



Annual Report 2022



The European Voice of Refrigeration,
Air Conditioning and Heat Pump Contractors

About AREA

AREA is the European association of refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump contractors. Contractors are the essential link between end users and manufacturers. They design, install and maintain refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump equipment using every available solution with complete neutrality towards equipment and refrigerants, in the sole aim of ensuring the highest level of reliability, energy efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

AREA in a nutshell

24 national associations

21 countries

13,000 companies

110,000 people

€23bn turnover



What's inside

Foreword by the President ^{P4}

Organisation ^{P5}

Working Bodies
Board of Directors

Internal Affairs ^{P7}

AREA welcomes new President
Area has two new members

Working Groups ^{P9}

Refrigerants
Sustainable Innovation
Human Capital
Legislation and Standards

Events ^{P12}

Launch of of INWIC
AREA General Assemblies 2022
Alternative Refrigerants for Africa
Webinar by U-3ARC, AREA and UNIDO
AREA joined U-3ARC GA in Casablanca
AREA President spoke at EUSEW
AREA at Chillventa
AREA spoke at the EFCTC event
WorldVentil8Day

Communication ^{P15}

Interview with AREA new President
Area celebrates IWD
Video AREA 2022 activities
Social media presence

International Affairs ^{P16}

AREA expresses supports to the Refrigeration Association of Ukraine

Projects ^{P16}

Refrigerant Driving Licence
REAL Alternatives 4 LIFE

Publications ^{P18}

Members and International Partners ^{P19}

Contact ^{P21}

Foreword by the President



This is my first foreword as President of AREA. I was very honored to be elected President by our General Assembly during the first in-person meeting in two years, hosted by HUFGAS in Athens on 13 May 2022. I took over the presidency from my esteemed colleague, Marco Buoni, who thankfully stays in the Board as “former president” for the coming years to continue his good work with fellow Board members and on international affairs.

In addition to the election of a new Board, we also said goodbye to our Secretary General, Olivier Janin, who served us very well for the past 14 years, bringing our association to the next level through strengthening our position in Brussels significantly. Olivier is succeeded by Claire Grossmann who joined us three years ago and continues to work at the same high level as Olivier did. During the General Assembly, we also welcomed two new member associations, Assofrigoristi and ÖGKT, which extends the network, knowledge, profile, and recognition of AREA.

In 2022, our main focus was the review of the F-gas Regulation, advocating for important matters for contractors like mandatory certification on alternative refrigerants, mandatory leak checks and preventing the illegal trade of F-gases. We were very active in sharing our position with EU representatives and presenting it at meetings and events.

In October 2022, we were happy that one of the main exhibitions in our business “Chillventa” was organised again after a period of four years following the Covid-19 pandemic. Chillventa 2022 turned out to be a very successful fair for AREA in which we organised a very well attended conference “The future of RAC training and certification in the EU” with key speakers and

leading experts in our industry. We also took part in the “Networking for better engagement” panel hosted by the International Woman in Cooling Network (INWIC), in collaboration with the World Refrigeration Day, the United Nations - UNEP, AREA and the main international HVACR Institutions.

Another great success in 2022 was our cooperation with UNEP and AHRI on the Refrigerant Driving License (RDL) for developing countries. AREA is responsible for the practical exams of the RDL, while our US colleagues of AHRI will take care of the theoretical part. Together with the environmental goals that training and certification of contractors in developing countries will achieve, this will also ensure that contractors will be properly trained when they decide to come to Europe to work in the RACHP sector. Again, a great example of international cooperation that was achieved through the good work of Graeme Fox and Marco Buoni.

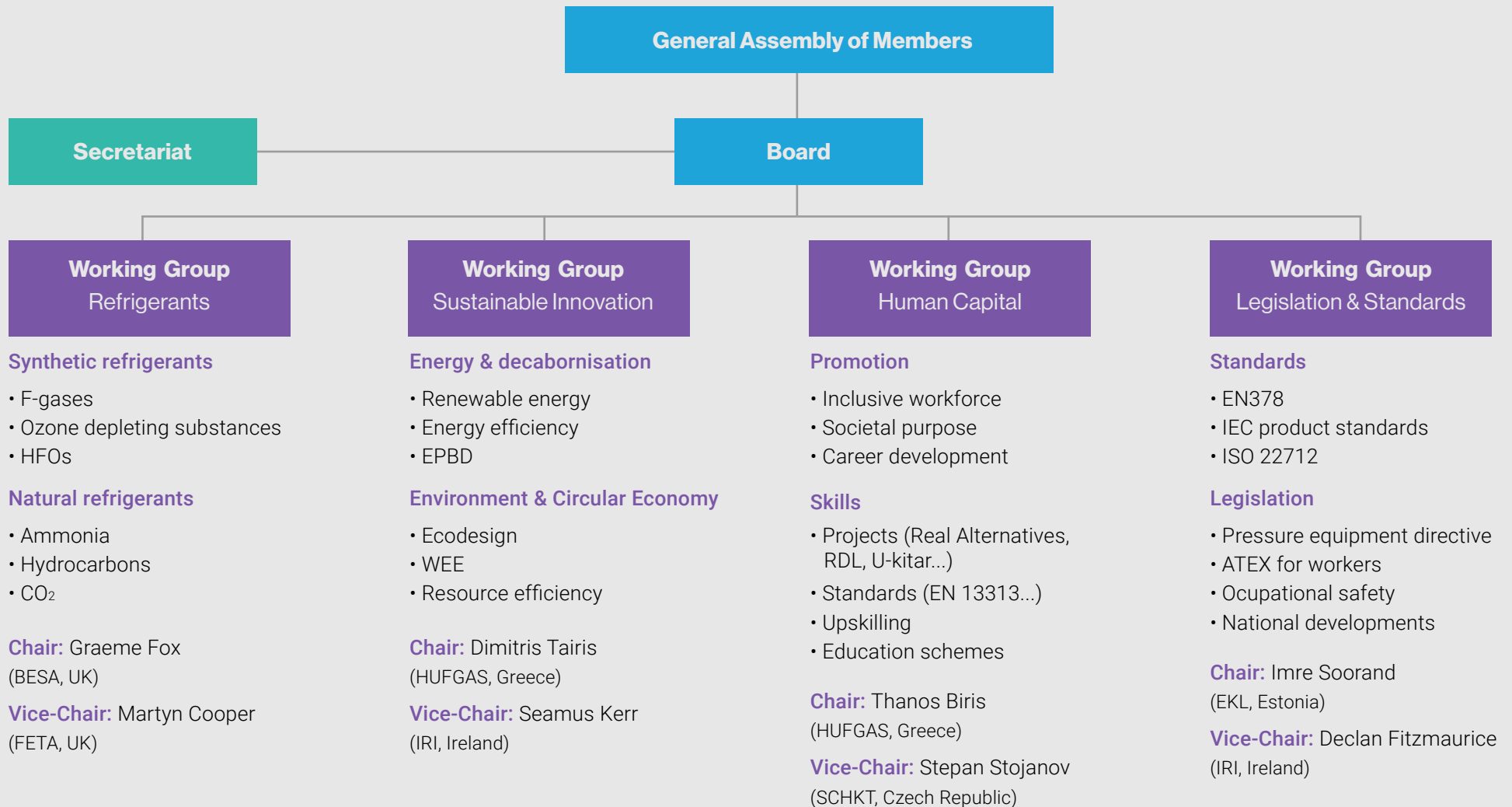
I look forward to continuing the great cooperation among our members and extending our profile and recognition to make the voice of contractors heard!

“In addition to mandatory certification on alternative refrigerants, AREA calls for extending article 5.1 ‘leak checking’ of the F-gas Regulation to RACHP systems charged with alternative refrigerants. Leak checking is absolutely required to keep our contractors and their customers safe and to be sure that these systems will keep on operating at maximum energy efficiency.”



Organisation

Working Bodies



Organisation

Board of Directors



Grzegorz Michalski

KFCh, Poland
Vice-President



Thanos Biris

HUFGAS, Greece
Board member



Coen van de Sande

NVKL, Netherlands
President



Marco Buoni

ATF, Italy
Past President with
a special mandate
“International Affairs”



Espen Rønning

VKE, Norway
Board member



Seamus Kerr

IRI, Ireland
Treasurer



Stepan Stojanov

SCHKT, Czechia
Board member

Internal Affairs

AREA welcomes new President, Board and Secretary General

The General Assembly meeting on 13 May 2022 gathered members in Athens, Greece for the first in-person meeting in two years.

During this meeting, AREA members unanimously elected Coen van de Sande, Director of the Dutch Association, NVKL, as President of AREA, replacing Marco Buoni, Secretary General of the Italian Association, ATF. Marco will continue to be active in the Board with a mandate for international affairs. Grzegorz

Michalski, President of the Polish Association, KFCh, was elected as Vice-President. In addition, Seamus Kerr (IRI, Ireland) was re-elected Treasurer as well as Thanos Biris (HUGAS, Greece) as Board member. They were joined by two new Board members: Stepan Stojanov (SCHKT, Czechia) and Espen Rønning (VKE, Norway).

In addition to this, AREA welcomed Claire Grossmann as the new Secretary General, taking over from Olivier Janin who held the position for the past 14 years.

Members paid tribute to Marco Buoni and Olivier Janin for their highly valued contribution and dedication during their time, while welcoming the new Secretary General, President, and Board members.

Following his election, Coen van de Sande stated:

“Legislation and standardisation became more and more an EU playing field in the last two decades. EU wide cooperation between associations of contractors through AREA is crucial to make the voice of contractors heard in all relevant EU stakeholders like the Commission, Parliament, Council and other umbrella associations in our RACHP sector. Without AREA we wouldn't be in any position to influence the development and implementation of legislation and standardisation.”



Area has two new members

AREA is pleased to announce that two associations, Assofrigoristi and ÖGKT, were welcomed as members during the annual General Assembly meeting in Athens, Greece.

Assofrigoristi, the Italian Refrigeration Association, is a non-profit association which brings together companies and SME's that carry out the design, assembly, installation, maintenance, repair and disposal of industrial refrigeration and non-domestic air condition systems. They are committed to the qualification of the HVAC&R professionals and joining AREA is a natural step towards participation in the European sphere regarding legislation and regulation for our industry.

Marco Oldrati, Managing Director of Assofrigoristi, stated:

“The networking possibilities, offered by AREA, is a precious resource that Assofrigoristi will exploit and cooperate to with the maximum effort. The Athens’ assembly was the natural place to discuss, at a continental level, what is relevant in our daily business and how the world of HVAC&R professionals will evolve in the future. We hope to take an active role in the development of a safe, environmentally sustainable, and efficient market.”



The Österreichische Gesellschaft der Kältetechnik (ÖGKT) is the independent network of refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump technology in Austria. They are committed to the development of education and training as well as to the exchange of knowledge, experience and information. They provide professional expertise to public authorities and companies in a range of topics including standardisation.

Harald Erös, President of ÖGKT stated:

“We are proud of how far we have come in the past few years and are happy to be able to participate on a European level at AREA.”



AREA is proud to have 25 associations from 21 countries, including 19 out of the 27 EU Member States, as part of its membership.



Working Groups

Refrigerants

In 2022, the work of the Refrigerants Working Group was dominated by the proposal for a revision of the F-gas Regulation published in April. AREA developed a detailed [position paper](#) on the draft regulation in August and proposed [concrete suggestions](#) for changes in November. One of our key asks focused on training and certification, but AREA also contributed to the revision process with proposals on many other points, including on leak checks. AREA has been very active throughout the year to promote its position towards the main EU representatives at the European Commission, European Parliament and EU Council.

In addition, AREA closely collaborated with other stakeholders representing a large spectrum of the refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump industry, in particular by co-signing a [joint statement](#) and participating in a [joint event](#) to exchange views on the proposed changes to the regulation in the European Parliament.

AREA also published a [position](#) on two new F-gas bans which entered into force on 1 January 2022: refrigerators and freezers for commercial use with HFCs of 150 GWP or more, and, multipack centralised refrigeration systems. In this position, AREA provides its views on several concepts (commercial use, multipack centralised systems, hermetically sealed), as well as what types of maintenance and repair operations may

or may not constitute a new 'placing on the market' that needs to comply with the applicable ban.

Finally, the group closely monitored the revision of the Ozone Depleting Substances Regulation, running in parallel of the F-gas Regulation review, as well as the developments on PFAS, in view of the upcoming publication of a PFAS restriction proposal.

Sustainable Innovation

In 2022, one of the main policy files that AREA's Sustainable Innovation Working Group focused on was the proposed revision of the Ecodesign Regulation on professional refrigeration products. The revision proposed measures for walk-in cold rooms (WICRs), and indicated that the responsibility for conformity, with all requirements on custom WICRs, would fall on the last person who puts the final system into operation. This meant that installers would have taken all final responsibility from the manufacturers.

AREA strongly reacted against the overall inclusion of WICRs in the scope of the Ecodesign Regulation with a position paper in February 2022. AREA's efforts saw success and the draft revision legislative text and explanatory memorandum excluded WICR's from the future Ecodesign Regulation on professional refrigeration.

Following joint activities of AREA's Sustainable Innovation and Human Capital Working Group in 2021 on the European Commission's proposed revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD), we closely monitored the development of the amendment positions of the European Parliament and EU Council

and will continue until the final adoption of the text, to identify if further advocacy actions may be required.

Furthermore, AREA closely monitored the development of the 'Fit for 55' legislative package, and in particular the revisions of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED II) and the Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) in light of AREA's position. After having both the European Parliament and Council of the EU positions adopted in 2022, trilogue negotiations commenced. Apart from the increase overall renewable energies and energy efficiency targets, there are several other relevant aspects that AREA identifies as positive developments.

This includes the obligation for Member States to hold initiatives and harmonise their requirements to support and ask contractors to obtain the adequate skills and knowledge required and increase the number of certified installers of renewable H&C systems. There are also requirements to analyse the supply and demand gap for professionals and create recommendations on how to address them. The final texts are expected to become EU law in Q2-Q3 of 2023.

Human Capital

In 2022, apart from collaborating with the Sustainable Innovation Working Group on the Ecodesign revision on professional refrigeration products, the EPBD and the 'Fit for 55' legislative package, the Human Capital Working Group continued monitoring the developments of the EU recommendations for an 'European approach for micro-credentials' and on 'Individual learning accounts'. Both files were completed in mid-2022 and were non-legislative enactments.

When it comes to projects on competences and training, the working group continued to monitor the developments and work of the REAL Alternative 4 LIFE, the Universal Training Kit for Alternative Refrigerants (U-TKitAR) and the Refrigerant Driving License (RDL).

Regarding the RDL, after expressed interest and invitation from UNEP and AHRI, AREA became the third leading party of the project, with the role of being a quality assurance body, ensuring consistency between all practical activities with the procedures that we have set. Under the umbrella of the Human Capital Working Group, a designated task force was established and is currently in charge of all related work.

Legislation and Standards

In 2022, the Legislation and Standards Working Group monitored these relevant standardisation evolvments:

- EN 378 – parts 1 to 5, expected to be finalised by 2024.
- EN ISO 22712: Refrigerating systems and heat pumps – Competence of personnel (the original standard was EN13313:2010).
- CEN/TR 17608:2022: State of the art on the use of flammable refrigerant alternatives, in particular from class A3, in refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump equipment.
- IEC 60335-2-40:2022: New requirements to enable the safe use of larger HC (A3s) charges for more systems, greatly widening the scope of its application.

The working group also observed the national developments regarding the bans, replacements of heating systems, and types of fuel used in light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and related and energy crisis from 2022.

Lastly, the working group analysed the interplay of RACHP-units with flammable refrigerants with the EN 378-2 standard, the machinery, pressure equipment and ATEX User Directives, and the practical situation in the sector to spot potential dangers for installers and technicians.



EUROPEAN HEAT PUMP SUMMIT

POWERED BY CHILLVENTA

CONGRESS + EXPO

Industrial | Commercial | Residential
Heating & Cooling | Components & Equipment

SAVE THE DATE!

NUREMBERG
24-25.10.2023

#HPsummit

NÜRNBERG / MESSE

Events

Launch of the International Network for Women in Cooling



Our sector is a truly vital, dynamic, and a rapidly growing field that represents a significant source of high-quality employment worldwide. However, it has the potential to contribute even more by increasing the number of women in its ranks at all levels and in all types of jobs, which includes diverse professions ranging from CEOs to professors and engineers to servicing technicians, to name just a few.

To help accelerate this process, a new initiative called the International Network for Women in Cooling (INWIC) has been launched to advance the engagement of women, promote career opportunities, and increase their overall participation in the RACHP sector.

INWIC is led by the World Refrigeration Day (WRD) Secretariat and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) OzonAction in cooperation with

a highly-reputed group of founding partners, all of whom are active in this area – AIRAH (Australia), AREA (Europe), ASHRAE (Global), CAR (China), FAIAR (Latin America), IIR (Global), IOR (UK), ISHRAE (India), JSRAE (Japan), U-3ARC (Africa), and Women in HVAC&R (North America).

Read the full press release [here](#).

AREA General Assemblies 2022

AREA members were happy to meet in Athens for the first in-person General Assembly meeting in two years on 13 May. At this meeting, AREA members elected Coen van de Sande as President of AREA, and the Board welcomed two new members: Stepan Stojanov (SCHKT, Czechia) and Espen Rønning (VKE, Norway). AREA also welcomed two new members, Assofrigoristi and ÖGKT, as well as its new Secretary General, Claire Grossmann, who took over from Olivier Janin.

The Autumn meeting took place in Nuremberg on 14 October. We welcomed Ayman Eltalouny from UNEP and Steve Gill, founder of World Refrigeration Day, as guest speakers. Among the main decisions taken, the 2023 budget was adopted.

Alternative Refrigerants for Africa

On Saturday 21 May, U-3ARC and AREA organised a free, online training event, with several of the main refrigeration companies worldwide participating, in the

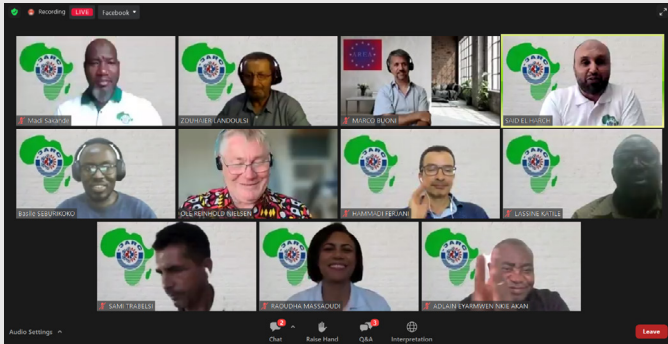
aim to bring attention to the use of natural refrigerants in Africa.

It was a great opportunity to raise general awareness of the safety challenges set by the use of the new refrigerants.

The webinar was delivered in English and translated simultaneously into Arabic, French and Portuguese. In addition to AREA and U-3ARC, other Associations such as SOSIAD from Turkey and APIRAC from Portugal participated.

The webinar was a wide success, welcoming almost 500 participants worldwide. In particular, the webinar recorded a large presence of African technicians. Three countries stood out with 57 experts from Morocco, 48 from Mali and 34 from Zambia.

Webinar by U-3ARC, AREA and UNIDO on tools and equipment



On 21 July, 400 African refrigeration technicians across the continent mobilised to participate in the 11th free training webinar organised and delivered by U-3ARC in collaboration with UNIDO and AREA. This successful event, held in English and simultaneously translated in French and Arabic, revolved around the topic: “Tools and equipment for handling flammable refrigerants”. You can watch the webinar [here](#).

AREA joined U-3ARC General Assembly in Casablanca

Refrigeration and air conditioning professionals, members of the Union of African Associations of Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Stakeholders (U-3ARC), gathered for the third General Assembly of U-3ARC on 23 September 2022, in Casablanca, under the theme “Cold, the key to sustainable development”.

President Madi Sakandé declared that after the first General Assembly held in 2020, the top priority still concerns the problem of controlling cold and air conditioning and is a major challenge for sustainable development.

AREA’s Former President, Marco Buoni, was there and presented AREA’s and European activities. In particular, he focused on the proposal for a revision of the F-gas Regulation and the competence in alternative refrigerants.



In addition to the 54 members, UNIDO (Mr. IINO Fukuya), the founder of World Refrigeration Day (Mr. Stephen Gill) and the ambassador of U-3ARC to African institutions (Princess Julie Kongo) also joined the event.

AREA President spoke at EUSEW

On 28 September, AREA, together with EPEE and REHVA, hosted a policy session at EU Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW), the biggest European conference dedicated to renewables and efficient energy use in Europe.

Our session on “Zero Emission Buildings: Climate neutral heating and cooling from Nuorgam to Rizokarpaso” gathered 67 physical and 280 virtual participants. This

session brought together various experts from the public and private sector to better understand what the introduction of Zero Emission Buildings definition and requirements would mean for heating and for cooling across the different climate zones in Europe. Panellists included representatives of EPEE, REHVA and Stefan Moser.

AREA’s President, Coen van de Sande, focused his intervention on the sufficient availability of certified installers and investment in skills to ensure the deployment of decarbonised and energy efficient technologies.



You can watch the reply [here](#) (from 5:11:17)

AREA at Chillventa

Following the Chillventa eSpecial 2020, and after four years without an in-person gathering, this year’s Chillventa exhibition successfully brought together key players and leading experts from all around the world at the Nuremberg Exhibition Centre. And we were there!

The program opened on 12 October with a conference within the forum, resulting in a full house.

Numerous participants attended our seminar “The future of RAC training and certification in the EU” with key speakers and leading experts of our industry including Coen van de Sande (AREA President), Ayman Eltalouny (UNEP), Marco Buoni (AREA Former President and Head of International Affairs), Marco Oldrati (Assofrigoristi), Harald Erös (ÖGKT) and Madi Sakandé (U-3ARC).

In addition to AREA’s proposals on the future revision of the F-gas Regulation, the talk featured discussions on how enhancing training and certification of technicians – also focusing on alternative and natural refrigerants – could help achieve the objectives of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, as well as tighten the very close relationship between the European and African RAC Associations – AREA and U-3ARC.



Visit our [website](#) to watch the videos of the forum with individual speeches.

In the evening of the same day, AREA teamed up again with ASERCOM and EPEE for their [traditional cocktail](#) where visitors concluded a busy day at the fair among colleagues.

AREA’s impact at Chillventa continued on the third and last day of the fair. We took part in the “Networking for better engagement” panel hosted by the International

Woman in Cooling Network ([INWIC](#)), in collaboration with World Refrigeration Day, the United Nations - UNEP, AREA and the main international HVACR Institutions.

AREA spoke at the EFCTC event

On 28 October 2022, AREA, represented by Marco Buoni, participated in the panel discussion on the revision of the F-gas Regulation organised by the European Fluorocarbons Technical Committee (EFCTC) and hosted by MEP Stelios Kypourouopoulos, Shadow Rapporteur on the file, at the European Parliament. The event, under the title of “What does the F-gas Regulation revision mean for Europe?” successfully brought together European policymakers, F-gases manufacturers and downstream users to exchange views on the proposed changes to the regulation. In particular, Marco underlined the importance of extending the current F-gas training and certification scheme to alternative refrigerants. The press release is available [here](#).



#WorldVentil8Day

On 8 November 2022, our members from the UK, BESA and FETA, together with a group of researchers and professional bodies, including AREA, launched World Ventilation Day ([#WorldVentil8Day](#)). The intention is to use the day to put a spotlight on ventilation, highlighting why ventilation is so important, how it can be done well, and to champion the organisations and people who work together to deliver good ventilation for health and sustainability. Our first World Ventilation Day theme is all about celebrating ventilation ([#CelebrateVentil8](#)).

Find out more on www.worldventil8day.com



Communication

Interview with Coen van de Sande, AREA's new President

Welcoming our new President, Coen van de Sande, Director of NVKL, as he began his mandate, we asked him a few key questions to get to know him better and hear about his vision for AREA in the coming years!



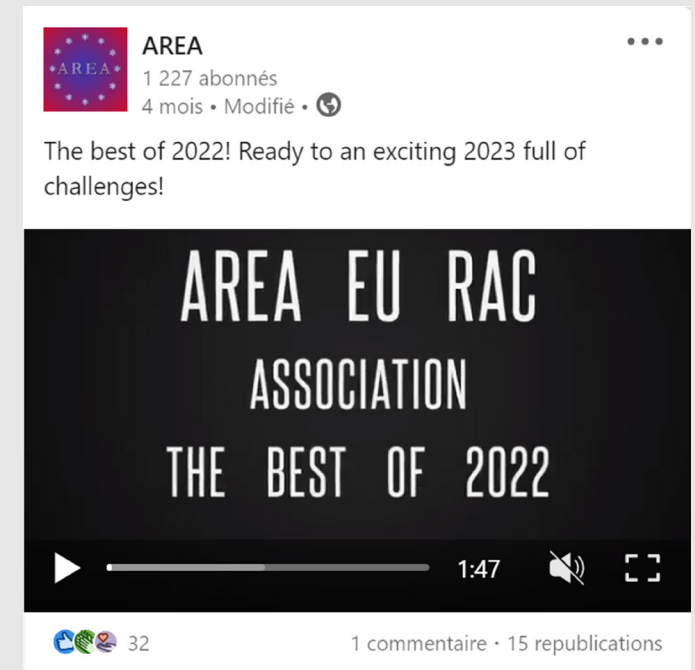
Find out what inspired him to take up this new position [here!](#)

IWD 2022: Area celebrates the women who make our industry

On International Women's Day 2022, AREA put the spotlight on women taking an active role in the RACHP industry. "We gladly welcome changes in our industry, with more and more women bringing their unique experiences and expertise".



A report of AREA's 2022 activities in a 2-minute video



You can watch the video [here.](#)

Social media presence



International Affairs

AREA expresses support to the Refrigeration Association of Ukraine

Further to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, AREA received a call for support from the Refrigeration Association of Ukraine through its President, Serhii Anashkin. The letter was distributed within AREA's membership and the call taken up by many of the members.

Marco Buoni provided an [official reply](#) a few days later, expressing full support from AREA and its community, and inviting the sector to deliver aid to Ukraine. AREA remains in close contact with its Ukrainian partners.

Picture: Stephen Gill



Projects

Refrigerant Driving Licence

The global upskilling programme, Refrigerant Driving Licence (RDL), is led by UNEP, AHRI and now AREA, which oversees the practical assessment for a Refrigerant Driving Licence to deliver globally and in particular to developing countries.



The Steering Committee, which includes the most important international associations from every continent, met in February to define the formal steps to conclude the pilot sessions and start the full programme. With the increased use of flammable refrigerants, this step is much needed and required by the industry, manufacturers, and end users, for a global competence uplevel, mutually recognised among countries.

REAL Alternatives 4 LIFE

REAL Alternatives : an international success story helping the RACHP move towards low GWP Refrigerants

On 2 March, more than 370 participants joined the live Real Alternatives' webinar "Refrigerant Emissions Alternatives and Leakage - blended learning for low GWP refrigerants" for 3 hours of presentations with simultaneous translation in 6 languages and 13 speakers.

The recording of the webinar is available [here](#).

The presentations provided a valuable overview of the current situation of alternative refrigerants with low-GWP and how the REAL Alternatives project, today with 20 member countries, can support companies, technicians, and associations in the transition towards new systems and safety while respecting the environment.



In addition to the experiences reported by the representatives of the many associations involved, the event also included two top-level technical presentations, based directly on the courses, by Marino Bassi Italy (Good practice for Flammable Refrigerants) and Kivanç Aslantaş Turkey (Good practice for Carbon Dioxide).

Further information on this project is available [here](#).

REAL Alternatives: the consortium is going strong in 2022

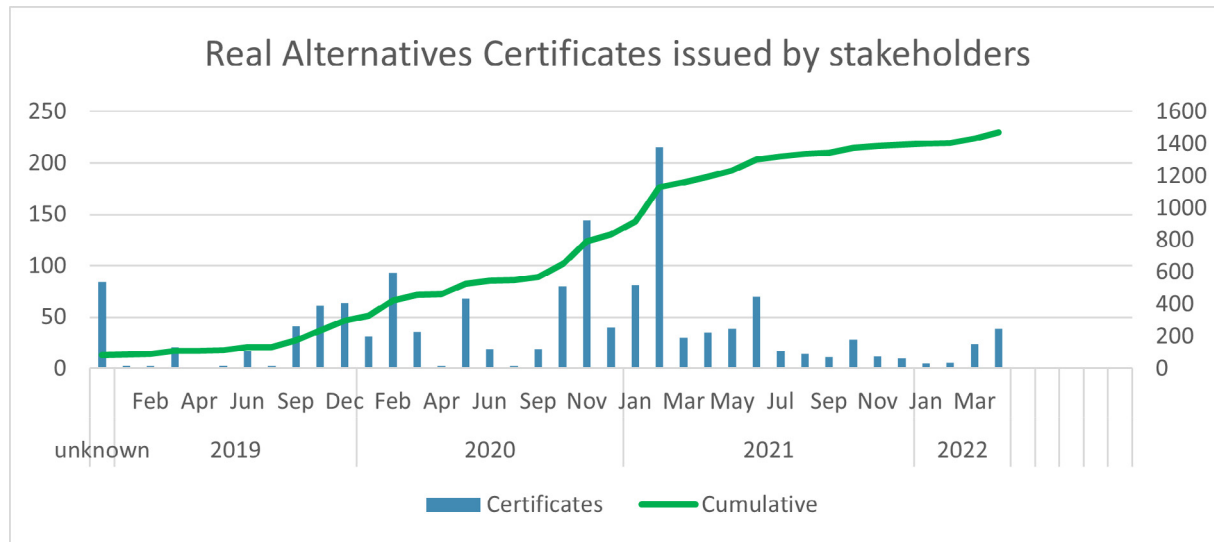
At the end of April 2022, the REAL Alternatives Consortium met online for the usual biannual conference call where all the member countries update one another on the progress of the project's implementation, such as training sessions delivered.

One of the leading topics of discussion was the recent issue of the F-gas Regulation revision proposal by the EU Commission and ATF Secretary General Marco Buoni (Italy) presented the latest news, as several items affect the RACHP sector and the REAL Alternatives programme as well.

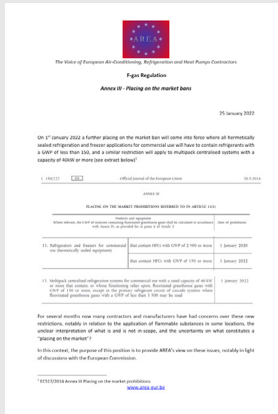
The REAL Alternatives project's numbers are extraordinary: the member countries have so far issued more than 1,500 certificates for flammable refrigerants' and carbon dioxide's proper handling, whereas more than 7,000 users have logged into the e-learning platform so far, confirming that investing on digital learning was a winning bet.

The e-learning platform underwent a major update and new languages were added (such as Greek and Estonian), extending the project's outreach even further. The programme keeps growing, for example, thanks to new countries getting in touch with the Consortium to

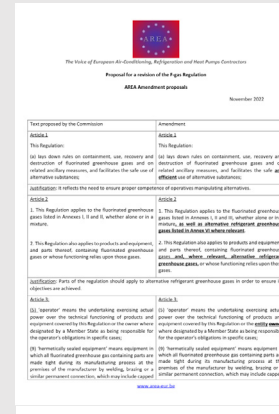
become an active part of it, international companies who are available to provide equipment for didactical purposes, and a flourishing social media network – the new [LinkedIn](#) page is a brand new communication tool alongside the existing [Twitter](#) (@REAL_Alts_EU) profile.



Publications



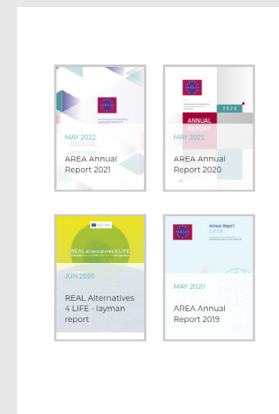
AREA Position Paper on F-gas bans & placing on the market



AREA proposal for a revision of the F-gas Regulation



AREA Position Paper on the F-gas Regulation



All publications can be downloaded [here](#)

Members

Austria



Belgium



Croatia



Czech Republic



Denmark



Estonia



Finland



France



Germany



Greece



Ireland



Italy



Italy



Netherlands



Norway



Poland



Portugal



Slovakia



Spain



Spain



Sweden



Turkey



United Kingdom



United Kingdom



International Members

Thailand



India



Africa



Contact



Claire
Grossmann

Secretary General



Dimitar
Kolichev

Policy Advisor



Christelle
Vandermeuter

Secretariat

Air Conditioning and Refrigeration
European Association - AREA aisbl

EU Transparency Register: 03396347383-49
Postal Address: BluePoint Brussels – Bd. A. Reyers 80 – 1030, Brussels (Belgium)
Tel: +32 2 206 68 66 | Email: info@area-eur.be