



FAX

**To Member State Ambassadors to the EU
Cc: Environment Delegates (e-mail)**

**AN EU MERCURY EXPORT BAN IS NEEDED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE -
AND BY 2011 AT THE LATEST!**

Brussels, 25 May 2005

Dear Ambassador,

Weⁱ wish once more to underline the significance of a strong Environmental Council Decision, foreseen for 24 June 2005, with respect to the Community Strategy on Mercury, as presented by the European Commission in January 2005.

With reference to your planned meeting on 25-26th May 2005, where mercury is on the agenda, this coalition of environment and health NGOs reminds you of the importance of the EU taking the lead and developing strong and clear Council conclusions, inviting the Commission to take action as soon as possible.

With this in mind, we believe that priority should be given to the following:

1. **UNDERLINE** that the proposed ban of EU mercury exports should be implemented as soon as possible, preferably by 2008¹, but certainly not later than 2011, and **INVITE** the Commission to take the necessary action to achieve this as soon as possible
2. **UNDERLINE** that the temporary storage of decommissioned mercury from the chlor-alkali industry should be pursued and **INVITE** the Commission to take relevant action as soon as possible.

Further to that, we would once more invite you to consider our letter² sent on 11th May 2005 to all Environment Delegates, concerning the importance of setting as early a date as possible for an EU mercury export ban.

¹ as originally proposed in earlier Commission drafts but also by the Luxemburg Presidency
<http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/05/st07/st07986.en05.pdf>

² http://www.eeb.org/activities/mercury/050511%20FINAL_EU_ENV_Working_Group_Letter_Mercury.pdf

To conclude, we are obliged to underline the necessity of the EU mercury export ban which is at the very core of the European Commission strategy on mercury. Your support will help to cement the EU's position as the leader in addressing global environmental challenges, reducing health risks to millions of its own citizens, and many more globally – an opportunity that we cannot afford to miss.

Thank you in advance for your interest and support,

Yours sincerely,

John Hontelez
Secretary General
European Environmental Bureau
<http://www.eeb.org>

Michael T. Bender,
Northern Representative
Ban Mercury Working Group
<http://www.ban.org/Ban-Hg-Wg>

Genon Jensen,
Director, European Public Health Alliance
Environment Network
<http://www.env-health.org>

Dr. Cestmir Hrdinka,
Executive Director
Health Care Without Harm Europe
www.noharm.org

ⁱEnvironmental NGOs include

The **European Environmental Bureau (EEB)**, www.eeb.org, is a federation of more than 140 environmental citizens' organisations based in all EU Member States and most Accession Countries, as well as in a few neighbouring countries. These organisations range from local and national, to European and international. The aim of the EEB is to protect and improve the environment of Europe and to enable the citizens of Europe to play their part in achieving that goal.

The **Ban Mercury Working Group**, www.ban.org/Ban-Hg-Wg/, is an international coalition of 27 public interest non-governmental organisations from around the world formed initially in 2002 by 2 US based NGOs, the Basel Action Network (www.ban.org) and the Mercury Policy Project (www.Mercurypolicy.org), working to end pollution from the toxic metal -- Mercury.

European Public Health Alliance Environment Network (EEN), <http://www.env-health.org/> is an international non-governmental organisation advocating environmental protection as a means to improving health and well-being. Member groups and organisations represent health, environment, women, health professionals and others. The group has a diverse membership, 29 members with 5 international organisations, 10 European networks and 14 national/local organisations, including non-governmental organisations, professional bodies representative of doctors and nurses, academic institutions and other not-for-profit organisations.

Health Care Without Harm Europe (HCWH), www.noharm.org, is an international coalition of hospitals and health care systems, medical and nursing professionals, community groups, health-affected constituencies, labour unions, environmental and religious organisations. HCWH is dedicated to transforming the health care industry worldwide, without compromising patient safety or care, so that it is ecologically sustainable and no longer a source of harm to public health and the environment.

And with the support of NGOs from the USA (Natural Resources Defence Council), India (Toxics Link), China (Global Village of Beijing), Brazil (Association for Combats against the POPS).