

*Recast of Ozone Depleting Substances Regulation (2037/2000/EC)
Inter-institutional code file: 2008/165(COD)
EP Rapp. Blokland (IND/DEM, NL)*

Support for stakeholder participation in ODS banks elimination

ISOPA (European Diisocyanate and Polyol Producers Association), BING (European rigid polyurethane insulation association) and EPIC (UK association of rigid urethane insulated panel industry) welcome the Commission's timely decision to revise the Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) Regulation.

In respect of the revised proposal, we are particularly concerned by the issue of ODS banks. We want to focus on ensuring that where these banks exist in old building foam insulation they are effectively dealt with so that the environmental impact can be minimised. We recognise the complexity involved in finding a solution to this problem across the EU and we are eager to play our part in doing what we can to ensure a positive outcome.

In the Commission's current wording there is a process under article 22.3 to identify a list of products and relevant technologies to deal with ODS banks. However, we believe that in its current form, the article needs to be clearer in respect of the decision-making process involved in drafting this list.

We therefore ask Council and MEPs to amend paragraph 3 of article 22 to establish a consultation forum enabling stakeholders with a valuable expertise in the area to be formally consulted on the potential development of the list based on technically and economically sound assessments. This will ensure the most effective way of dealing with ODS banks is found.

Why engagement is important

Over the last decade the polyurethanes industry has embraced the European legislation by taking important steps to ensure the elimination of ODS in its products. CFCs, once used in polyurethane foams have now been completely phased out and since 2003 all polyurethanes have been ODS free.

However, there remains an historic issue of ODS banks in pre 2003 insulation building foams which has to be addressed. As older buildings are demolished the foam panels from them must be dealt with to ensure that ODS leakage into the atmosphere is kept to a minimum. The real question is 'what is the most effective way of ensuring that these gases are destroyed?'

The Montreal Protocol provides guidance as to how to deal with ODS banks but currently Member States have different capacities and therefore implement different solutions to the problem, meaning that it is at present not economically or technically feasible to implement a one-size-fits-all approach across the EU. Having previously focused on phasing out the use of harmful ODS, the Parties of the Montreal Protocol have recently started discussing what is the most effective way to deal with the historic ODS banks and how to fund their destruction. We encourage EU policy makers to closely follow these discussions and to adopt provisions that are in line with the UN approach.

Industry is fully committed to finding a solution and there are currently several studies underway to characterise the potential recovery and destruction of banked ODS. The challenges are considerable but we firmly believe that working in conjunction with policy makers within a consultation forum we will be able to devise a workable and effective solution to eliminate ODS banks.

In conclusion we strongly urge both Parliament and Council to amend the Regulation so that the legislation achieves its stated objective.

For further information

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