



QUARTERLY PERIODICAL FOR THE EUROPEAN CONTRACTORS SOCIETY WORKING
IN THE REFRIGERATION, AIR-CONDITIONING AND HEAT PUMP SECTOR
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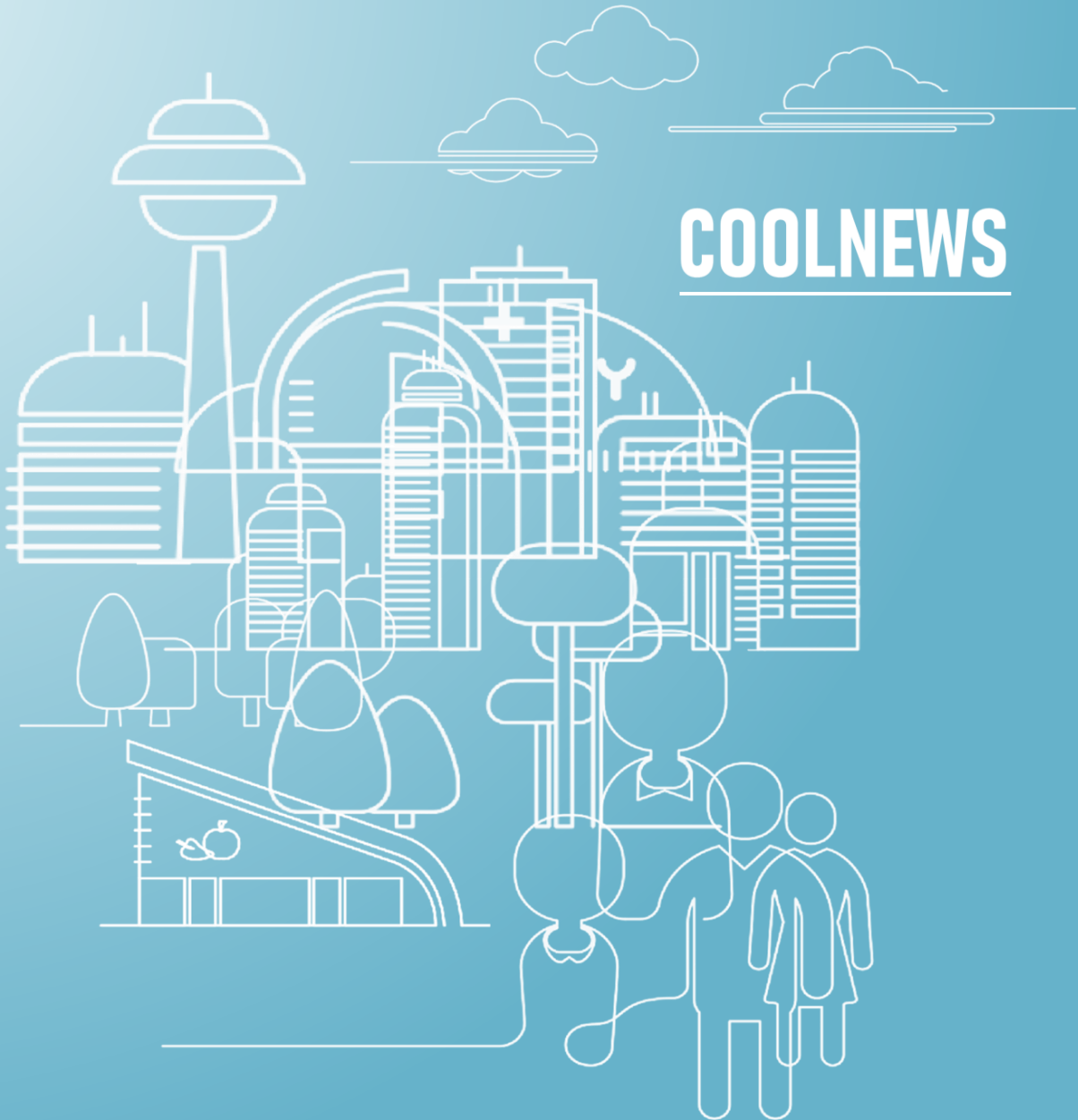


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AREA AFFAIRS

AREA'S PRESIDENT SPOKE AT THE REHVA EVENT ON 7 FEBRUARY



On 7 February, AREA's President, Coen Van de Sande, took to the stage for an event organised by REHVA alongside representatives from the European Commission, European Economic and Social Committee, European Parliament and Karlsruhe University of Applied Sciences.

Discussions took a deep dive into heat pumps and the impact that the F-gas Regulation will have on the

industry. Coen highlighted our commitment to the transition to climate-friendly alternatives to f-gases, challenges faced by contractors with a rapid deployment of heat pumps based on natural refrigerants, and set out conditions for a successful transition:

- The timing needs to be aligned with market and technological realities.
- Alternative refrigerants should be properly regulated. In particular, the current F-gas training and certification scheme should be extended to alternative refrigerants. However, ensuring the widespread of training and certifications for those refrigerants across Europe will require time.

IWD 2023: AREA CELEBRATES THE WOMEN WHO MAKE OUR INDUSTRY



Silvia Romano
Chief International Affairs



International Women's Day is a special opportunity to shine the spotlight on women taking an active role in the RACHP industry. This year, we [interviewed](#) Silvia Romano, an active member of AREA and Chief International Affairs at Centro Studi Galileo and ATF. She highlighted what led her to the HVACR sector, and what could be done to encourage more women to see the many opportunities here! She also

presented the competition on best practices for EU women in cooling.

LEGISLATION

F-GAS REGULATION

Revision of the F-Gas Regulation

On 1 March, the European Parliament's Environment Committee (ENVI) adopted its [report](#) on the F-gas Regulation Revision. The report includes, among others, strengthened new requirements proposed by the Commission that prohibit placing products containing F-gases (Annex IV) on the single market. The text also adds prohibitions on the use of F-gases for sectors where it is, according to the report, technologically and economically feasible to switch to alternatives that do not use F-gases, such as refrigeration, air conditioning, heat pumps and electrical switchgear.

In addition, the report introduces a steeper trajectory from 2039 onwards to phase down hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) placed on the EU market, with the goal of a zero HFC target by 2050 (Annex VII). Phasing out HFC production and consumption in the EU would align these updated rules with the EU's 2050 climate neutrality goal.

AREA's proposal to extend the current F-Gas training and certification scheme to alternative refrigerants was broadly supported in the European Parliament. Please see our reaction [here](#).

In addition to our individual advocacy work on this issue, AREA also joined forces with 11 industry associations to propose [amendments](#) for the plenary sitting.

Further to the report, additional amendments are tabled for the plenary vote (available [here](#)) scheduled on 30 March 2023. The adopted text will constitute the Parliament's negotiating position with EU governments on the final shape of the legislation.

On the Council's side, a general approach is expected to be reached by the end of the Swedish Council presidency at the end of June. The latest proposal is available [here](#).

HFC prices

Öko-Recherche released the Q4/2022 excerpt of the HFC prices monitoring. The main findings are:

- Prices for high GWP gases/mixtures R134a and R410A are on an upwards trend since Q4/2020.
- Compared to Q3/2022, in Q4/2022 the price of R410A has risen by 15%, while the price of R134a has increased by 8% on average, throughout the supply chain.
- Compared to the baseline in 2014, R134a and R410A prices are 1-5 to 5, and R404A prices are 2.5 to 13 times higher depending on the supply chain level. Compared to Chinese producer prices, selling prices of European producers are almost four times higher for R134a.
- In general, the EU refrigerant market appears to be quite stable in terms of supply. There were a few indications of limited regional availability, mostly related to R1234ze.

- For prices of quota authorisations, increases have been indicated with prices ranging from 14,5 to almost 16 €/t CO₂e. Average authorisation prices (ca. 15 €/t CO₂e) have increased by 16 % compared to last quarter.

PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES (PFAS)

Since 2020, the competent authorities of five countries (Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Denmark) have been preparing a REACH restriction dossier for PFAS, arguing that the persistence of PFAS poses an unacceptable risk to the environment and humans.

In January the restriction proposal was submitted to ECHA and it was [published](#) in February. There are two options on how to restrict the use and placing on the market of PFAS:

- Full ban with no derogations and a transition period of 18 months after the Regulation enters into force.
- Ban with use-specific and time-limited derogations that would carry an 18-month transition period and a 5 or 12-year derogation period, depending on the application.

ECHA launched the six month [public consultation](#) on 22 March 2023.

Next steps:

- 5 April: ECHA online information session;
- 2024: SEAC and RAC final opinions;
- 2025: European Commission adoption and entry into force;
- 2026-27: PFAS restriction becomes applicable.

ODS REGULATION

In the European Parliament, Members of the Committee on the Environment adopted their [report](#) on the revision of the ODS Regulation with 74 votes in favour, none against and 2 abstentions on 1 March:

- MEPs support the Commission's proposal which confirms that the production, sale, use, imports and exports of ODS are not allowed. Strict exemptions are foreseen for the use of ODS to produce other chemicals (as feedstock) and as process agents, in laboratories and for fire protection in special applications such as military equipment and airplanes.
- MEPs introduce a rolling review mechanism (by 1 January 2025 and every 2.5 years thereafter) requiring the Commission to assess the availability of alternatives for ODS used as feedstock and propose measures to further cap or phase out such uses where alternatives exist.
- MEPs want that the rules related to leakages and registration in the licensing system should be extended to all ODS covered by the EU legislation (including those not covered by the Montreal Protocol, listed in Annex II)

The report is scheduled to be adopted during the 29-30 March 2023 plenary sitting.

ENERGY PERFORMANCE OF BUILDINGS DIRECTIVE (EPBD)

On 14 March 2023, during its Plenary meeting, the European Parliament adopted its [position](#) on the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) revision proposal with 343 votes for, 216 against, and 78 abstentions. Some of the main amendments in the Parliament's position include that all new buildings should be zero-emission from 2028 (2026 for public ones), be equipped with solar technologies by 2028 (where technically suitable and economically feasible), and residential buildings should achieve, at a minimum, energy performance class E by 2030, and D by 2033.

One of the more controversial amendments proposed by the MEPs is that boilers certified to run on renewable fuels, and other technical building systems not exclusively using fossil fuels, shall not be considered to be fossil heating systems, allowing the installation of 'hydrogen ready' boilers in new buildings.

What is specifically positive for AREA:

- Indoor environmental quality (IEQ) received a definition, a dedicated article, and has been integrated as an element in many recitals and other articles throughout the legal text – a big success for AREA and the IEQ gathering.
- The terms 'cooling system', 'ventilation system' and 'heat pump' have been defined.
- Member States will have to prepare an overview of implemented and planned policies to increase the availability of qualified professionals' skills development programmes and build national action plans to address gaps.
- Increased inspections of fossil fuel-based generators and BACS.

As next step, with both the Parliament and Council positions adopted, the EU institutions will enter trialogue negotiations, to reach a compromise on the final text that will become EU law.

RENEWABLE ENERGY DIRECTIVE (RED II) AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY DIRECTIVE (EED)

The trialogue negotiations on the Renewable Energy Directive (RED II) and Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) recasts between the European Parliament and EU Council are ongoing.

When it comes to the RED II, so far, six trialogue meetings have taken place, with the last one on 21 March 2023. What is known at this stage is that the talks have been revolving around the topics of bioenergy, and in particular the divisive issue of biomass.

Regarding the EED, there has already been five meetings. On 10 March, the Parliament and Council have agreed on new energy saving targets in both primary and final energy consumption in the EU (at least 11.7% at EU level by 2030), ensuring annual energy savings of 1.5% on average by 2030 and that

at least 3% of public buildings are renovated each year into nearly-zero energy buildings or zero-emission buildings. The agreement also establishes new requirements for efficient district heating systems.

The EED provisional agreement will now have to be officially endorsed by both the Parliament and EU Council.

ECODESIGN & ENERGY LABELLING ON AIR-CONDITIONERS & COMFORT FANS AND LOCAL SPACE HEATERS

On 7 March 2023, the European Commission held a Consultation Forum meeting on the revision of the Ecodesign and Energy Labelling measures on air-conditioners and comfort fans, and local space heaters, providing their new draft text and ideas for merger of the energy labelling of the two groups.

Some of the main potential changes that are relevant for AREA concern the minimum availability of certain spare parts for professional repairers and end-users, and their maximum delivery times.

- Availability:
 - Given spare parts listed in the text shall be available on the market minimum 7 years after their respective product is placed (a downgrade from the usual 10).
 - Certain components that interfere with liability and safety aspects concerning wiring and refrigerants might become available to end-users.
- Delivery:
 - The delivery of the spare parts for air-to-air air conditioners, air-to-air heat pumps and comfort fans within 10 working days after having received the order (upgrade for us from the usual 15%).

The deadline to provide comments to the European Commission is 11 April.

The AREA Sustainable Innovation WG does not see a need to react at this moment, but will continue to monitor the developments.

EUROPEAN YEAR OF SKILLS

Announced in the end of 2022, the European Commission made a proposal for 2023 to be [a year dedicated to skills](#), in light of their vital importance for ensuring the EU green and digital transitions.

The European Year of Skills, officially launched on 9 May 2023, will run until May 2024, linking skills-related activities across Europe, implementing existing instruments and launching a number of actions and initiatives.

Some of the new EU proposals that will be adopted include:

- A digital education and skills package.
- An EU talent pool will facilitate international recruitment and opportunities for qualified third-country nationals to work in sectors identified as of strategic relevance at EU level.
- As part of [the Pact for Skills](#), industry, vocational and education providers, social partners, public employment services and others will create more partnerships to commit to training and investing in the reskilling of workers. Partnerships for onshore renewable energy, heat pumps skills and energy efficiency are in the making.
- The [European Vocational Skills Week](#) 2023 from 23-27 October will shine a spotlight on how vocational education and training is key for people of all ages.

Furthermore, the Commission has launched a [dedicated website](#) on the European Year of skills, through which stakeholders can access and register relevant events and initiatives happening across the EU.

See the full list of new initiatives and proposals under the umbrella of the European Year of Skills [here](#).

NET ZERO INDUSTRY ACT

As announced under the European Commission's 'Green Deal Industrial Plan' Communication, the [Net Zero Industry Act](#) proposal was adopted on 6 March 2023.

The aim of the Regulation is to scale up manufacturing and take up of clean technologies in the EU, strengthening Union's resilience and competitiveness of the Union.

Of high importance for AREA is that among the strategic technologies that have been addressed in the proposal, heat pumps are explicitly included. Furthermore, the enhancing of skills is one of the main pillars on which the Regulation is based on. The Commission's proposal includes the creation of:

- Net-Zero Industry Academies: will develop leaning programmes, content and learning and training materials for developing, installing, commissioning, operating and maintaining net-zero technologies. Will also promote content and materials for training trainers and have mechanisms to ensure high quality of training offered by education and training providers.
- Net-Zero Europe Platform: will support the availability and deployment of skills in net-zero technologies, monitor and forecast the demand and supply of a workforce and the availability of education and training. Will also facilitate the development of European occupation profiles consisting of a common set of knowledge, skills and competences for key professions.

AREA issued an official reaction, welcoming the proposal, which you can read [here](#).

GENERAL

AREA WOMEN IN COOLING COMPETITION

AREA is excited to have partnered with our friends at [World Refrigeration Day®](#) to launch a competition on best practices for all EU women in cooling!

→ The challenge is to provide a video showing best practices (e.g. installation, repair, charging, leak checking, recovery etc.) using the right PPE and the right tools.

The Competition brochures are now available on AREA website in English, French, Italian and Spanish.



2023

The winner will be awarded:

- ✓ by AREA (through ATF) of flight, accommodation, and conference fee
- ✓ by World Refrigeration Day of a check in the value of 1,000 EUR
- ✓ receiving the prize in the frame of UNEP-IIR-AREA-CSG 20th European Conference Milan, 8-9 June 2023

EU WOMEN IN COOLING VIDEO COMPETITION

- Record a video showing your best practices (e.g. installation, repair, charging, leak checking, recovery...) using the right PPE.
- Upload your video on "AREA rachp" Facebook page.

Deadline: May 13th. GOOD LUCK!
any *EU language is welcome*

Diarrah Coulibaly from Mali, winner of "Good Practices Video Competition Woman in Refrigeration in Africa" by U-3ARC, September 2022



Interested? Find out how you can get involved <https://bit.ly/3IPA5ia>

F-GAS DEBATE: INDUSTRY OFFERS CONCRETE PROPOSALS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



Industry holds out hope that the European Parliament will take a practical approach to the challenge of reducing climate warming F-gas emissions and support the view taken by its industry committee in the upcoming plenary vote.

Brussels, 22nd March 2023: An alliance of 12 leading European associations and global partners active in the European market and representing industries manufacturing, servicing and installing heating, cooling, refrigeration and foam insulation solutions offered proposals to the European Parliament to effectively implement an F-gas phasedown while achieving the EU's climate and energy security goals.

On 30th March, Parliament will vote on the F-Gas Regulation Revision that aims to reduce emissions from hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and related fluorinated substances, which are used in many products, including heat pumps, air conditioning, refrigeration and foam insulation. The alliance is now offering several concrete and ambitious amendment proposals to the F-Gas Regulation Revision proposed by the Commission.

Read more  [HERE](#)

AREA INTERVIEWS FAROOQ MEHBOOB, ASHRAE PRESIDENT

During the last ASHRAE Winter meeting and AHR Expo, which took place on 6-8 February 2023 in Atlanta, Georgia, [ASHRAE](#) President [Farooq Mehboob](#) had a long meeting with Marco Buoni, Former President of AREA, with a mandate in International Affairs.

The questions tackled were:

- Your presidential theme is “leveraging relationships, knowledge and change; it is the formula to securing our future”. In your opinion, what do we need to do to secure our future within our sector?
- In Europe we aim for “net-zero” by 2050, with heating and cooling through heat pumps and A/C powered by PV systems (or any other renewable energy). Is the world ready for this step?
- Is training of contractors and operators (end-users) an important missing link in our sector, which is normally focused on manufacturers and design engineers, and how can we improve it?

View the full interview  <https://www.area-eur.be/news>

EUROPEAN HEAT PUMP SUMMIT

POWERED BY CHILLVENTA

CONGRESS + EXPO
NUREMBERG, 24–25.10.2023

Industrial | Commercial | Residential
Heating & Cooling | Components & Equipment

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NÜRNBERG MESSE

On 24-25 October 2023, heat pump experts from all over the world will come together for the European Heat Pump Summit in Nuremberg. The professional congress brings together renowned speakers and international decision-makers from industry, trade, and science. As a platform for targeted dialog, discourse and exchange of experience, the European Heat Pump Summit focuses on various aspects of the promising topic of heat pumps – from market developments, research and development, and application to the creation of components and products. Additionally, exhibitors have the opportunity to present their companies and products at the accompanying foyer exhibition.



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