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Balkan countries and Turkey on track with Phase-out of Ozone-Depleting HCFC



Bucharest, Romania, 29 September 2015 -: Montreal Protocol focal points and refrigeration & air-conditioning (RAC) experts shared highlights, challenges and lessons learnt from the implementation of their respective HCFC phase-out strategies.

The meeting was opened by Ms. Anne-Rose Marie Juganaru, State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests of Romania who emphasized that despite the successful implementation of the Montreal Protocol, a lot of concrete action is still required until the ozone layer will have recovered in the second half of the century. The representatives of the Romanian General Refrigeration Association (AGFR), UNIDO and UNEP OzonAction welcomed the international participants and highlighted the importance of close cooperation, continued capacity building and the important role of the RAC associations in training & certification. The meeting has been organized as part of the work programme of UNEP's Regional Ozone Network for Europe & Central Asia in close cooperation with the Ministry, AGFR and UNIDO.

Albania explained how they improved their legislation on ozone-depleting substances (ODS) and fluorinated greenhouse gases (F-gases) in line with the requirements of the Montreal Protocol and in view of their future accession to the European Union and highlighted their close cooperation with the RAC associations and the vocational training institutes.

Bosnia and Herzegovina announced the creation of their national RAC association as part of the Chamber of Commerce to support the phase-out of HCFCs and introduced a ban on the import products / equipment using or containing HCFCs.

As a new member of the European Union, Croatia is the first country which completed its HCFC phase-out project funded by the Multilateral Fund. For training purposes, they imported air-conditioning (AC) units using hydrocarbons as refrigerant for their vocational training institutes.

Their RAC expert also briefed the participants on the results of a mapping study on the potential use of ground source heat pumps in Croatia.

Montenegro trained their environmental inspector on the identification of refrigerants to prevent illegal trade as well as the verification of RAC systems that they comply with national legislation.

The Romanian General Refrigeration Association (AGFR) presented their training & certification activities and explained their approach to certification of technicians in mobile air-conditioning (MAC) sector in line with the European Union regulation EC 307/2008. Their certification specifies that it is valid for the MAC sector only and which activities the certified technicians are allowed to execute. AGFR also highlighted the importance of company certification and that certified companies must have a technical manager / supervisor and at least one certified technician in order to purchase refrigerants ODS or fluorinated greenhouse gases (F-gases). The only exception might be one-person companies which understandably cannot afford in addition such technical manager / supervisor. According to AGFR's certification regulation (RC-AGFR), such one-person company is to be certified for the categories III and IV for stationary refrigeration and categories II or I for mobile air-conditioning systems.

Serbia reported two seizures of ODS at the Serbian border and incorporated the informal Prior Informed Consent for imports of ODS and F-gases as a part of procedure of the licensing system. They also issue import licenses for products / equipment containing or relying ODS as well as F-gases and might introduce quota / bans for some products and/or equipment containing or relying on ODS. The Serbian RAC association KGH also introduced the e-learning course on the F-gas regulation in Serbian language.

Turkey up-dated its ODS legislation and drafted a national F-gas regulation which both are awaiting official approval.

The Macedonian FYR delegation presented their approach to the registration of RAC equipment with more than 3 kg refrigerant charge, equipment logbooks, labelling, leakage checking and training of equipment owners, service technicians and environmental inspectors. They demonstrated the equipment database with various report functions and the guide for equipment recording and labelling which is available from the Ministry website. Penalties for non-compliance with the legal requirements as well as an online reporting facility might be introduced in the future. The disposal of end-of-life RAC equipment remains a challenge to be resolved.

The second meeting day started with a practical exercise on the drafting of an action plan to establish new legislation on equipment labelling and logbooks. This was followed by technical site visits of Carrefour Romania supermarkets with trans-critical carbon dioxide (CO₂) refrigeration systems and the visit of Daikin Romania facility to demonstrate the equipment labelling, logbook keeping and leak-testing of RAC systems containing more than 3 kg refrigerant.

The last meeting day will be dedicated to the concluding session of the ECA destruction project for ODS. The participating countries Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro will share the achievements and lessons learnt. In addition, Turkey will present the progress of its national ODS destruction project. For the first time, there will be a presentation on the establishment public procurement policies to promote environmentally sound technologies.

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