

**Brussels, 8 December 2016**

**EEB welcomes strengthening of EU mercury laws**

The EEB today welcomed the deal struck in the early hours of yesterday (7 December) by the European Commission, EU Member States and the European Parliament to beef up the EU mercury regulation. This opens the way to the EU now swiftly ratifying the Minamata Convention on Mercury

**Elena Lymberidi-Settimo, Zero Mercury Campaign Project Manager, commented:**

*“We are glad that the provisionally agreed text improves the Commission’s initial proposal. It strengthens the EU mercury regulation and on a number of issues goes beyond the requirements of the Minamata Convention. This sends the right signal to the rest of world that mercury elimination is necessary and possible. The decision to end dental amalgam use in children and pregnant and breastfeeding women is great news, but it is disappointing that a general phase out was not agreed. The failure to end the export of all mercury-added products already prohibited in the EU and mercury use in some processes sooner rather than later also suggests that financial interests still prevailed over health and nature protection for certain issues.”*

In particular the EEB praised the proposed improvements for the management of mercury waste and the fact that liquid mercury waste will have to be converted to a solid form before its final disposal in underground salt mines or in dedicated above ground facilities (with an additional solidification step).

**Lymberidi-Settimo added:**

*“This is a clear gain in terms of environmental protection and reduced risk for future generations.”*

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