New F-gas regulation to enter force in June
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The recently adopted regulation on fluorinated greenhouse gases will enter force in June following its publication in the EU’s official journal. Key provisions include bans on certain equipment containing the potent greenhouse gases. Annex III lists eight categories of products with different phase-out dates between 2015 and 2025. The bans will not apply to military equipment or highly energy efficient products whose life-cycle emissions are lower than those that meet ecodesign requirements and do not contain HFCs. In specific cases, manufacturers of annex III products may also obtain derogations for up to four years. These will be granted through implementing acts.
The phase-down schedule to reduce quantities of bulk HFCs on the EU market appears in annex V of the regulation. As agreed by European legislators in December, these quantities will gradually decline by 79% between 2015 and 2030.
Free HFC quotas will be allocated to each producer or importer from 2015, based on a mechanism described in annex VI and an individual reference value that the European Commission will have to determine by 31 October this year. An electronic registry for companies with quotas will also be set up by 2015. The system will be reviewed by July 2017. As a result, the Commission may recommend a new allocation method and the introduction of a pricing system.
Heat pump association EHPA welcomed the rules’ publication. They create a “clear framework for upcoming R&D and investment decisions”, it said, adding the Commission should “back this transition to [HFC] alternatives by earmarking funds in Horizon 2020 to support the development of heat pumps using low-GWP refrigerants”.
EHPA was one of several industry groups that rejected and eventually defeated a Commission proposal to ban equipment pre-charged with HFCs.