on inspections for the leakage of these gases. Parliament also demanded that consumers and citizens be informed of the global warming potential of products containing fluorinated gases.