

Combating the Illegal Imports of F-gases in the EU

In response to the escalating climate crisis, the EU has implemented a stringent F-gas Regulation¹, which came into force in March 2024, to phase down the use of HFCs and reduce their environmental footprint. However, recent investigations indicate a rising trend in illicit imports potentially undermining the EU's climate objectives, threatening the integrity of the market and prompting the EU to ramp up enforcement measures and regulatory oversight.

Investigators have identified a network of suppliers bypassing EU regulations, often sourcing F-gases from non-compliant producers outside the EU or importers not holding quota.

In the past years, several EU Member States and Authorities have reported successful operations in combating illegal imports. Their work hasn't stopped.

In October, the Dutch authorities, acting on OLAF's information, confiscated four containers filled with nearly 4,800 cylinders of F-gases at the port of Rotterdam. The illegal shipment, valued at approximately 1.5 million EUR, was intercepted before it could be delivered to unauthorized importers within the European Union.²

In November 2024, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and Joint Customs Operation KHIONE led an operation which resulted in the successful interception of the equivalent of more than 400,000 tons of CO₂ and prevented the total market loss of over 4.5 million euro.³

The industry's proactive actions on illegal imports of F-gases represents a critical step in protecting both the environment contributing to climate goals, but also ensures a level playing field for businesses committed to sustainable practices.

¹ [Regulation \(EU\) 2024/573](#)

² https://anti-fraud.ec.europa.eu/media-corner/news/olafs-intelligence-leads-record-breaking-seizure-illegal-f-gases-netherlands-2024-10-22_en

³ https://anti-fraud.ec.europa.eu/media-corner/news/jco-khione-olaf-and-eu-customs-authorities-crack-down-illegal-trade-refrigerant-gases-2024-11-20_en

With these initiatives in place, the industry aims to foster a greener future while safeguarding the principles of its regulatory framework.

EFCTC has taken a leading role in fostering industry compliance and supporting regulatory enforcement.

Key initiatives include:

- **Industry Collaboration:** EFCTC is working closely with manufacturers, distributors, and end-users to raise awareness about the risks and consequences of engaging with unregulated suppliers. This collaboration aims at encouraging companies to report suspicious activities.
- **Raise awareness and provide resources:** since 2019 EFCTC has being active in drafting awareness programs and resources aimed at sharing good practices on compliance requirements. These efforts have empowered industry players to better identify, avoid and provide information on illegal products.
- **Engagement with Authorities:** EFCTC is open to collaborate with customs and regulatory authorities across the EU to facilitate information sharing and enhance enforcement capabilities.

About EFCTC

The European FluoroCarbons Technical Committee is a Cefic Sector Group that monitors legislation related to HFCs (hydrofluorocarbons), and HFOs (hydrofluoro-olefins) in the EU and at global level. Fluorocarbons are used as feedstock, as refrigerants, as solvents and as blowing agents for insulation plastic foams.

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