



***Invitation to the Conference
“Mercury containing lamps under the spotlight”
Friday, 27 June, 2008, Brussels
Venue: Cenelec***

14 May 2008

Dear Madam/Sir,

The European Environmental Bureau and the Zero Mercury Working Group, are very pleased to invite you to their **Conference “Mercury containing lamps under the spotlight”**, **Friday 27 June 2008, Brussels**.

Mercury is highly toxic, causing damage to the nervous system, and is particularly harmful during the early development phases of children. Mercury can become more concentrated as it is ingested by tiny organisms and moves up the food chain, accumulating in the bodies of humans and wildlife. This can be a particular problem for those species, including humans, that consume certain types of fish. Mercury travels long distances through the atmosphere, and has contaminated global food supplies at levels that can pose a significant risk to human health.

One of the key objectives of the EU Mercury Strategy, adopted in January 2005, is to reduce the amount of mercury circulating in society by cutting both supply and demand. On the demand side the largest uses are for the chlor-alkali industry and dental amalgam. *Lighting* is the next biggest mercury use, equalling the total amount used in electric and electronic equipment and measuring and control devices – around 35 tonnes of mercury (out of 440 tonnes total in EU 25).ⁱ The EC, in line with the Mercury Strategy (actions 8 and 10), is currently conducting a study on the products and applications that continue to circulate mercury in society, with a view to eventually shifting to mercury-free solutions wherever possible.ⁱⁱ

The largest number of lamps that contain mercury are the energy-efficient compact and straight fluorescent lamps. These are increasingly promoted in the fight against climate change, and various initiatives are underway to increase their market share.

More importantly, however, it is expected that the EU will move to phase out incandescent lamps over the next several years. As a result, there will be an enormous increase in the number of lamps containing mercury, and even more mercury will be put into circulation if steps are not taken to further reduce mercury content and require best practices for those lamps manufactured and/or used in the EU. Furthermore, separate collection of such lamps becomes even more important because of the hazardous content and their fragility.

Given these policy developments, and the realisation that the ever increasing use of energy-saving lamps could increase overall mercury use and eventual risk of exposure, the EEB and the Zero Mercury Working Group are organising this conference in order to engage more stakeholders in this important debate.

The programme of the conference includes presentations from:

- ***the European Commission on the actions related to energy saving lamps***
- ***lamp manufacturers and their association on the content of mercury in lamps***
- ***Member States and experts on lamp collection***
- ***Panel discussion on the content of mercury in lamps and the collection aspects.***

Invited speakers include: the *European Commission, European Lamp Companies Federation, Philips, General Electric, Sylvania, representatives of Member States, recyclers, experts on the issue and NGOs*

As you may know, the European Environmental Bureau is a federation of over 142 environmental citizens' organisations based in all EU Member States, potential new member states and a few neighbouring countries, with the aim of protecting and improving Europe's environment and of enabling Europe's citizens to play their part in achieving that goal.

The Zero Mercury Working group, www.zeromercury.org, is an international coalition of more than 55 public interest environmental and health non-governmental organizations from around the world formed in 2005 by the European Environmental Bureau and the Mercury Policy Project/Ban Mercury Working Group. The aim of the group is to strive for 'Zero' emissions, demand and supply of mercury, from all sources we can control, eventually eliminating mercury in the environment at EU level and globally.

The participants of the conference will be representatives of different DGs of the European Commission, EU Ministries of the Environment and Health, local authorities, scientists, industry, and NGOs.

The draft agenda, registration form and other details can be found at:
http://www.zeromercury.org/080627_EEB_conf_lamps.html

If you are interested to attend the conference, please fill out and return the registration form as soon as possible and in any case, **before 20th June 2008.**

We look forward to welcoming you at the conference.

Yours sincerely,

Elena Lymberidi-Settimo
Project Coordinator "Zero Mercury Campaign"
European Environmental Bureau

ⁱ Mercury flows and safe storage of surplus mercury, Concorde East/West, for DG Environment, August 2006, p. 21

ⁱⁱ [Legislative Background](#)

The EC, in line with the Mercury Strategy actions 8 and 10, is currently conducting a study of the products and applications containing mercury circulating in society, with a view to eventually shifting to mercury-free solutions wherever possible.

In parallel two other EU directives are dealing with mercury in lamps:

- the EU Directive 2002/95 on the Restriction of Hazardous Substances in Electrical and Electronic Equipment (RoHS) (including mercury), which sets minimum allowed content of mercury in compact and straight fluorescent lamps, is currently under revision.ⁱⁱ
- The EU Directive 2005/32 establishing a framework for the setting of eco-design requirements for energy-using products, is currently in the process of detailing such requirements for street, office and domestic lighting.ⁱⁱ

Moreover the EU Directive 2002/96 on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment is currently under revision, which will deal with the need for separate collection and recycling of such products.