



SUBMISSION BY IRELAND AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS MEMBER STATES.

This submission is supported by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia.

Dublin, 27 May 2013

Subject: A Proposed Decision Relating to Phasing Down of Hydrofluorocarbons under the Montreal Protocol

The issue

1. The phase-out of Ozone Depleting Substances (*ODS*) such as CFCs and HCFCs has led directly to a strong increase in use and related emissions of hydrofluorocarbons (*HFCs*). These are man-made chemicals that do not deplete the ozone layer but are powerful greenhouse gases with global warming potentials ranging from hundreds to several thousand times that of CO₂.
2. If this trend continues, radiative forcing from HFCs could rise from 1% of the global total in 2000 to over 20% by 2050 (assuming effective action on CO₂).¹ For this reason reducing HFCs can make a significant contribution towards realising our collective below 2°C objective. Conversely, without action in this field, such an objective becomes more challenging. Global action to curb emissions of HFCs is therefore needed.

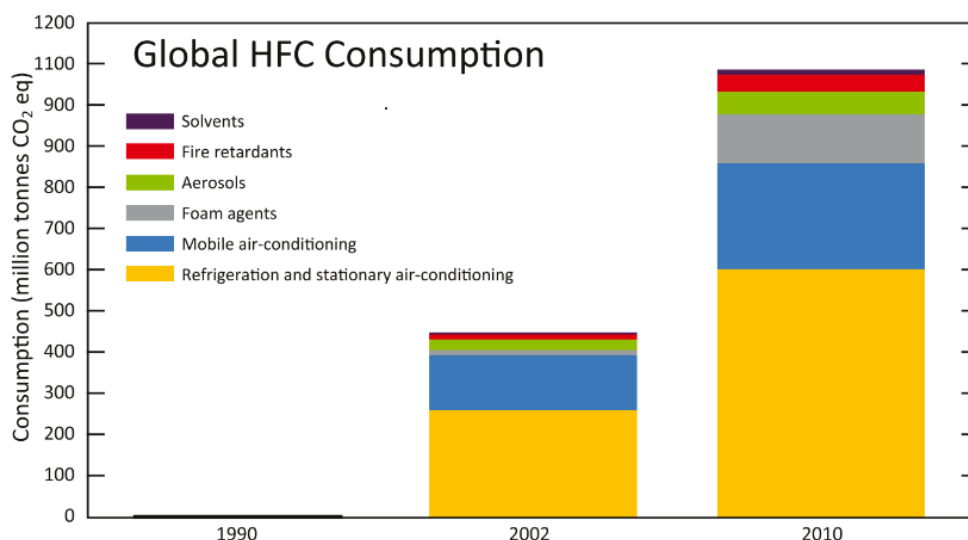
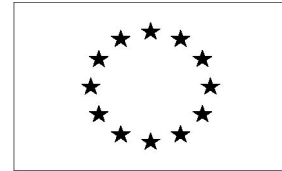


Figure 1: Source UNEP (2011), HFCs: A Critical Link in Protecting Climate and the Ozone Layer

¹ UNEP (2011). HFCs: A Critical Link in Protecting Climate and the Ozone Layer. A UNEP Synthesis Report. http://www.unep.org/dewa/Portals/67/pdf/HFC_report.pdf



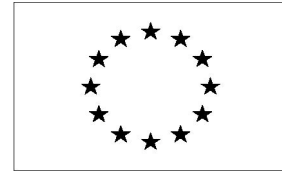
3. Low Global Warming Potential (**GWP**) alternatives to HFCs are developing rapidly and becoming widely available in most sectors. Moving from HFCs and substances that deplete the ozone layer to climate friendly alternatives can be achieved if we share information and experiences and act timely internationally.
4. Countries that already use HFCs at large scale should reduce their consumption in line with the widespread and increased availability of suitable alternatives. Acting now would assure that Countries that have not yet phased in HFCs could leapfrog the HFC challenge, avoiding a transition to high-GWP HFCs by moving straight to low-GWP alternatives. Therefore, by acting quickly and avoiding HFCs altogether, many countries will significantly reduce the cost of regulation by doing so once rather than twice.
5. Broad acknowledgement of the problem and the need for global action is expressed in the conclusions of the Rio+20 summit, which 'supports a gradual phase-down in the consumption and production of HFCs'. The 2011 Bali Declaration under the Montreal Protocol lists 112 signatories committed to explore further and pursue effective means of transitioning to environmentally friendly alternatives to high GWP HFCs.

The Montreal Protocol; a ready-made solution

6. There are clear reasons why utilising the Montreal Protocol now to deliver a global phase-down of HFCs makes sense:
 - The Montreal Protocol has universal membership and has successfully reduced 98% of 97 different chemicals responsible for ozone depletion in the same sectors that use HFCs today. It therefore represents a tried and tested mechanism and could be applied immediately to reducing use of HFCs to provide real pre-2020 emissions prevention.
 - Implementation by developing countries is supported through the Montreal Protocol's successful financial mechanism (the Multilateral Fund) through which regular financial contributions from developed countries are used to cover the full agreed incremental costs of delivering a phase out of ODS in developing countries. This financial mechanism was evaluated positively by all parties in 2012, enabling parties to meet their commitments.
 - Article 2 of the Vienna Convention (upon which the Montreal Protocol is based) mandates Parties to address adverse effects of efforts to protect the ozone layer, including effects on the climate system. As the use of HFCs has arisen as a direct result of actions taken by the Montreal Protocol, there is therefore a clear remit for the Montreal Protocol to deliver an HFC phase-down.

Role of UNFCCC

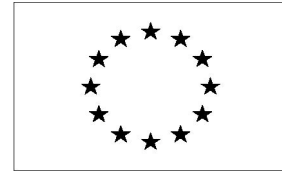
7. HFCs are currently covered only under the UNFCCC and not by the Montreal Protocol. However, In the last 4 years amendment proposals to the Montreal Protocol to phase-down HFCs have been tabled by North America (US, Canada and Mexico), and by the Federated States of Micronesia (the Federated States of Mauritius jointly submitted a proposal in 2009). As set out above, the Montreal Protocol offers the best vehicle to address HFCs.



8. In depth discussions on the HFC amendment proposals have yet to be started under the Montreal Protocol. One major concern explaining some Parties' hesitance to engage in the discussion is that HFCs are climate forcers rather than ODSs, and no clear signal has yet been given by the Parties of the UNFCCC that growing HFC emissions are a concern and priority area for action.

Recommendation

9. As the EU proposed in the additional ADP session in April in Bonn, a Decision at the 19th Conference of the Parties in Warsaw to urge the Montreal Protocol to undertake a global phase-down of the production and consumption of HFCs would be a very useful step, greatly encouraging effective action to stop the current rapid increase in HFC emissions and thereby making a significant contribution to the effort to close the emissions gap pre-2020. This should therefore be discussed as part of Workstream 2 of the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action. A proposal for a COP Decision is attached.



DRAFT

Decision Welcoming Complementary Efforts to Prevent a Dangerous Increase in the Use and Release of Hydrofluorocarbons to the Environment

The Conference of the Parties,

Reaffirming the ultimate objective of Article 2 of the Convention to prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system in a timely manner;

Recognizing that the phase-out of ozone-depleting substances is resulting in a rapid increase in the use and release of high global-warming potential hydrofluorocarbons to the environment;

Recalling Decision 12/CP.8 encouraging Parties to ensure that their actions to address ozone depletion are undertaken in a manner that also contributes to the objective of the Convention;

Encouraged by the outcome of the Rio + 20 Conference, which noted support for a gradual phase-down in the consumption and production of hydrofluorocarbons;

Noting that for twenty-five years the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer has proven effective at phasing down the consumption and production of similar high global-warming potential fluorinated gases, and that the Montreal Protocol bodies have considerable expertise in dealing with the relevant sectors;

Urges all Parties to pursue the adoption, under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, of appropriate measures to progressively reduce the production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons, in a manner that would complement the efforts under this Convention to minimize emissions of hydrofluorocarbons to the environment.