

OZONews

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UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme, Paris

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1- Ozone Hole 'Heading for Europe'

A small "hole" in the ozone layer is opening up over the North Atlantic and heading for Europe, say climate researchers. They predict that it will move over Greenland to southern Scandinavia in the next few days. Levels of ozone in the atmosphere will fall to 60-70% of the seasonal average as the hole deepens, according to scientists at the climate research centre, KNMI, in The Netherlands. But they say the mini ozone hole does not present a significant threat to health. "At this time of the year at our latitudes, the Sun does not rise high enough above the horizon to deliver a significant amount of harmful ultra-violet light," says Ankie Piters at KNMI. "But low ozone events over Europe are still of great interest." The ozone loss was detected by an instrument aboard the European Space Agency probe ERS-2. The device collects data in real time, allowing scientists to track the movement of the ozone hole from hour to hour. Ultra-violet shield The mini-hole over Europe seems to be appearing because of unusual air currents in the atmosphere. The ozone loss is not thought to be linked to the breakdown of ozone by chemicals. Emissions of ozone-depleting gases have been blamed for the much larger hole over Antarctica. The chemicals include chlorofluorocarbons and halons, now limited under the Montreal Protocol, and bromine compounds, some of which are new and not covered by the international agreement. In September, the Antarctic ozone hole measured 26 million square kilometres (10 million square miles), almost as bad as the worst year recorded. The ozone layer helps to shield the Earth's surface against harmful ultra-violet radiation from the Sun.

Article @: http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/sci/tech/newsid_1647000/1647177.stm

Source: BBC News, 10 November, 2001

Related Link: New Mini Ozone Hole Over Europe, ESA Portal @:
http://www.esa.int/export/esaCP/ESAHFRQQSTC_index_0.html

2- Halon Users Must Register by Year's End (Malaysia)

PENANG: Users of the ozone-depleting fire extinguishing agent halon have until Dec 31 to register with the Fire and Rescue Department or face stern action. Department director-general Datuk Jaafar Sidek Tambi said those who failed to register would be fined a maximum RM10,000, jailed two years, or both, under the Environment Quality (Halon Management) Regulations 1999. The registration is to enable the department to keep an inventory of the amount of halon in the country and as a control measure. "To date, the department has recorded 320,000kg of Halon 1301 and 8,000kg of Halon 1211 but only 35,000kg and 4,000kg of the respective compounds have been collected and kept in the Malaysia Halon Bank," he told newsmen after opening a seminar on halon here yesterday. Halon, a stable compound with low toxicity in its natural state, has been used as a fire-fighting agent and an explosion suppressant. However, it depletes the ozone layer and is one of the substances targeted for elimination under the Montreal Protocol 1987. Jaafar said the department's target of achieving "zero halon" by 2005 would not be realised without the co-operation of users and the public. "The people's mentality is that the problem is only confined to the users but they must know that if left unchecked, it will erupt into a global issue," he said. He added that Malaysia had in 1996 stopped the import of halon, which was replaced with alternatives. On another matter, he said developers and managements of high-risk premises and high-rise buildings must apply for Fire Certificates from next year under the Designated Building Regulation

Article @: <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2001/11/13/nation/cchalon&sec=nation>

Source: The Star Online, Malaysia, 13 November 2001

3- EU Directive on CFC Disposal Could Lead to Refrigerator Dumping - Retailers

LONDON (AFX) - The reinforcement of an EU directive on the safe disposal on refrigerators that contain ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) could lead to units being dumped around the UK, said retailers. The new interpretation of the directive on ozone depleting substances comes into force on Jan 1, 2002 after the European Commission ruled there were also harmful CFCs in the foam insulation inside refrigerator frames. Under the old ruling, they only had to be taken out of a refrigerator's compressor... Refrigerators were previously sent to developing countries to be reused, or they were scrapped locally, but under the Basle convention on transboundary waste, a country cannot ship hazardous waste to another... The EU is hoping to implement the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment directive by 2004 that will make manufacturers responsible for disposal of second hand goods...

Full Text @: <<http://www.iii.co.uk/uknews/?articleid=4227442&action=article>>

Source: Ample Interactive Investor, 02 November 2001

OzoNews is available on the OzonAction Programme web site @:

<http://www.unep.tie.org/ozonaction/compliance/ozonews/main.html>

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