



– Press RELEASE –

RAL Quality Assurance Association welcomes EU Commission's climate protection targets

Luxembourg, January 2007 – The climate protection targets recently announced by the EU Commission have been generally well received. The Commission proposes a 30 percent reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases by the year 2020. The RAL Quality Assurance Association for the Demanufacture of Refrigeration Equipment supports the European initiative and is promoting ways in which the fridge recycling sector can actively contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

According to press reports, the EU is pursuing ambitious climate protection targets in an effort to move on from the Kyoto process. According to statements made by President of the Commission, José Manuel Barroso, the Commission wants EU member states to reduce their greenhouse gas emission levels by 30 percent by 2020. These new targets are to be set out in a follow-up agreement to the Kyoto Protocol. Reports forecasting that fifty years from now the world will be experiencing extended periods of drought, harvest failure, flooding and fatal heat waves, have also been instrumental in encouraging the EU Commission to take action. Long-term projections indicate that southern Europe will be regularly afflicted by natural catastrophes causing severe economic crises and fatality levels estimated in the tens of thousands. Scientists have been warning for years about the impact of a global increase in temperatures.

The Commission's proposal shows that action to counter carbon dioxide induced climate change has now been put firmly at the top of the Brussels agenda.

Information received by the RAL Quality Assurance Association suggests that the chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) – gases which up until now have been predominantly associated with stratospheric ozone depletion – will be given greater weight in future analyses of global greenhouse warming.

In Europe alone there are still about 200 million domestic fridge and freezer appliances containing CFCs. The quantity of CFCs in these appliances is equivalent to some 560 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. These numbers highlight the severity of the CFC problem and emphasize the need to do everything to minimize the escape of CFCs into the environment.

The RAL Quality Assurance Association welcomes the Commission's proposed climate protection measures as they underscore the importance of all climate-related activities, including the recovery of CFCs from end-of-life refrigeration equipment and other products.

The significant contribution that fridge recycling can make to reducing greenhouse gas emissions will be given strong emphasis in future discussions between the RAL Quality Assurance Association and international bodies and government agencies. CFC losses that arise from the use of inadequate recycling technology, the low motivation of some plant owners to maintain compliance with minimum environmental standards and the deployment of insufficiently trained personnel, are all factors with a detrimental effect on the greenhouse gas emission balance of fridge recycling activities in individual EU member states. The realization of the relevance of fridge recycling to climate protection goals has led to a significant increase in the willingness of EU countries to stipulate binding CFC recovery levels. With over fifteen years experience in the fridge recycling field, the RAL Quality Assurance Association is increasingly in demand for support and advice on how best to ensure that European fridge recycling activities are environmentally compliant.

Environmentally sound fridge recycling is clearly only one of a number of climate protection activities. It is, however, an area that can rapidly make a key and measurable contribution to attaining the EU's new climate targets. Systematic fridge recycling in all EU member states will not only promote European climate protection objectives, it will act as an indicator of European willingness to make an active contribution to global climate improvement. The RAL Quality Assurance Association therefore lends its wholehearted support to the proposals of the EU Commission.



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