



**Review Paper / Derleme Makale**

**Environmental and Physiochemical Properties of Gaseous Dielectrics  
Alternatives to SF<sub>6</sub>**

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**Abstract:** Research on alternative dielectric gases to eliminate the disadvantages of SF<sub>6</sub>, which is widely used in GIS and switching systems in the power system engineering, has been an important study topic in the literature for nearly 40 years. Because of environmental priorities defined by international agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol and Doha Amendment, the restrictions on the use of SF<sub>6</sub> make these studies an obligation. Although the number of alternative dielectric gases studied for this purpose is quite high, these gases can be classified under the titles of non-synthetics, hydrocarbons (HCs), fluorocarbons (FCs), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), fluoronitriles (FNs), fluoroketones (FKs) and other synthetic gases. In this study, the gases classified under these titles are compared using the dielectric constant relative to SF<sub>6</sub>, Global Warming Potential (GWP), atmospheric lifetime, boiling point and toxicity parameters used in the comparison of dielectric gases. When compared with these parameters, non-synthetic air, CO<sub>2</sub>, and N<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>3</sub>F<sub>7</sub>CN from FN, and C<sub>5</sub>F<sub>10</sub>O and C<sub>6</sub>F<sub>12</sub>O from FKs stand out among alternative gases to SF<sub>6</sub>. These alternatives are used in some innovative power system industry applications and have a widespread use potential in the insulating gas industry instead of SF<sub>6</sub>.

**Keywords:** Gaseous dielectrics, sulfur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>), global warming potential, dielectric strength

**SF<sub>6</sub> Alternatifi Yalıtkan Gazların Çevresel ve Fizyokimyasal Özellikleri**

**Öz:** Güç sistem mühendisliğinde GIS ve anahtarlama sistemlerinde yaygın olarak kullanılan SF<sub>6</sub>'nın dezavantajları nedeniyle alternatif yalıtkan gaz araştırmaları, yaklaşık 40 yıldır literatürde önemli araştırma konularından birisidir. Kyoto Protokolü ve Doha Değişikliği gibi uluslararası anlaşmalarla tanımlanan çevresel önceliklerin bir sonucu olarak, SF<sub>6</sub>'nin kullanımına ilişkin sınırlamalar bu çalışmaları bir zorunluluk haline getirmektedir. Bu amaçla alternatif yalıtkan gazlarla ilgili çalışmalarının sayısı oldukça fazla olmasına rağmen, bu gazlar sentetik olmayan, hidrokarbonlar (HCs), florokarbonlar (FCs), hidroflorokarbonlar (HFCs), floronitriller (FNs), floroketonlar (FKs) ve diğer sentetik gazlar başlıkları altında sınıflandırılabilir. Bu çalışma, bu başlıklar altında sınıflandırılan gazları yalıtkan gazların karşılaştırılmasında kullanılan SF<sub>6</sub>'ya göre yalıtkanlık katsayısı, küresel ısınma potansiyeli, atmosferik yaşam ömrü, kaynama noktası ve toksiklik parametrelerini kullanarak karşılaştırmaktadır. Bu karşılaştırmada, SF<sub>6</sub>'ya alternatif gazlar arasında sentetik olmayan gazlardan hava, CO<sub>2</sub> ve N<sub>2</sub>, floronitrillerden C<sub>3</sub>F<sub>7</sub>N ve floroketonlardan C<sub>5</sub>F<sub>10</sub>O ve C<sub>6</sub>F<sub>12</sub>O öne çıkmaktadır. Bu alternatifler bazı yenilikçi güç sistem endüstrisi uygulamalarında kullanılmaktadır ve SF<sub>6</sub>'nin yerine yalıtkan gaz endüstrisinde yaygın bir kullanım potansiyeline sahiptir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Gaz yalıtkanlar, kükürt hekzaflorür (SF<sub>6</sub>), küresel ısınma potansiyeli, yalıtkanlık kuvveti

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## 1. Introduction

The distance between the points where electricity is produced and consumed and the regional energy demand that changes rapidly throughout the day makes it an imperative to establish an integrated transmission and distribution system on a global scale [1]. Competitive design and production of the circuit components used during the transportation of the voltage increased by transformers in transmission and distribution systems, depending on the cost and size criteria, is an important research area in power systems [2-4].

Sulfur hexafluoride, SF<sub>6</sub> is non-toxic, odorless, nonflammable and chemically stable. In addition to its chemical stability, it is also an effective absorber in heat and light source energy emissions [5-7]. SF<sub>6</sub>, which is an electronegative gas with high dielectric constant since the electron attachment cross section is larger than the total ionization cross section even in high electric fields, is widely used in power system transmission and distribution equipment since the 1950s [5]. Owing to these properties, the breakdown voltage is three times higher compared to air at the unit distance provided that the product of the pressure and electrode gap remains constant, approximately 89 kV/cm [8]. SF<sub>6</sub> gas is used in almost 80% of gas-insulated applications in transmission and distribution systems such as circuit breakers, disconnectors, busbars and transformers [9]. In addition to this extensive use in power systems, it also has a wide range of industrial uses such as laser and semiconductor technology, plasma physics, magnesium and aluminum casting [10-11]. With the use in the power system industry, the size of switching elements such as circuit breakers and sectionalizers is reduced, the areas required for substations are reduced and supply processes such as transportation and installation are simplified [12]. In addition to these advantages of SF<sub>6</sub>, its major disadvantages can be listed as follows,

- Disruption of discharge characteristics for high pressure and wide electrode gaps in non-homogeneous electric field configurations [9],
- Partial liquefaction depending on the high pressure in cold climatic conditions [9],
- The occurrence of corrosive and toxic decomposition products as a result of partial discharge and breakdown mechanisms [13, 14],
- Since it is a synthetic gas, its relatively high cost [9], and
- As it is an important greenhouse gas, its use causes important environmental problems [15].

Global Warming Potential (GWP) value, which is one of the greenhouse gas indicators, is 23.500 times of CO<sub>2</sub> for 100-year period [16]. The use of SF<sub>6</sub>, which has one of the highest GWP among the synthetic gases used for industrial purposes, is recommended to be limited to the countries that are parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) with the 1997 Kyoto Protocol and the 2012 Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol agreements [17, 18]. The atmospheric lifetime of SF<sub>6</sub> is about 3200 years, making these environmental effects more important [19, 20]. Despite these agreements that recommend restricting the use of SF<sub>6</sub>, its proportion in the atmosphere continues to increase. While the rate in the atmosphere was 3.94 ppt (parts-per-trillion) in 1997 when the Kyoto Protocol was signed, this rate increased to 8.61 ppt in 2015 [15]. The concentration of SF<sub>6</sub> in the atmosphere has more than doubled in 20 years.

Considering these disadvantages, producing switching and substation equipment with alternative gases to SF<sub>6</sub> in the power system industry becomes an economic and environmental requirement [4]. Since alternative gases to SF<sub>6</sub> have been the subject of significant discussion in the literature for nearly forty years, the number of alternative gases is quite high. These alternative gases are examined in the study by classification in non-synthetics, hydrocarbons (HCs), fluorocarbons (FCs), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), fluoronitriles (FNs), fluoroketones (FKs), and other synthetics [19; 21, 22].

SF<sub>6</sub> and other gaseous dielectrics are used in the power system industry to meet economic, safety and size constraints and to minimize faults caused by electrical breakdowns, partial discharges, coronas etc. Within the scope of this study, gas insulator alternatives used in power system transmission and distribution systems, especially in switching equipment, are examined in detail in terms of their environmental and physicochemical properties. These properties examined during the evaluation of these alternatives are GWP and lifetime in terms of environmental effects, and dielectric strength, boiling point and toxicity in terms of their physicochemical properties.

## 2. Alternative Gaseous Dielectrics

### 2.1. Non-Synthetics

Stable molecules and noble gases in the atmosphere are often used as pure or gas mixtures in search of an alternative to SF<sub>6</sub> due to their almost no greenhouse effects, they can be used in cold climates without risk of liquefaction independent of pressure and low costs [23-25]. The relative dielectric coefficient of dry air, N<sub>2</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O, CO<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>, Ar, He and Ne gases, which are frequently used in the literature among non-synthetic gases, varies between 0.37-0.40, 0.34-0.43, 0.44-0.50, 0.33-0.37, 0.20-0.22, 0.04-0.10, 0.02-0.06 and 0.01-0.02 ranges, respectively, see Table 1. Although the dielectric strength of these gases is significantly less compared to SF<sub>6</sub>, the prominent advantages of these non-synthetic alternatives are the lower GWP values, boiling temperatures, costs and non-toxicity except CO. In order to increase the dielectric strength of these alternatives, binary or ternary mixtures with different gases, especially SF<sub>6</sub>, can be used [2, 7]. This feature can also be improved by applying a magnetic field in the perpendicular direction to the electric field that causes the breakdown [23, 26]. Dry air, N<sub>2</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub> insulating medium switching and Gas Isolated System (GIS) designs are used by important manufacturers in the industry as transmission and distribution system equipment [2, 4, 25, 27]. In applications where these gases are used in GIS and circuit breakers, important technical parameters such as rated voltage, rated normal current, short circuit breaking current and rated filling pressure range between 24-175 kV, 800-3150 A, 16-40 kA and 1.3-7.7 bar, respectively [4].

**Table 1.** Main properties of non-synthetic alternative gaseous

	Gaseous	Dielectric constant relative to SF <sub>6</sub>	GWP	Atmospheric Lifetime (Years)	Boiling point (°C)	Toxicity
	SF <sub>6</sub>	1.00	23500 [16]	3200 [19, 20]	-64.0 [19, 22]	>50000 ppm for LC <sub>50</sub> 4h [20]
	Air (Dry)	0.37-0.4 [19, 25]	~0 [4, 26]	∞ [26]	-194.0 [4]	Non-toxic [19]
	N <sub>2</sub>	0.34-0.43 [19, 22]	0 [4, 26]	∞ [26]	-196.0 [4, 19]	Non-toxic [19, 27]
	N <sub>2</sub> O	0.50 [19] 0.46 [28]	320 [19] 310 [26]	120 [26, 29]	-89.0 [19, 27]	Non-toxic [19]
Non-synthetics	CO <sub>2</sub>	0.32-0.37 [19, 22]	1	30-95 [19] 50-200 [26]	-79.0 [19, 22]	>300000 for LC <sub>50</sub> 4h [19]
	CO	0.40 [19, 30]	1-3 [19]	0.08-0.25 [31]	-192.0 [27, 28]	1807 ppm for LC <sub>50</sub> 4h [4, 19]
	O <sub>2</sub>	0.33-0.37 [28] 0.33 [30]	0 [4]		-182.0 [4]	Hyperoxia [27]
	H <sub>2</sub>	0.20 [19] 0.22 [28]			-253.0 [19, 27]	Non-toxic [19, 27]
	Ar	0.04-0.10 [19] 0.07 [26]	0 [26]	∞ [26]	-186.0 [19, 27]	Non-toxic [19, 27]
	He	0.02-0.06 [19]			-269.0 [19]	Non-toxic [19]
	Ne	0.01-0.02 [19] 0.006 [26]	0 [26]	∞ [26]	-246.0 [19, 27]	Non-toxic [19, 27]

## 2.2. Hydrocarbons (HCs)

Hydrocarbons, where carbon and hydrogen atoms combine with different geometrical sequences and the number of bonds, are a rich variety of organic compounds. When the literature on insulating gases is examined, it is seen that among the commonly used hydrocarbons are CH<sub>4</sub> and C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>2</sub> [34, 35]. The relative dielectric coefficient of CH<sub>4</sub> relative to SF<sub>6</sub> is 0.43, its GWP is 23 times its CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent in a 100-year period, its atmospheric lifetime is about 10 years and its boiling point is -163.0 °C, see Table 2. Through these features, it can be preferred for high pressure applications in cold climates, and it is known to be more suitable than N<sub>2</sub> and Ar for design in electron-beam controlled on/off switches [41]. Although the relative dielectric strength of C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>2</sub> is almost at the same level as CH<sub>4</sub>, the high boiling point compared to CH<sub>4</sub> is a disadvantage, see Table 2. There is diffuse discharge switching applications using ternary gas mixtures including C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>2</sub> [35]. It is an advantage in terms of power system applications that these gases and possible decomposition products are non-toxic.

**Table 2.** Main properties of HCs, FCs, and HFCs

	Gaseous	Dielectric constant relative to SF <sub>6</sub>	GWP	Atmospheric Lifetime (Years)	Boiling point (°C)	Toxicity
Hydrocarbons (HCs)	CH <sub>4</sub>	0.43 [27, 28]	23 [31]	8.4-12 [31]	-163.0 [28]	Non-toxic [36]
	C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>2</sub>	0.42 [27]			-84.8 [27]	Non-toxic [36]
Fluorocarbons (FCs)	CF <sub>4</sub>	0.42 [28]	6300 [37, 38]	50000 [19, 22]	-128.0 [4, 19]	40000 ppm for LC <sub>50</sub> 4h [37]
	C <sub>2</sub> F <sub>4</sub>	0.50 [21]	0 [20]	1.9 days [20]	-76.3 [20]	40000 ppm for LC <sub>50</sub> 4h [20]
	C <sub>2</sub> F <sub>6</sub>	0.78-0.79 [20, 38]	12200 [4, 22]	10000 [19, 22]	-78.0 [19, 38]	Non-toxic [19]
	C <sub>3</sub> F <sub>6</sub>	0.90-1.00 [4]	100 [4]	<10 [20, 38]	-28.0 [20, 38]	750 ppm for LC <sub>50</sub> 4h [20, 37]
	C <sub>3</sub> F <sub>8</sub>	0.97-1.12 [37]	8830 [22, 39]	2600 [19, 39]	-37.0 [28, 38]	750 ppm for LC <sub>50</sub> 4h [20]
	C <sub>4</sub> F <sub>6</sub>	1.71 [30]		-25.4 [27]	-25.0 [40]	82 ppm for LC <sub>50</sub> 4h [4, 19]
	C <sub>4</sub> F <sub>8</sub>	1.32 [30]	8700 [19]	3200 [31]	-16.0/22.0 [21]	0.5 ppm for LC <sub>50</sub> 4h [4, 19]
	C <sub>4</sub> F <sub>10</sub>	1.25-1.31 [38]	8860 [4]	2600 [31, 38]	-2.0 [28, 38]	
	C <sub>5</sub> F <sub>12</sub>	1.75 [30, 40]	8900 [31]	4100 [31]	28.0 [38]	
	C <sub>6</sub> F <sub>14</sub>	2.26 [40]	9000 [31]	3200 [29, 31]	52.0 [40]	
	c-C <sub>4</sub> F <sub>8</sub>	1.25-1.31 [26]	8700 [19, 22]	3200 [19, 22]	-6.0 [19, 20]	Non-toxic [19]
	n-C <sub>4</sub> F <sub>10</sub>	1.32-1.36 [26]	7000 [26]	2600 [26]	-2.0 [26]	
Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)	CH <sub>3</sub> F	0.28 [29]	97 [31]	2.6 [31]	-74.0 [28]	Non-toxic [36]
	CH <sub>2</sub> F <sub>2</sub>	0.27 [28] 0.50 [21]	550 [31]	5 [31]	-52.0 [28]	520000 ppm for LC <sub>50</sub> 4h [36]
	CHF <sub>3</sub>	0.38 [38]	11700 [26]	264 [26]	-83.0 [27, 28]	663000 ppm for LC <sub>50</sub> 4h [36]

### 2.3. Fluorocarbons (FCs)

Fluorocarbons are highly stable due to the carbon-fluorine bond, which is considered one of the strongest bonds in organic chemistry. Due to the partial ionic character of the fluorine(s), the molecules on which these bonds are formed also have an electronegative property. As the number of carbons that forms the body of the molecule increases in fluorocarbons, the stability of the molecule increases with the effect of fluorine atoms. In other words, fluorocarbons are more stable than other organic compounds such as hydrocarbons [19]. Because of these properties, fluorocarbons are an important alternative in gas insulating applications in the power system industry.

Prominent alternatives among FCs compounds in the literature are  $\text{CF}_4$ ,  $\text{C}_2\text{F}_4$ ,  $\text{C}_2\text{F}_6$ ,  $\text{C}_3\text{F}_6$ ,  $\text{C}_4\text{F}_6$ ,  $\text{C}_4\text{F}_8$ ,  $\text{C}_4\text{F}_{10}$ ,  $\text{C}_5\text{F}_{12}$ ,  $\text{C}_6\text{F}_{14}$ ,  $n\text{-C}_4\text{F}_{10}$ , and  $c\text{-C}_4\text{F}_8$ , see Table 2. The dielectric constant of these gases relative to  $\text{SF}_6$  tends to increase with the increase in the number of carbon and fluorine in its compound. This is one of the consequences of increased stability due to the growth of the molecule. While this relative dielectric coefficient is 0.42 for  $\text{CF}_4$  [28], it increases to 2.26 for  $\text{C}_6\text{F}_{14}$  [40]. One of the characteristic features of fluorocarbons is that they are among the gases proposed to be restricted by the Kyoto Protocol and Doha Amendment [17, 18]. Fluorocarbons other than  $\text{C}_2\text{F}_4$  and  $\text{C}_4\text{F}_6$ , which are alternatives to dielectric gas, have the potential to cause significant environmental problems with their high GWP value and long atmospheric lifetimes, such as  $\text{SF}_6$ , see Table 2. Another negative feature of these gases is the high boiling point, depending on the molecular size. Boiling points of fluorocarbons such as  $\text{C}_3\text{F}_6$  and  $\text{C}_3\text{F}_8$  with dielectric strength close to  $\text{SF}_6$  are  $-28^\circ\text{C}$  and  $-37^\circ\text{C}$ , respectively. High boiling points make these alternatives inefficient in high pressure and/or cold climate applications.

$\text{LC}_{50}$ , a unit of toxicity, indicates that half of all living things exposed to a gas over a certain concentration and time interval are killed. When FCs are examined for toxicity,  $\text{C}_3\text{F}_6$ ,  $\text{C}_3\text{F}_8$ ,  $\text{C}_4\text{F}_6$  and  $\text{C}_4\text{F}_8$  are toxic and their use in high amounts in industrial applications should be avoided [19, 20]. FCs are used in GIS and switching equipment in double or triple gas mixtures [42]. In these mixtures, gases such as  $\text{SF}_6$ ,  $\text{N}_2$  and Ar are used in different concentrations and their breakdown characteristics are examined in different electrical discharges [43]. The ratio of FCs in these gas mixtures ranges from 20% to 80% [44-45]. These rates are determined by the environmental and electrical limitations of power system equipment application.

### 2.4. Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)

Hydrofluorocarbons, which contain carbon, hydrogen and fluorine atoms in their compounds, are recommended to limit their use for industrial purposes due to their greenhouse gas effects, just like  $\text{SF}_6$  and FCs [17, 18]. Although there are studies on different molecular structures such as  $\text{CHF}_3$ ,  $\text{CH}_2\text{F}_2$ ,  $\text{CH}_3\text{F}$ ,  $\text{C}_2\text{H}_2\text{F}_3$ ,  $\text{C}_2\text{H}_2\text{F}_4$  and  $\text{C}_4\text{H}_2\text{F}_6$ , the HFCs frequently recommended as an alternative to  $\text{SF}_6$  are  $\text{CHF}_3$ ,  $\text{CH}_2\text{F}_2$ , and  $\text{CH}_3\text{F}$ , see Table 2 [21, 28].

The stability and dielectric constants of HFCs increase in relation to the increase in the number of carbon and fluorine in the molecular structure, similar to FCs [28, 46]. In the literature,  $\text{CHF}_3$  has been frequently studied due to its nontoxicity, low boiling point, relatively low cost, and high electronegativity from fluorine atoms [47]. However, this gas cannot meet environmental priorities due to its high GWP [26].

### 2.5. Fluoronitriles (FNs)

The low dielectric coefficient of non-synthetic gases relative to  $\text{SF}_6$  and the limitation of the use of FCs and HFCs due to their high GWP values make FN and FK prominent in the search for

alternative dielectric gases. Due to their high dielectric strengths and low GWPs, these gases have recently become an important alternative in high power transmission and distribution system equipment.

FNs contain carbon, fluorine and nitrogen atoms. Unlike FCs, the nitrogen atom makes a double or triple bond with a carbon in the molecule. FNs commonly used in alternative dielectric gas studies include  $\text{CF}_3\text{CN}$ ,  $\text{C}_2\text{F}_5\text{CN}$ ,  $\text{C}_3\text{F}_7\text{N}$ , and  $\text{C}_3\text{F}_7\text{CN}$  ( $\text{C}_4\text{F}_7\text{N}$ ) [37, 46]. The relative dielectric strengths of these alternatives increase due to the increase in the number of carbon and fluorine in the structure and vary between 1.46-2.70, see Table 3. Despite these high dielectric strengths and relatively low GWPs compared to  $\text{SF}_6$ , it is an important disadvantage that FNs other than  $\text{C}_3\text{F}_7\text{CN}$  are acute toxic [19, 37]. Considering the dimensions of power system equipment, it is an obligation to take precautions for human and environmental health in the use of these alternatives.

**Table 3.** Main properties of FNs and FKs

	Gaseous	Dielectric constant relative to $\text{SF}_6$	GWP	Atmospheric Lifetime (Years)	Boiling point ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ )	Toxicity
Fluoronitriles (FNs)	$\text{CF}_3\text{CN}$	1.46 [37, 46]			-62.0 [19, 40]	360 ppm for $\text{LC}_{50}$ 4h [37]
	$\text{C}_2\text{F}_5\text{CN}$	1.80-1.85 [19] 2.00 [28]			-32.0 [19, 40]	High [19]
	$\text{C}_3\text{F}_7\text{N}$	2.20-2.35 [19]			-2.0 [19]	Toxic [19]
	$\text{C}_3\text{F}_7\text{CN}$	2.20 [4] 2.74 [30, 46]	2100 [46]	22 [22]	-4.7 [46]	10000-15000 ppm for $\text{LC}_{50}$ 4h [19, 37]
Fluoroketones (FKs)	$\text{C}_4\text{F}_8\text{O}$	1.60 [4]	4100 [4]		0 [4]	200 ppm for $\text{LC}_{50}$ [19]
	$\text{C}_5\text{F}_{10}\text{O}$	2.00 [4, 30]	1 [19, 22]	0.044 [22]	24.0 [19]	Non-toxic [19]
	$\text{C}_6\text{F}_{12}\text{O}$	2.70 [22, 38]	1 [22, 38]	0.014 [38]	49.0 [22, 38]	Non-toxic [19]

Alternative dielectric gas studies are concentrated on the  $\text{C}_3\text{F}_7\text{CN}$  molecule, which is nontoxic among nitriles and has a relative dielectric strength in the range of 2.20-2.70 [4, 48]. However, due to the high boiling point of  $\text{C}_3\text{F}_7\text{CN}$  such as  $-4.7^{\circ}\text{C}$ , there is a risk of liquefaction in outdoor applications. In order to overcome this problem, binary mixtures with alternative non-synthetic dry air,  $\text{N}_2$  and  $\text{CO}_2$  gases are recommended [4, 49]. Due to partial discharges, arcs and breakdowns naturally occurring in power system equipment, decomposition products emerge depending on the molecular structure of the insulating gas. Decomposition products formed by the binary mixtures of  $\text{C}_3\text{F}_7\text{CN}$  with different gases and the effects of impurities such as  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  and  $\text{O}_2$ , which are inevitably present in the environment, have been studied in detail recently [46, 48]. These main stable decomposition products include FKs such as  $\text{C}_2\text{F}_5\text{CN}$ ,  $\text{CF}_3\text{CN}$ , and  $\text{CH}_2\text{FCN}$ , FCs such as  $\text{CF}_4$ ,  $\text{C}_2\text{F}_6$ ,  $\text{C}_3\text{F}_8$ , and  $\text{C}_4\text{F}_{10}$ , and HFCs such as  $\text{CHF}_3$  [46, 48]. The electronegativity of these decomposition products is close to  $\text{C}_3\text{F}_7\text{CN}$  and therefore the insulation performance is not damaged. However, decomposition products such as  $\text{COF}_2$ ,  $\text{C}_3\text{F}_7\text{H}$ , and  $\text{HF}$  are toxic and/or corrosive [46]. These decomposition products threaten the internal structure of the equipment and the safety of maintenance personnel, so they should be detected during service periods.

## 2.6. Fluoroketones (FKs)

Fluoroketones, which have similar properties with FNs, have an oxygen molecule in the molecular structure instead of a nitrogen molecule. Among the fluoroketones,  $\text{C}_4\text{F}_8\text{O}$  is more disadvantageous than  $\text{C}_5\text{F}_{10}\text{O}$  and  $\text{C}_6\text{F}_{12}\text{O}$  due to its 4100 equivalent  $\text{CO}_2$  GWP value and highly toxic, see Table 3. The main disadvantages of  $\text{C}_5\text{F}_{10}\text{O}$  and  $\text{C}_6\text{F}_{12}\text{O}$ , which have optimum data on almost all properties

in the search for alternative dielectric gas, are the boiling points of 24.0 °C and 49.0 °C, respectively. This disadvantage is tried to be eliminated by mixing these gases with different gases and not using them in high pressure equipment [30, 50]. After the FKs are subjected to electrical discharges, decomposition products consisting of fluorocarbons are formed, such as CF<sub>4</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>F<sub>6</sub>, C<sub>3</sub>F<sub>6</sub>, C<sub>3</sub>F<sub>8</sub>, C<sub>4</sub>F<sub>10</sub> and C<sub>5</sub>F<sub>12</sub> [38]. These products can be varied depending on the buffer gases and the concentration of impurities in the medium. These by-products may have undesirable properties in terms of GWP and toxicity parameters.

## 2.7. Other Synthetics

Other synthetic alternatives include chlorocarbon, bromocarbon and iodide-carbons molecules using chlorine, bromine, and iodine from 7A elements instead of fluorine.

The chlorocarbons commonly used in the literature are CF<sub>3</sub>Cl, C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>5</sub>Cl, CH<sub>2</sub>FCl, CHF<sub>2</sub>Cl, C<sub>2</sub>F<sub>3</sub>Cl, C<sub>2</sub>F<sub>5</sub>Cl, CF<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, CHFCl<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>HF<sub>3</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>F<sub>4</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>F<sub>3</sub>Cl<sub>3</sub>, CHCl<sub>3</sub>, CFCI<sub>3</sub>, and CCl<sub>4</sub>. The relative dielectric coefficient of these molecules ranges from 0.30-1.80 [28, 40, 51]. These molecules generally have undesirable properties in terms of environment and human health, such as high GWPs and toxicity [36]. However, some molecular structures, such as CF<sub>3</sub>CHCl<sub>2</sub>, are proposed as an alternative in switching designs [51].

Bromocarbons studied in the gas dielectric literature are CH<sub>3</sub>Br and CF<sub>3</sub>Br. The relative dielectric coefficient of these gases is only 0.45 and 0.76, respectively [28, 30]. The boiling point of CH<sub>3</sub>Br at 2.7 °C and the GWP value of CF<sub>3</sub>Br at 5600 equivalents CO<sub>2</sub> restrict their use in the dielectric industry [27, 29].

c-CIF<sub>3</sub>, CF<sub>3</sub>I and CH<sub>3</sub>I are important iodide-carbons. The relative dielectric coefficients of these molecules are 0.47-0.58, 1.27 and 1.15, respectively [19, 27]. Although CF<sub>3</sub>I is the most widely used literature among these gases, its acute toxic feature prevents its use for industrial purposes. In order to reduce this toxic effect of CF<sub>3</sub>I, double and triple gas mixtures with gases such as N<sub>2</sub>, CO<sub>2</sub>, CF<sub>4</sub> and Ar have been proposed in different studies [52-53]. In these studies, the ratio of CF<sub>3</sub>I in these mixtures is kept in amounts not exceeding 10%. Despite this low rate, it significantly increases the dielectric strength of the mixture.

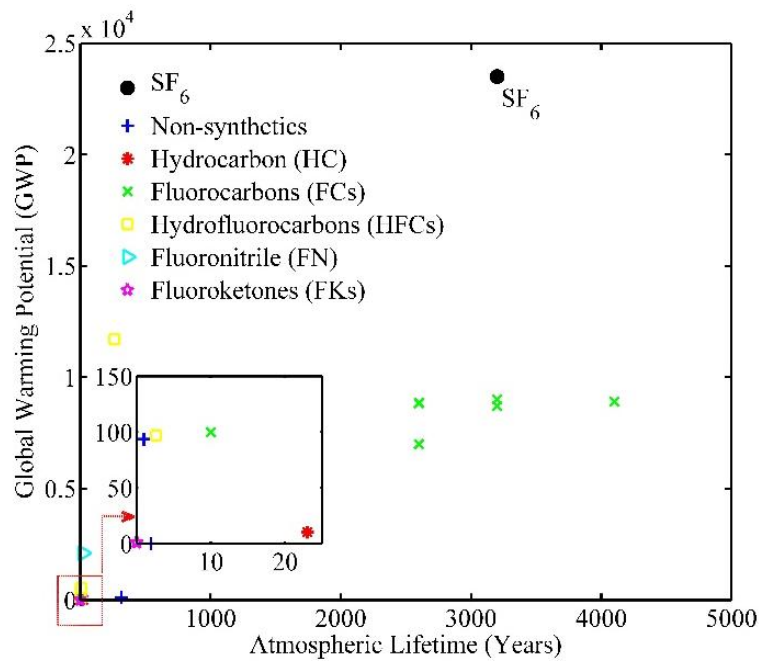
## 3. Conclusions and Perspectives

This study, in which alternative dielectric gases are examined in different parameters, focuses on the selection of the most suitable gas or gases in terms of environmental and physicochemical properties that can be used instead of SF<sub>6</sub> in the power system industry.

The environmental effect that causes the use of SF<sub>6</sub> to be limited is evaluated by examining the GWP and atmospheric lifetime properties of alternative gases, see Figure 1. In terms of these features, a better alternative gas is expected to have a low GWP and long atmospheric lifetime due to the nature of power system equipment. When Figure 1 is examined in terms of these requirements, it can be seen that non-synthetics, CH<sub>4</sub>, C<sub>3</sub>F<sub>7</sub>CN and FKs may be alternative, and FCs and HFCs are not environmentally suitable due to their high GWP value. In terms of toxicity, another parameter in terms of human and environmental health, FCs, HFCs and FNs other than C<sub>3</sub>F<sub>7</sub>CN pose a threat and are not recommended for large-scale industrial use.

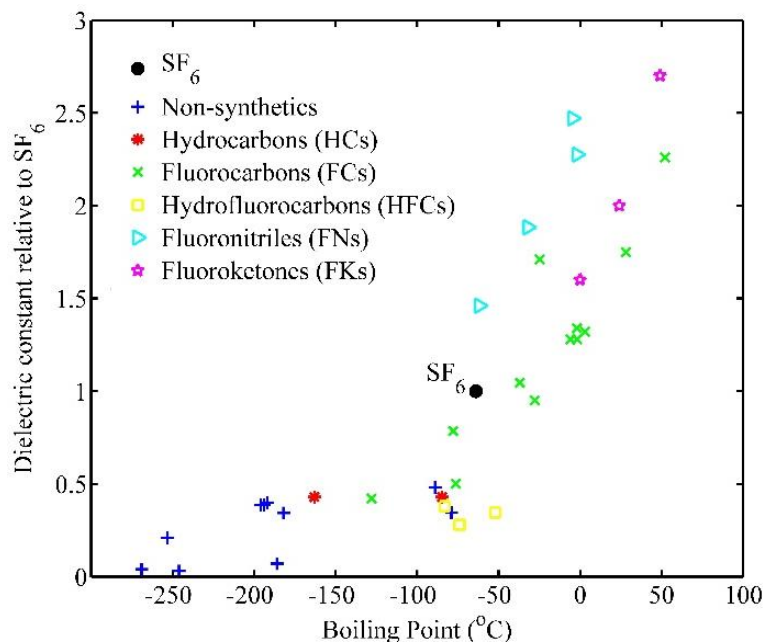
The dielectric characteristics of these alternatives are examined in terms of dielectric constants relative to SF<sub>6</sub> and boiling points, see Figure 2. It is desired that the dielectric coefficient of the gas dielectric material should be as big as possible due to reasons such as reduction in size, security and

cost in power system equipment. On the other hand, boiling point should be as low as possible to avoid liquefaction since these equipment operate outdoors under cold climate conditions.



**Figure 1.** GWP and atmospheric lifetimes of alternatives to SF<sub>6</sub>

According to Figure 2, HFCs, FNs and FKs stand out in terms of dielectric strength. However, the boiling points of these gases are quite high, and they are present as liquid in cold climate working conditions. To eliminate this disadvantage, these gases are mixed with non-synthetic gases such as air, N<sub>2</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub>, where boiling points are considerably low.



**Figure 2.** Dielectric constants relative to SF<sub>6</sub> and boiling points of alternatives

Among the gases that meet the requirements in terms of both environmental and electrical properties, non-synthetics, C<sub>3</sub>F<sub>7</sub>CN and FKs stand out. These gases are recently used by the leading companies of the power system industry sector in GIS and Circuit Breaker (CB) applications [4, 33, 49]. Non-synthetic gases in medium voltage equipment are preferred with high pressure



applications to increase the insulating level of the system [4]. In applications where  $C_3F_7CN$  and fluoroketones are used, double or triple gas mixtures of non-synthetic gases such as air,  $N_2$ ,  $CO_2$ , and  $O_2$  are used to prevent liquefaction in the gas dielectric environment [49, 54]. These application examples and scientific studies, which have become widespread recently, show that a new era has started in the  $SF_6$  alternative gas industry and applications will continue to increase.

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