

Ozone Layer Protection

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Ozone layer (stratospheric ozone) is a high concentration of ozone molecules about 30 to 50 km altitude (stratosphere). The main function of the ozone layer is to absorb the Sun's ultraviolet radiation, hence protecting the Earth from its harmful effects. The thickness of the ozone layer is measured in Dobson Units, denoted "DU". 100 DU = 1 mm. "Normal" thickness of the ozone layer is ~ 3 mm (300 DU), but the average ozone layer's thickness above Latvia is between 200 and 500 DU.

Depletion of the ozone layer and widening of ozone "holes" is considered to be one of the 20 to 21'st century's major environmental problems. Excessive ultraviolet radiation increases a possibility to come down with skin cancer and eye cataract, weakens immunity, decreases yields as well as fish hauls, etc.

In 1995 in order to support world's struggle for the ozone layer protection and promote phase out of ozone depleting substances, Latvia joined the [Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer](#)(1985) and the [Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer](#) (1987).

European Union joined the Montreal Protocol in 1988. In order to comply with the requirements of the Montreal Protocol the European Union established the [Regulation \(EC\) No 2037/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 June 2000 on substances that deplete the ozone layer](#), which in Latvia came into force on 1 May 2004 and identifies a procedure how Latvia will comply with the requirements of the Montreal Protocol.

The procedure how Latvia ensures the compliance with the particular requirements of the Regulation No. 2037/2000, is established by the Regulations No. 233 of the Cabinet of Ministers (in Riga, 1st April 2004) "Ozone layer protection regulations", which after 1st January 2006 will be replaced by the Regulations No. 688 of the Cabinet of Ministers (in Riga, 6th September 2005) "Regulations regarding ozone depleting substances and fluorinated greenhouse gases, which are refrigerating fluids". Recent Regulations contains former requirements for the implementation of the Regulation No. 2037/2000 as well as in order to facilitate the elimination of leakages of ozone depleting substances (CFC and HCFC) and fluorinated greenhouse gases (HFC) – particular requirements for its transporting, repacking, storing, use (int. al. use in refrigerators) etc. Recent Regulations also establishes a procedure of certification the specialists carrying out operations with refrigerating fluids, and a procedure of licensing the companies carrying out operations with refrigerating fluids.

[The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Latvia](#) is a competent authority responsible for the implementation of the Regulation No 2037/2000 in Latvia, but in the implementation and control of performance of particular requirements of the Regulation following institutions are involved:

- [Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Agency](#)
- [State Plant Protection Service](#)
- [State Revenue Service](#)
- [State Environmental Service](#)

The phase-out of the ozone depleting substances in Latvia is carried out according to schedules laid down in the Montreal protocol and Regulation No. 2037/2000. Between 1993 and 2003 Latvia reduced the consumption of the ozone depleting substances by 88 % and entirely eliminated import, export and consumption of such ozone depleting substances as freon-11, freon-12, freon-13 etc. During 2004 only freon-22 was imported in Latvia.

Major in Latvia implemented projects relating to the protection of the ozone layer:

- Technical Assistance Programme “Phasing-out Ozone Depleting Substances in Latvia” (1997 –1998)
- UNDP project “Sectorial Phase-out of the Use of CFCs in the Latvian Aerosol Industry” (1999 - 2001)
- UNDP/GEF project “Implementation of a National Programme for Recovery & Recycling of Refrigerants” (1999 - 2001)
- UNDP project “RITOLS Conversion to CFC-free Technology in the Manufacture of Rigid Polyurethane Foam” (1999 - 2000)
- UNDP/GEF project “Total Sector Phase Out of Methyl Bromide in Countries with Economies in Transition” (2004)
- UNEP/GEF project “Institutional Strengthening for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol in Latvia” (2004-2006)
- UNEP/UNDP/GEF regional project “Total Sector Methyl Bromide Phase Out in Countries with Economies in Transition” (2005-2008)

More information about the protection of the ozone layer all around the world:[Ozone Secretariat](#)

More information about the protection of the ozone layer in Latvia: [Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Agency](#)

<https://www.varam.gov.lv/en/ozone-layer-protection>