

EEB Reaction to the exchange of view in the European Parliament's Environment Committee (12 July 2016) on the report on mercury by the MEP Rapporteur Eck, GUE, DE

The Rapporteur presented his [report](#) which strengthens the European Commission's proposal and goes well beyond the Minamata Convention.

The shadow rapporteurs presented their views: Michel Dantin (EPP), Massimo Paolucci (S&D), Julie Girling (ECR), Anneli Jaatteenmaki (ALDE), Michele Rivasi (Greens), Mireille D'Ornano (ENF). Other MEPs intervened including Auyso, Florenz, Mikolasik, Grossetete (all from EPP).

This is a summary on the views expressed as above on the main technical issues:

1. The export ban should be expanded to include a wider list of mercury compounds. This was supported by GUE, but not all parties expressed views on this.
2. A full import ban on mercury was supported by GUE, the Greens; ALDE and S&D supported a full import ban unless the mercury in question is destined for disposal. The EPP and ECR would support the EC's approach (import ban only from non-Parties to the Convention, or under specific conditions).
3. The export ban on mercury-added products should be aligned with the restrictions applied within the EU - this view was supported by GUE, S&D, the Greens, ALDE, the EPP and ECR as well as the EC expressed concerns against this approach.
4. Mercury in dentistry should be phased out as soon as possible, and for children and pregnant women even sooner. This was supported by GUE, S&D, the Greens and the ECR. Concerns were raised about the scientific evidence supporting such a decision by the EPP, ALDE and the EC.
5. Mercury used in processes including alcoholates needs to be phased out. This was generally supported by all parties, though there may be some concerns since not all parties expressed their views on this.
6. Liquid mercury waste needs to be solidified before disposal. This was supported by all parties. Some difference of opinion still exists on whether the solidified product should be disposed in salt mines (GUE, S&D) or in above ground facilities (Greens). EPP representative had split views on this last point.
7. The temporary storage of mercury waste for a few years will be needed considering the available capacity for solidification/stabilization. This was also supported by all parties

The EEB is very happy to see that all parties expressed the need to strengthen the EU regulation. Such an approach will allow the EU to keep its leadership position and to adequately ensure the protection of human health and the environment while sending a clear and unequivocal signal to other countries working towards the same objectives.

The message is also very clear with respect to the export of mercury-added products. Most parties agreed that double standards should be avoided to ensure that these products do not end up in countries with no or less stringent regulations for the management of mercury. Since alternatives exist, such a measure will promote mercury-free markets and drive mercury free product prices down.

A rather strong message was also echoed with respect to the use of mercury in dental amalgams. It seems that most parties are in favour of a phase out since this is the most cost-effective way to prevent dental mercury pollution. Mercury-free dental restorations are available, affordable, effective and preferred by most EU citizens.

It seems to be also clear that no liquid mercury waste should be disposed of before it is first solidified/stabilized, a step to the right direction for safer handling and disposal.

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EEB full comments <http://bit.ly/29Lb8zl> , NGOs letter on phasing out mercury from dentistry <http://bit.ly/29Albrt>, Technical advantages of mercury free dentistry <http://bit.ly/29urWGh>