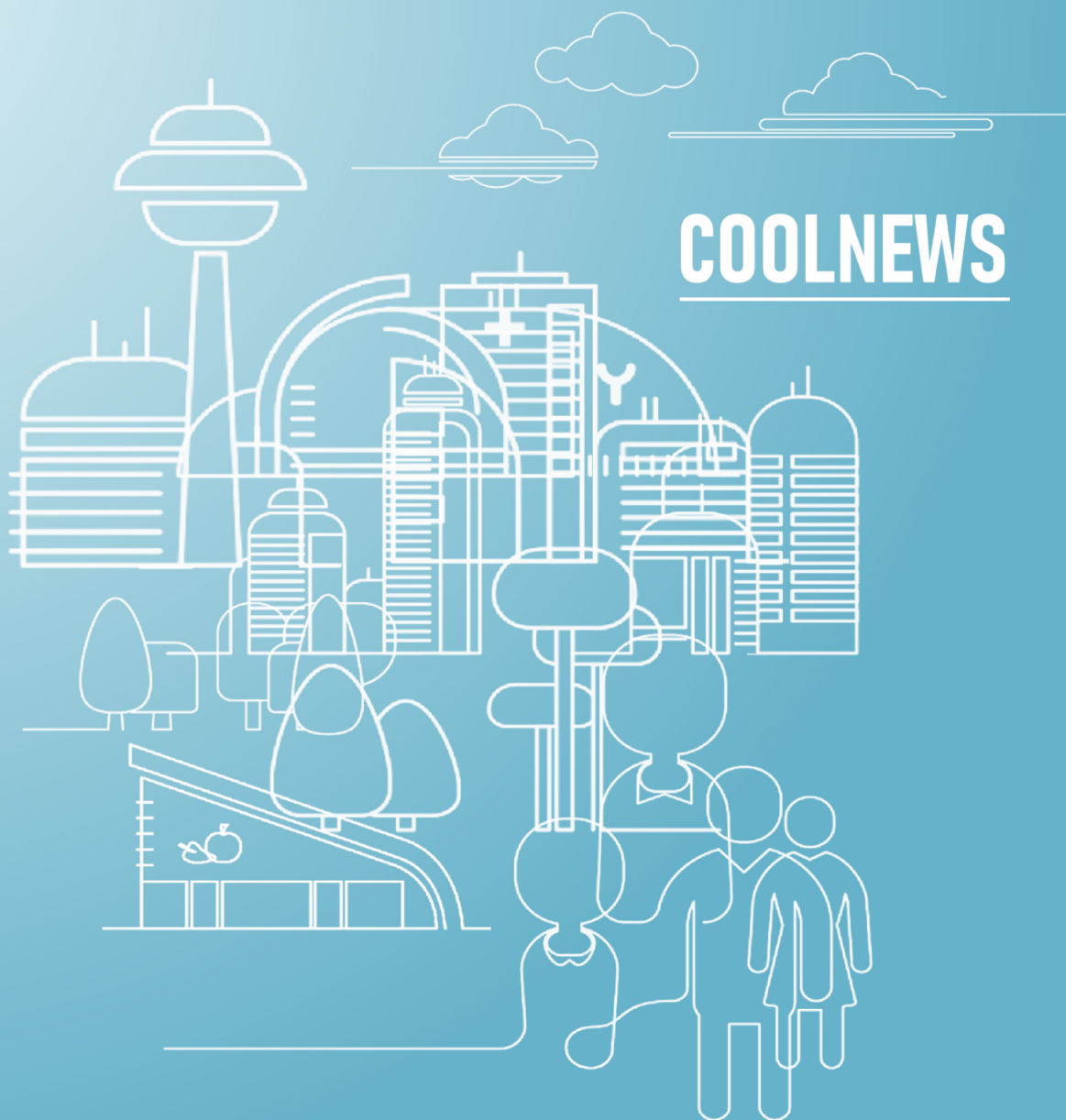




QUARTERLY PERIODICAL FOR THE EUROPEAN CONTRACTORS SOCIETY WORKING  
IN THE REFRIGERATION, AIR-CONDITIONING AND HEAT PUMP SECTOR  
**ISSUE 2026/01 – MARCH 2026**



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## AREA AFFAIRS

### AREA SPRING MEETINGS IN MADRID

This year, the AREA Spring meetings are organised by our AEFYT & CNI colleagues and will take place on 21-22 May 2026, at hotel NH Madrid Ribera del Manzanares.

The full programme of the event will include:

#### Delegates Programme

##### 20 May

19h00: Board Dinner (at NH Hotel – Board members only)

##### 21 May

09:00 - 10:30: WG Sustainable Innovation

11:00 - 12:30: WG Human Capital

12:30 - 13:30: Lunch break

13:30 - 15:30: WG Refrigerants

16:00 - 17:30: WG Legislation & Standards

19:00 - : Members Dinner at PAPAGENA(\*) restaurant

*(\*)PAPAGENA is a contemporary dining space located inside Madrid's iconic Teatro Real. It offers refined modern Spanish cuisine in an elegant setting that blends design, culture and privileged views of the Royal Palace.*

##### 22 May

08h30 - 09h30: Board meeting (Board members only)

09h45 - 12h30: General Assembly meeting

12h30 - 13h30: Members lunch at the hotel

#### Partners Programme

##### 21 May

09h00 – 14h30: Discover old Madrid: A guided walking tour

19:00 -: Members Dinner at PAPAGENA restaurant

##### 22 May

12h30 - 13h30: Members lunch at the hotel

**If you intend to participate and haven't registered yet, please make sure to contact AREA secretariat **by end of March latest.****

## WOMEN IN REFRIGERATION WEBINAR: PROMOTING INCLUSION IN THE COOLING SECTOR

On International Women's Day 2026, AREA was pleased to invite all members to a special webinar dedicated to celebrating, supporting, and empowering women in the refrigeration and cooling sector, co-organised with UNEP, WRD and INWIC.

*"Women in Refrigeration – Empowering Inclusion in the Cooling Sector"* brought together representatives from international organisations, industry associations and professionals working in refrigeration and heat pump technologies. The initiative highlighted the contribution of women to the HVAC&R sector and encouraged greater diversity in an industry where female participation remains limited.



Opening the event, **Coen Van De Sande**, President of AREA, and former President **Marco Buoni** emphasised the importance of sharing experiences and strengthening the visibility of women in the sector. They highlighted that inclusion and skills development will be essential for the future of the refrigeration industry.

The event also promoted the [Young and Women in Cooling Competition](#), now in its **4th edition**, offering important prizes, including travel opportunities to Madrid.

Representing UNEP OzonAction, **Sonja Wagner** presented the organisation's activities supporting gender inclusion within refrigeration training programmes.

Through surveys, technical workshops and targeted initiatives, UNEP promotes capacity building and helps identify challenges faced by women technicians, supporting national strategies aimed at increasing female participation in the cooling workforce.

**Stephen Gill**, founder of World Refrigeration Day, explained how awareness campaigns can help improve the visibility of women in the industry. Initiatives such as the **Women in Cooling** campaign



share stories and experiences of female professionals, highlighting that women are already active across the sector, even if their presence is often less visible.

During the webinar, **Andrea Voigt**, Head of Global Public Affairs at Danfoss Climate Solutions, and **Miriam Solana Ciprés**, Group Human Resources Director at CAREL, shared complementary perspectives on inclusion in the HVAC&R sector.

The webinar also presented the work of the **International Network of Women in Cooling (INWIC)**. Representing the organisation, **Mikaila Ganado** described how the network connects women working in refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump technologies through mentorship, networking and professional development opportunities.

The final part of the webinar focused on real experiences from the field. **Hannah Romberg**, mechanical engineer at RWTH Aachen University, presented her work on heat pump technologies and energy-efficient systems, highlighting the importance of confidence and visibility when presenting research in technical environments.

**Araceli Pino Ruiz**, electronic engineer at Spanish manufacturer INTARCON, illustrated the practical side of refrigeration engineering, describing her work in developing control systems and validating refrigeration equipment to ensure safety, efficiency and reliability.

Across the different presentations, speakers highlighted that the cooling sector is expanding rapidly and requires a growing number of qualified professionals. Increasing the participation and visibility of women, alongside mentoring initiatives and international collaboration, represents an important step toward building a stronger and more inclusive HVAC&R workforce.

Full video of the event could be watched here:



## NEW OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN AREA AS OBSERVING PARTNER!



Spread the word on the exciting new opportunity to join AREA as an Observing Partner!

By becoming an Observing Partner, organisations will join a unique network of peers where they can:

- Connect with Europe's RACHP contractors and organisations active in the sector.
- Receive key updates on European policy and regulation that impacts our industry.
- Gain insights that help you to stay up to date on industry trends.

The brochure is available on our [website](#), and we are promoting it on [social media](#).

Your support in sharing this information is crucial to the success of this initiative. We greatly appreciate your support and involvement in disseminating and promoting this new opportunity within your network.

## AREA APPOINTS TWO NEW INWIC REPRESENTATIVES

In February 2026, AREA was honoured to appoint two new representatives within INWIC, The International Network for Women in Cooling:

- Blanca Gomez, Director, CNI, Spain
- Gratiela-Maria Tarlea, President of AGFR and Professor at UTCB, Romania

With these nominations, AREA remains deeply committed to increase the role of women in the servicing sector, recognising their contribution as a key element for the sustainable development and future of our industry.

We take this opportunity to thank Susana Rodriguez and Lorena Hernandez for their support and valuable contributions over the past two year.

## **New Digitalisation Task Force**

Following a unanimous agreement at the last in-person meetings in Brussels in October 2025, the Sustainable Innovation Working Group and the Human Capital Working Group held their first introductory meeting on 2 March to launch a joint AREA task force on the impact of digitalisation in the RACHP sector. Participants discussed and approved the timeline, scope and purpose of the project, which will culminate in the publication of guidelines for contractors, installers and repairers. Volunteers will analyse the most significant impacts of the sector's digital transformation, including the role of AI and data-driven technologies; clarify roles and liabilities for installers and repairers; and highlight opportunities for the sector. At this stage, the task force will focus on the Artificial Intelligence Act and the Data Act, including the targeted amendments proposed under the two Digital Omnibus packages.

AREA Secretariat launched a call for volunteers to join the task force. Members are invited to express their interest by Monday 16 March.

## LEGISLATION

### F-GAS REGULATION

#### HFC prices

Öko-Recherche released the Q4/2025 excerpt of the HFC prices monitoring. The main findings are:

- Compared to Q4/2024, throughout the entire supply chain, prices for the high GWP gases/mixtures went down slightly (end user prices excluded): R410A and R134a -3%, respectively.
- From one quarter to the next, when considering the whole supply chain (end user prices excluded), prices did not change for R410A and decreased by -3% for R134a.
- Compared to 2014, prices of R134a are 3.7 (end user) to 9.5 (distributor) and R410A prices are 3.3 (end-user) to 10.9 (distributor) times higher. For comparison: on the world market, producer prices increased by a factor of 2.8 for R134a and 2.3 for R410A in the same time period.
- When it comes to alternatives, price levels along the supply chain changed as follows relative to Q3/25 (end user prices omitted): stable price levels for R448A, R449A, R513A and R452A (+/-0%), R32 -6%
- Compared to Q3/2025, the purchase price of reclaimed R404A increased by +9% on service company level and by +6% on distributor level. In Q1/2025, the purchase price of reclaimed R404A was at 140% the price level of virgin R404A material in Q1/2025.
- The price of quota authorisations indicated ranges from 12 to 20 €/t CO<sub>2</sub>e (purchasing price). On average, purchasing prices for quota authorisations amounted to 16.15 €/t CO<sub>2</sub>e, approximately. Compared to Q3/2025, the purchasing price of quota authorisations increased by 1%. Taking a more long-term perspective, e.g. compared to Q4/2024, prices also increased by 1%.
- In general, the EU refrigerant market appears to have been stable in terms of supply, with no indications of limited regional availability or shortage indicated by companies.



## ENTR LOT 1

The ongoing review of the Regulation on ecodesign requirements on professional refrigeration (condensing units and process chillers), known as ENTR LOT 1, continues dragging. The publication of the draft measures for feedback is now expected in Q3 or Q4 2026.

In late January, AREA endorsed an EPEE-led joint letter, also cosigned by ASERCOM and EUROVENT, which was sent to Davide Polverini, the policy officer in charge of the ENTR Lot 1 file at DG GROW, and Stefano Soro, his Head of Unit. The statement calls on the Commission to discard its alleged plans to introduce a B2B energy label for condensing units due to its impracticability and irrelevance for installers. The Commission has not replied yet.

## PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES (PFAS)

On 3 March, ECHA's Risk Assessment Committee (RAC) [concluded](#) its evaluation of the proposed EU-wide restriction on all PFAS, marking the end of the first stage of ECHA's scientific assessment of the proposal.

The opinion, which will become publicly accessible shortly, is based on an extensive review of PFAS hazards, emissions, volumes and risks, as well as the expected effectiveness and enforceability of a potential restriction. It must be noted that these conclusions concern exclusively the assessment of the risks to the environment and human health, with no mentions to economic aspects and potential sector derogations. These topics are to be addressed by ECHA's committee for socio-economic analysis (SEAC), which is expected to adopt its draft opinion in the coming weeks, then subject to a 60-day stakeholder consultation. SEAC is foreseen to finalise its opinion by the end of 2026.

## LEGISLATIVE TRACKER

| Initiative                                                  | Legislative milestones                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | AREA Activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Heating &amp; Cooling Strategy</p> <p>Status: ACTIVE</p> | <p>Commission's consultation: <a href="#">20 August - 10 November 2025</a></p> <p><u>Next steps:</u><br/>Adoption by the Commission: 19 May 2026</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>AREA position paper: <a href="#">20 November 2025</a></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p>F-gas Regulation</p> <p>Status: ACTIVE</p>               | <p>Commission proposal: <a href="#">5 April 2022</a><br/>European Parliament (EP) position: <a href="#">30 March 2023</a><br/>EU Council General Approach: <a href="#">5 April 2023</a><br/>Final agreement: <a href="#">5 October 2023</a><br/>EP adoption in Plenary of trilogue agreement: <a href="#">16 January 2024</a><br/>Council adoption of trilogue agreement: <a href="#">29 January 2024</a><br/>Regulation published in the Official Journal of the EU: <a href="#">7 February 2024</a><br/>Implementing Act on certification and training mandated by Article 10 published: <a href="#">6 September 2024</a></p>                           | <p>AREA reply to the public consultation: <a href="#">24 December 2020</a><br/>Reaction to the Commission proposal: <a href="#">6 April 2022</a><br/>AREA Position Paper on the F-gas Regulation: <a href="#">24 August 2022</a><br/>AREA proposal for amendments: <a href="#">18 November 2022</a><br/>AREA reaction to the EP position: <a href="#">4 April 2023</a><br/>AREA reply to public consultation on IA on certification and training: <a href="#">10 June 2024</a><br/><i>Additional statements and joint letters are available on our <a href="#">website</a> or upon request.</i><br/><br/>Numerous meetings with EU officials, MEPs, EP policy advisors, MSs representatives and stakeholders</p> |
| <p>EU Talent Pool</p> <p>Status: Ongoing</p>                | <p>Commission proposal: <a href="#">15 November 2023</a><br/>Council General Approach: <a href="#">13 June 2024</a><br/>EP LIBE Committee position: <a href="#">19 March 2025</a><br/>Plenary adoption: <a href="#">3 April</a><br/>First trilogue: <a href="#">7 April</a><br/>Second trilogue: 24 September<br/>Third trilogue: 17 October<br/>Final trilogue: <a href="#">18 November</a><br/>LIBE Vote on trilogue agreement: <a href="#">3 December</a><br/>LIBE amendments to the trilogue agreements in plenary: <a href="#">3 March</a></p> <p><u>Next steps:</u> Vote on the adoption of the trilogue agreement in EP Plenary: 10 March 2026</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

## REFRIGERATION, AIR-CONDITIONING & HEAT PUMP NEWS

### 2025-2026 CALENDAR

|                                                                                                                                                                     |                             |                    |           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
|                                                                                    | Mostra Convegno Expocomfort | 24-27 March 2026   | Milano    |
|   | AREA Spring meetings        | 21-22 May 2026     | Madrid    |
|                                                                                    | Chillventa                  | 13-15 October 2026 | Nuremberg |
|                                                                                                                                                                     | AREA Autumn meetings        | 16 October 2026    | Nuremberg |

### INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

#### MOSTRA CONVEGNO EXPOCOMFORT 2026

An international conference will be held on 26 March at [MCE Milano](#) to discuss the evolution of the F-gas regulatory framework and the transition to alternative refrigerants. The event, titled FROM THE F-GAS REGULATION TO ALTERNATIVE REFRIGERANTS: IMPACT ON NEW AND EXISTING SYSTEMS, will take place from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM at the Libra Conference Room (1st floor) of the Stella Polare Congress Centre, Rho Fiera Milano. Simultaneous translation of Italian and English is provided, and, at the end of the proceedings, there will be a networking cocktail.

The conference is set within the context of the Regulation (EU) 2024/573 and its implementing acts, with a specific focus on the impacts on air conditioning systems, heat pumps, and refrigeration, both new and existing. The presidency will involve representatives from MASE, IIR, EUROVENT, EPEE, AHRI, ACCREDIA, AREA, ATF, and ASSOCLIMA, confirming the institutional and international scope of the initiative.

The division into two sessions will allow for an integrated approach to addressing regulatory aspects, professional qualification, technologies, components, and management of the refrigerant supply chain.

## AREA JOINS AASA THE ASHRAE ASSOCIATE SOCIETY ALLIANCE, STRENGTHENING GLOBAL HVAC&R COOPERATION

AREA has officially joined the global community of the ASHRAE Associate Society Alliance (AASA), marking a further step in the international positioning of the European HVAC&R contracting sector. The announcement was made during the AASA meeting held in Las Vegas, where AREA presented its role and mission as the European federation representing contractors and installers active in refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump technologies.



AASA meeting, in Las Vegas (Texas, USA)

The inclusion of AREA within AASA reinforces the dialogue between regional and global stakeholders at a time when the HVAC&R sector is facing shared challenges, from energy efficiency targets to skills development and the deployment of sustainable technologies. By joining the Alliance, AREA contributes with the perspective of European contractors, whose daily work translates regulatory frameworks, technological innovation and market requirements into practical, on-site solutions.

AASA acts as a platform for cooperation among associations worldwide, fostering alignment between global objectives and local implementation.

## PROJECTS

### INWIC LAUNCHES A NEW MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

The International Network for Women in Cooling has recently launched the new Mentorship Programme, an online service designed to connect women professionals in the refrigeration, air-conditioning and heat pump (RACHP) sector worldwide.

The initiative aims to foster knowledge exchange, support professional development and contribute in a structured way to the advancement of women's careers in an industry that has traditionally been male dominated.

More information at:



## NEXT REAL ALTERNATIVES TOT SESSION

**11–15 May 2026 | Killybegs, Donegal**

The next Stakeholder and Real Alternatives Train-the-Trainers (**TOT**) session will take place from 11 - 15 May 2026 in Killybegs, Donegal, Ireland. The programme is designed for certified trainers and industry experts who wish to strengthen their technical and pedagogical expertise in alternative refrigerants and contribute to high-quality training delivery across Europe.

If you are already involved in delivering courses on low-GWP refrigerants — or planning to expand your training portfolio — this is a unique opportunity to deepen your practical knowledge and connect with fellow trainers from across the network.

### **Advanced Technical Programme**

The five-day programme focuses on practical, hands-on training on key alternative refrigerants:

- 11–12 May 2026 – Ammonia Practical Training
- 13 May 2026 – Flammable Refrigerants Training
- 14–15 May 2026 – Carbon Dioxide Practical Training

Participants will engage in intensive technical sessions designed to enhance both confidence and competence in delivering high-level training on:

- Safety and risk management
- Installation and servicing considerations
- Practical system operation
- Best practices aligned with European regulatory developments

### **Networking and Logistics**

- Welcome Dinner: Tuesday, 12 May 2026
- Location: Killybegs, Donegal, Ireland
- Transfers: All transfers, including airport transportation, will be organised
- **Registration deadline: 16 March 2026**

For further information or to register, please contact: [info@realalternatives.eu](mailto:info@realalternatives.eu)

**Strengthen your expertise. Expand your training impact.  
Join the Real Alternatives Train-the-Trainers in Ireland.**





Organised by:



ASSOCIAZIONE  
TECNICI DEL  
FREDDO

# REAL ALTERNATIVES TRAIN-THE-TRAINERS

*Advanced training on alternative refrigerants for certified  
trainers and industry experts.*

## Training Agenda:

- Ammonia Practical Training: 11-12/05/2026
- Flammable Refrigerants Training: 13/05/2026
- Carbon Dioxide Practical Training: 14-15/05/2026

## Real Alternatives Stakeholder Meeting:

Wednesday 13/05/2026

**Welcome Dinner** on Tuesday 12/05/2026

**Location:** Killybegs, Donegal, Ireland

*All transfers will be organized, including airport  
transportation.*

**Register by  
16 March 2026**



For more information,  
please contact:  
[info@realalternatives.eu](mailto:info@realalternatives.eu)



THIS NEWSLETTER IS RESERVED TO AREA MEMBERS. FOR ANY ENQUIRY, PLEASE CONTACT :

AREA Aisbl, Avenue des Arts 56, 1000 Brussels (Belgium)

Tel: + 32 2 206 68 66 | Email: [info@area-eur.be](mailto:info@area-eur.be) | [www.area-eur.be](http://www.area-eur.be)