



One step closer to toxic free batteries

[Brussels, 20 March 2013] The European Parliament Environment Committee's vote for a phase out of mercury in button cell batteries by 2014 and cadmium in batteries for cordless power tools (CPTs) by 2015 was today welcomed by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and the Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG). Banning mercury in button cell batteries in the EU is an important step towards implementing the provisions of the newly adopted Minamata Convention on Mercury.

Elena Lymberidi-Settimo, EEB Zero Mercury Project Manager said that “Banning these products in the EU would help foster a rapid switch to the manufacture of mercury free products from large global exporters such as China, and reduce the use of mercury in this industry sector.”

With this vote, the EP Environment Committee followed the advice of two Commission funded studies [1] which found strong environmental and economic grounds for banning mercury from button cell batteries and cadmium from CPT batteries with alternatives being widely available within the EU [2].

Although introducing a date for the withdrawal of obsolete products is a positive addition to the directive, the EEB and ZMWG would have preferred a shorter period than the three years post phase out dates that MEPs supported, during which the non-compliant batteries can remain on the market. *“Three years is too long to leave non-compliant products on the shelves after the phase out dates”*, says Stephane Ardit, EEB’s Senior Policy Officer on Products & Waste. *“One year would be plenty of time to sell off any remaining products and would also prevent overproduction of obsolete ‘toxic batteries’ prior to the phase out.”*^[1]

Negotiators from the Council and Parliament will now attempt to reach a first reading agreement on this subject. The EEB will call on them to ensure a final deal will phase out these two toxic substances from batteries by 2014 for mercury and 2015 for cadmium respectively with as short a delay as possible for the withdrawal of obsolete stocks.

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[1] An EC commissioned report (BIOIS 2012) proposed to ban the marketing of mercury –containing button cell batteries in the EU, to reduce the environmental impact from mercury use in these products and their contribution to the overall mercury problem http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/mercury/pdf/Final_report_11.07.12.pdf

[2] The Commission's own Impact Assessment from 2010 showed that appropriate substitutes for cadmium batteries for CPTs are commercially available and already widely used on the EU market <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=SWD :2012:0065:FIN:EN:PDF>

[3] EEB/ZMWG letter to the ENVI committee: [Environment NGOs call for a ban on Cadmium in batteries for cordless power tools \(CPTs\) and on Mercury in button cells batteries](#)

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[BIO IS final Report: Study on the potential for reducing mercury pollution from dental amalgam and batteries, July 2012](#)

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