

## **EU ratification propels global mercury treaty into force**

Brussels-Today the EU and seven of its member states (Bulgaria, Denmark, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania, and Sweden) ratified the Minamata Convention on Mercury, thereby providing the “tipping point” needed to trigger its entry into force.

*“The EU has re-established its global leadership role- surpassing the 50 countries needed to ratify the Convention, ”* said Elena Lymberidi-Settimo, Project Manager, European Environmental Bureau and coordinator of the Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG). *“ On this historic occasion, we urge governments to pay homage to Minamata and the tragedy that befell there by undertaking concrete activities to reduce global mercury pollution.*  
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*“This legally binding agreement is our best hope to curtail the global mercury crisis,”* said Michael Bender, co-coordinator of the Zero Mercury Working Group. *“ Over time, it will provide countries with both the technical and financial resources necessary to reduce worldwide exposure risks to mercury.*  
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The Zero Mercury Working Group welcomes the actions of those nations who ratified the Convention today. The Minamata Convention will now come into force 90 days from now in on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2017.

This international breakthrough-- prompted by European Union Member States -- enables the First Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention to convene, as scheduled, in Geneva during the third week of September 2017. During that meeting, called COP1, critical decisions will be made to help determine the treaty’s overall effectiveness.

128 countries are signatories, signifying their intentions to ratify and implement the Convention. The treaty holds critical obligations for Parties that affect primary mining of mercury, mercury product phase-outs, mercury use, trade, emissions and disposal, among others, that taken together will eventually lead to global mercury reductions.

For more information, see:

<http://www.mercuryconvention.org/Negotiations/COP1/tabid/5544/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

[www.zeromercury.org](http://www.zeromercury.org)

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### Notes to the editors:

Mercury is a global pollutant that travels long distances. Its most toxic form – methylmercury - accumulates in large predatory fish and is taken up in our bodies through eating fish, with the worst impacts on babies *in utero* and small children.

The **Zero Mercury Working Group** (ZMWG) is an international coalition of over 95 public interest environmental and health non-governmental organizations from more than 50 countries from around the world formed in 2005 by the European Environmental Bureau and the Mercury Policy Project.

*ZMWG strives for zero supply, demand, and emissions of mercury from all anthropogenic sources, with the goal of reducing mercury in the global environment to a minimum. Our mission is to advocate and support the adoption and implementation of a legally binding instrument which contains mandatory obligations to eliminate where feasible, and otherwise minimize, the global supply and trade of mercury, the global demand for mercury, anthropogenic releases of mercury to the environment, and human and wildlife exposure to mercury.*