

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-001442/26
to the Commission**

Anna Stürgh (Renew), Christophe Grudler (Renew), Martin Hojsík (Renew), Elisabetta Gualmini (Renew), Andreas Glück (Renew), Helmut Brandstätter (Renew)
(9 April 2026)

Subject: Ecodesign requirements for high-voltage switchgear critical to electricity grid expansion

High-voltage switchgear is essential grid equipment enabling the integration of renewable energy and preventing the propagation of blackouts. Article 13(13) of the F-Gas Regulation ⁽¹⁾ allows fluorinated gases with global warming potential (GWP) >1 if ecodesign requirements establish that the resulting life cycle CO₂ emissions are lower than for alternatives.

However, the Commission states it will 'monitor developments without a specific end date' before proposing such requirements. This regulatory uncertainty undermines grid buildout objectives. With support from EU LIFE funds, European manufacturers have invested in SF₆-free gas-insulated switchgear with a GWP 99% lower than that of SF₆, but are excluded from the market because of the lack of life cycle criteria. Since no other technology is up to scale at very high voltage yet, utilities are reverting to SF₆ technologies or delaying grid investments.

In June 2025, 14 Member States formally requested ecodesign requirements, citing new International Electrotechnical Commission guidelines. With 26-month procurement lead times and European leadership in grid technology at stake, clarity is urgently needed.

1. By when will the Commission propose ecodesign requirements for high-voltage switchgear under Article 13(13)?
2. How does indefinite regulatory delay reconcile with the urgent need for grid expansion and the Commission's commitment to life-cycle assessment?
3. What measures will prevent grid operators from procuring equipment with higher life cycle emissions, given the regulatory uncertainty?

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Answer given by Mr Hoekstra on behalf of the European Commission
(5 May 2026)

The Commission agrees that a sufficient supply of switchgear is essential for the electrical power system and the transition to a climate neutral Union.

As reflected in the communication on Ecodesign for Sustainable Products and Energy Labelling Working Plan 2025-2030 ⁽¹⁾ the Commission did not plan to establish a life cycle-based methodology for switchgear.

The Commission continuously monitors the progress in the implementation of the regulation (EU) 2024/573 ⁽²⁾ (F-gas Regulation) and the market developments in the switchgear sector and will act in accordance with the applicable legal framework.

The detailed rules in the F-gas Regulation already provide regulatory certainty. In particular, the F-gas Regulation envisages that the restriction for high voltage equipment above 145 kV only starts in 2032 and it entails a mechanism ensuring competitive prices and that preference must be given to offers involving substances with the lowest global warming potential.

It also implies that equipment that does not contain Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) will be favoured. Following the request from 14 Member States the Commission explained in an F-gas Consultation Forum on 21 October 2025 with around 200 stakeholders how the mechanism addresses concerns related to competition and availability issues.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2024/573 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 February 2024 on fluorinated greenhouse gases, amending Directive (EU) 2019/1937 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 517/2014 (OJ L, 2024/573, 20.2.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/573/oj>).

⁽¹⁾ COM/2025/187 final.

⁽²⁾ OJ L, 2024/573, 20.2.2024, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/573/oj>.