



CoolNews

*Quarterly periodical for the European contractors society working in the Refrigeration,
Air-Conditioning and Heat pump sector*

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***Enabling refrigeration, air conditioning and heat
pump contractors to fulfil the essential needs of
our European citizens***

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Message from the President

Dear colleagues,
Dear friends,



As you are reading this newsletter, our lives have taken an unexpected turn. Within less than a couple of months, the COVID-19 pandemic has abruptly and profoundly changed our way of life. Half of the world is in confinement. In Europe, most countries have drastically restricted their people's movements to stop the spread of the virus and give a chance to their overwhelmed health services to treat the thousands of patients that flood hospitals every day. Large parts of our economy are at best majorly slowed down if not completely put to a halt.

In these unprecedented times, when the vast majority of the EU population has had to adapt to a new normal, our lives mostly depend on a bunch of heroes. Heroes from our health sector, who help the many patients days and night. Heroes from the food chain, who ensure that our most basic needs are still fulfilled, that our markets, shops and supermarkets are still supplied with the goods essential to our lives. Heroes from the IT sector who keep our communication systems going at a time when they are more important than ever. We are grateful to those obvious heroes, who keep our society going.

I also want to express my most sincere gratitude to other, perhaps less obvious, heroes. Every day, our refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump contractors play their part to fulfil the most essential needs of our European citizens. They ensure the proper functioning of the cooling systems that preserve food and medicines, that provide thermal comfort in hospitals and homes, that keep data centres running. They are heroes too and we should all thank them.

We, in AREA, are by their side. I have personally issued a call to national and European Heads of State and Government to plead for the recognition of the essential role that our sector plays. We are also preparing a letter to the European Commission to request flexibility and guidance regarding some Fgas deadlines that COVID-19 is making impossible to meet. Next to the advocacy work that we will continue towards the authorities in the coming weeks and months, we are also mobilising our network to facilitate exchange of good practices among our members and to provide a picture of the situation and its evolution across our membership.

More than ever, we stand united for our members, our heroes.

Stay healthy.

Marco Buoni
President

AREA AFFAIRS

COVID-19 – AREA takes action

Further to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Board of AREA took a number of decisions to address this unprecedented situation.

AREA has published an open letter from our President Marco Buoni stressing the strategic importance of our RACHP contractors in support of our citizens' essential needs. As some countries are setting lists of "essential businesses", the purpose is to alert European and national leaders on how essential our sector is. Feel free to use at national level as you see fit.

In order to keep constant monitoring of the situation in our sector across Europe, the secretariat will manage an information exchange system whereby member will be invited to report on the impacts COVID-19 and their evolution. Results will be made available every 2 weeks and serve several purposes:

- a. Exchange information on national situations and potential best practices
- b. Give AREA an up-to-date global overview of the situation at European level
- c. Enable AREA to add value to its members, for instance by formulating common positions, requests or messages towards decision-makers

AREA has created a [page](#) on its website to be used as a library of guidelines, recommendations and other useful documents that members have drawn up and that can be of use for others

The Board will meet every two weeks to re-evaluate the situation and take decisions on AREA's actions accordingly.

AREA & ISHRAE sign a Memorandum of Understanding

On 2nd February 2020, after the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Environment Programme last November 2019 in Rome and in the frame of the 31st Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol, AREA signed a collaboration agreement with the Indian Society of Engineers ISHRAE (Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers) in the premises of the ASHRAE Winter Meeting.

Through this signature, AREA President Mr. Buoni and ISHRAE President Mr. Murthy share their common vision of how much the global HVACR sector can profit from mutual cooperation, especially in this historical moment of technological and legislative innovation.

The scope of the agreement is to support and initiate activities to promote the industry and its high standards of quality, in order to serve users' interest in a safe and uninterrupted usage of efficient refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump equipment, and to create and maintain a favourable


business climate for European refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump contractors, in terms of quality, safety, employment, fair competition and profitability.



Staff news at FRIXIS

We have been informed that Dirk van de Wynckel, Director of AREA's Belgian member FRIXIS, has left the organisation. For the time being, FRIXIS' point of contact is Chintana Van Caster, who can be reached at info@frixis.be. The organisation of looking for a new Director and Communications Associate. Jurgen Buckinx, who is the National President at Frixis, is also involved in the daily operations for now.

AREA joins the Count On Cooling campaign

 AREA is a partner to the [Count On Cooling](#) campaign initiated by EPEE. The launch was supposed to take place late March with a conference at which AREA was due to speak. The event was however cancelled because of the coronavirus and replaced with a webinar.

A [promotional video](#) was also published. It features AREA President who stresses the importance of proper design, installation and maintenance for the energy efficiency of cooling systems.

LEGISLATION

Fgas Regulation

On 13 March, AREA attended the EPEE Industry F-Gas Round Table (webinar) where representatives of the European Commission DG CLIMA gave an update on the main F-Gas related issues. DG CLIMA informed that the EC will start in the next months the preparatory works of the evaluation of the current F-Gas Regulation and the drafting of the Inception Impact Assessment. Whereas the EC was not able to provide further details, they communicated their intention of publishing the new legislative proposal by end of 2021, with the ambition of the entry into force of the new legal text no later than 2023. During the whole revision process, stakeholders will be given the chance to participate by providing opinions. Concerning the implementation of the current Regulation, DG CLIMA reported to have recently organised a conference in cooperation with OLAF and DG TAXUD addressing illegal trade. Moreover, the EU Project Customs 2020 Group, which includes the Single Window, has been refinanced by the EC.

In parallel, DG CLIMA has circulated with stakeholders the Technical Briefings on HFC Availability and on Alternatives in split air-conditioning prepared by Oko-Recherche. AREA intends to provide its comments to the briefings in the next weeks. In view of the WG Refrigerants Meeting of May, AREA will present a Report on the Members' views about the F-Gas Regulation. The report will be discussed during the meeting to facilitate the AREA position in view of the revision.

On another topic, further to the request from Assofrigoristi, DG CLIMA has clarified the meaning of article 13, paragraph 3(b) of the Fgas Regulation related to the extended use of recycled refrigerants in the context of the service ban. The Commission confirmed that the Regulation's wording "provided they have been recovered from such equipment" seen in context refers back to *(any) such equipment* mentioned in the first subparagraph and *not the specific equipment being serviced*. This interpretation is commensurate with that of AREA, as expressed in the [AREA F-Gas Guide](#) (see page 29, "exceptions", second bullet point under "recycled refrigerants").

Ozone Depleting Substances Regulation

Further to the publication, last November, of the evaluation of the ODS Regulation 1005/2009, the European Commission has published its [inception impact assessment](#). The inception Impact Assessment doesn't necessarily reflect the final decision of the Commission, but it already lists potential policy options. In the case of this particular inception impact assessment, four groups of policy options will be considered (see page 2 in the attached document):

- Higher level of emission reductions
- Improving the efficiency of the Regulation while preserving effective prevention of illegal activities
- Ensuring good monitoring

- Improving coherence and updating

[Feedback](#) on the inception impact assessment is possible until 23rd April. A public consultation will then take place in Q3 together with targeted stakeholder consultations and followed with a stakeholder workshop in Q4. The outcome of all consultations will then be presented in a synopsis report. A proposal for a revision from the Commission is not expected until mid-2021.

European Green Deal & Decarbonisation Agenda

The European Green Deal was published on 11 December, and since then the European Commission has been busy presenting the strategies and action plans which will be the building blocks for decarbonising the economy.

On 4 March, the Commission released a [proposal for a European Climate Law](#). The objective is to enshrine in European law the legally binding objective of becoming carbon neutral by 2050. With this in mind, the Commission will revise the 2030 objectives and revise existing legislation to ensure they are aligned with the long-term objectives. It will also seek to potentially increase the emission reduction target for 2030 to up to 55, and the Commission is expected to present this summer an impact assessment on how to achieve this.

The proposal will now be discussed by the European Parliament and the Council. The Parliament is expected to be favourable to the increased level of ambition. While Member States are likely to oppose the Commission's proposal on establishing Delegated Acts on the EU trajectory towards climate neutrality, as it would decrease their ability to influence the legislation.

Circular Economy

On 11 March the European Commission presented its' new [Circular Economy Action Plan](#). This action plan introduces bold measures to minimise the environmental impact of products throughout their entire lifetime while harnessing digital innovations to accelerate the transition.

Several of the announced initiatives highlighted below could potentially have a strong impact for refrigeration installers:

- A new **sustainable product policy framework** will be introduced in 2021 and will seek to strengthen and expand the existing Ecodesign Framework. While not directly impacting us, certain measures such as measuring the carbon footprint, and the durability/reparability of refrigeration systems could impact us in the future. We will continue monitoring any potential impacts for our sector.
- Additionally, the '**right to repair**' will be introduced into European consumer laws. Our members could benefit as this could lead to increased repair and maintenance operations, but it could also make them liable for the durability of systems designed by them.
- Measures will be taken to strengthen green **public procurement (GPP)** such as implementing mandatory targets and reporting.

- **Construction and buildings** are identified as a key value chain for the circular economy, and there is a shift towards a life-cycle approach:
 - This entails potentially introducing the carbon reduction targets. It's not clear at this stage if carbon of CO2 equivalent emissions from heating/cooling systems would be included in the calculation;
 - Level(s), a voluntary reporting system on the sustainability of the lifecycle of buildings, is gaining increasing prominence. The Commission will likely seek to make it mandatory (at the very least for GPP) either in the context of the circular economy or the Renovation Wave initiative (to be launched this autumn).
- Ensuring that the Circular and Decarbonisation transitions do not leave people behind, for this the Commission envisions:
 - **Updating the Skills Agenda and launching a new Pact for Skills** (expected this November);
 - **Strengthening investments in education and life learning** through the European Social Fund Plus;
 - Making use of the Just Transition mechanism to help vulnerable regions transition to a more environmentally sustainable economy.

Energy Performance of Buildings Directive

Smart Readiness Indicator

On 13 February the European Commission hosted a meeting with stakeholders of the different topical groups and Member States to present the updated SRI report and draft acts. While many stakeholders requested to have a harmonised system, it appears that Member States are requesting additional flexibility on the implementation. According to feedback from the Commission, Member States have requested that the SRI framework allows sufficient adaptations to national and local conditions.

Based on the draft acts, Member States could select actors already performing inspections on heating and cooling systems under the EPBD to be the ones to issue the SRI certificates for buildings. As the implementation of the EPBD varies amongst Member States, in some countries AREA members are responsible for performing the EPBD inspections. Therefore, while these new requirements could open new income streams, it would also entail some refrigeration contractors having to obtain new certifications or conduct new trainings.

NACE Code

In February 2020, Eurostat drafted a report on the inputs received by stakeholders during the consultation phase in view of the revision of the NACE Code. In the section Construction, AREA request to include "repair and maintenance of refrigeration and heat pump equipment" was acknowledged. As a follow up, AREA reiterated its request to repatriate all the RACHP services under Class 33.

Next steps will include a deeper analysis of the change requests gathered during the consultation by the NACE review Task Force and the drafting of the reviewed NACE structure by the end of 2020. This will be followed by a second consultation before the legislative procedure could start. The draft should

be available in early 2021 after the finalisation of the current revision process lead by a Task Force consisting 16 EU Member States and Switzerland.

Indoor Environmental Quality

In view of the EU Sustainable Energy Week taking place in Brussels on 22-25 June 2020, AREA, together with 5 partner associations (EPEE, GCP Europe, EVIA, EuBAC and LightingEurope), co-signed an application to organise a policy session on Indoor Environmental Quality. The application was retained partially successful by the EC that decided to merge the IEQ session together with the one proposed by the World Green Building Council on decarbonisation. All the partners are now discussing how to structure and decline the joint session whose title will be *“Buildings as Green Deal Heroes: Delivering on Climate, Circularity and Wellbeing”*. Date and final programme will be communicated when more information will become available. At the moment, the EC has not decided yet whether the EUSEW will be maintained due to the COVID-19 situation.

PROJECTS

REAL Alternatives for LIFE - update

On 20 February, a delegation of partners of the REAL Alternatives for Life Project, composed of AREA, IoR and ATF representatives, had a meeting at DG CLIMA premises with Nicolo Costantini, Policy Officer – F-Gas and Ozone Depleting Substances. During the meeting, the project partners presented the activities and results of the Project in view of the After-Life phase. DG Clima appreciated the achievements of the Project as they meet with the policy objectives of the F-Gas Regulation.

With the Project going towards an end in June 2020, partners are undertaking the last activities for Q2 2020 and assessing options for the After-Life phase. Some final reports will be prepared to assess the final achievements of the project. Among those, AREA is taking the responsibility of drawing the layman report, which will give a concise overview of the project’s purpose and results. The report will be issued in the second quarter of 2020.

New trainings will be organised soon. Check our website for details of future technician training events at <https://www.realalternatives.eu/training-providers>. The final Partner Meeting will be held on 28/29 May 2020 at the Cool Concerns training centre Tewkesbury, Gloucester - United Kingdom.

This newsletter is reserved to AREA members

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