



“Towards a Mercury Free World” Madrid, 22 April 2005

# “Zero Mercury - a global campaign”

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# Introduction

**Mercury** and its compounds are highly toxic to humans, especially to children's developing nervous system. They are also harmful to ecosystems and wildlife populations. In the environment mercury can change into methylmercury, which has the capacity to collect in organisms (bioaccumulate) and to concentrate up food chains (biomagnify), especially in the aquatic food chain. Methylmercury readily passes both the placental barrier and the blood-brain barrier.

**Mercury** contamination is a global threat. This is clearly recognised by the conclusion of the UNEP Global Mercury Assessment (2002).



# Objective

In collaboration with the (international) Ban Hg Working Group, the EEB started the European 'Zero Mercury' Campaign having as its main objective ***“to minimise emissions, demand and supply of mercury, in view of reducing to a minimum, mercury in the environment at EU level and globally”***.

Work on mercury at a global level, started in 2002, with the formation of the international Ban Mercury Working Group (Ban Hg Wg) ([www.ban.org/Ban-Hg-Wg/](http://www.ban.org/Ban-Hg-Wg/))– formed initially by 2 US based NGOs, the Basel Action Network ([www.ban.org](http://www.ban.org)) and the Mercury Policy Project ([www.mercurypolicy.org](http://www.mercurypolicy.org)).



# Networking

An EU/international group of NGOs working on mercury has been created to support the project.

EU (B, FR, UK, D, S, DK, FIN, NL, GR, IT, ES, CZ, LV, PL, HU), NW, Brazil, India, China, South Africa, USA, Indigenous peoples from Alaska and California

You are welcome!



# the project (1)

***The project moves along 4 directions, with complementary activities towards the same goal:***

- **Follow the process at EU level - Community Strategy on Mercury:** an EU Strategy on mercury has been requested from the European Council and was presented by the Commission on 28 January 2005.

The Commission communication is currently discussed at:

- \* the Council Environment Working Group towards an Environment Council Decision on the 24 June 2005, and
- \* the Environment Committee of the European Parliament, towards a resolution.



## the project (2)

- **Activities in Spain - Stop mercury mining and trade in Almaden:** The biggest mercury mine in the world is situated in Almaden, Spain. The owner company, MAYASA, is collecting and trading internationally (mainly to developing countries) the mercury from Western Europe's decommissioned chloro-alkali plants (using the mercury-cell process, which is not considered to be B.A.T., under IPPC and will eventually have to be replaced). A part time campaigner in Spain (Ecologistas en Acción) has been hired to provide support towards stopping these above-mentioned activities.



## the project (3)

- **Follow the process at UNEP level - Push towards a global legally binding solution.** Mercury was on the agenda of the UNEP Governing Council, 21-25 February 2005.

Activities include cooperation with NGOs all over the world (EU, US, Developing countries) and input to UNEP towards that direction. 10 persons/NGOs representing Europe, USA, Brazil, India, S. Africa, China and the Indigenous Peoples of Alaska and California, attended the meeting.

- The NGOs submitted their proposal to UNEP, prior to the meeting, asking for *immediate concrete actions to be taken, to substantially reduce mercury demand and releases, the adoption of meaningful targets, and the development of a new global binding instrument to address mercury.*
- All Civil Society Organisations (apart from Businesses and Industry) of the 6<sup>th</sup> Global Civil Society Forum, called for the adoption of the NGOs proposal by the UNEP GC



## the project (4)

- **Help affected developing countries - 4 NGOs from developing countries will be financially assisted for active involvement.** Support will be given for national activities as well as participation at international level, to assist in the global campaign.

The selected NGOs to participate are :

- *Toxics Link, India*
- *Associação de Combate aos POPs, Brazil*
- *groundWork, South Africa*
- *Global Village of Beijing, China*



# “Zero Mercury” – a global campaign

Temporary website:

<http://www.eeb.org/activities/mercury/>

Global website , to be online soon

<http://www.zeromercury.org>

The EEB receives a special grant from the Sigrid Rausing Trust for this activity