**EEB/ZMWG Press Release - Berlin, Brussels- 21 February 2020**

**Berlinale 2020 - NGOs: ‘Minamata can be anywhere’**

**Despite new international treaty, stronger action needed to reduce global mercury crisis.**

**Friday 21 February 2020, Brussels, Berlin: Today the world premiere of the new film with Johnny Depp "Minamata" debuts in Berlin. The film is about the mercury catastrophe in the 1950s in Minamata, Japan, in which thousands of people were poisoned and hundreds died.**

**However, research shows that the global mercury crisis persists and is getting worse. With the debut of the ‘Minamata’ film, NGOs are calling for stronger action worldwide to drastically curtail mercury pollution.**

Elena Lymberidi-Settimo, Project Manager at the European Environmental Bureau and International co-coordinator of the Zero Mercury Working Group, said: *"In Minamata, people died from eating highly contaminated fish. Unfortunately, mercury is still being used and released the world over, including from a wide range of everyday products and processes, contaminating the environment, fish and people. Limiting its use would reduce risks, particularly to the most vulnerable people. “*

The European Environment Agency State of the Environment 2020 report confirms that ‘Diffuse pollution remains a problem in Europe. It’s mostly due to […] both historical and current emissions of mercury to the atmosphere and subsequently surface waters.’ However, mercury emissions from outside Europe contribute about 50 % of the anthropogenic mercury deposited annually within Europe, with nearly 30 % of the mercury deposited in Europe originating in Asia. Concerted global action among other nations and the EU is necessary.

Lymberidi-Settimo continues: *“While the global threat of mercury persists, Europe’s steadfast commitment to the Minamata Convention to phase out and limit mercury and its leadership is needed. The challenge now is to ensure that the Minamata Convention is implemented globally to #MakeMercuryHistory.”*

Notes to the editor:

* <https://meta.eeb.org/2020/02/20/mercury-rising-for-johnny-depp/>
* [Minamata Convention on Mercury](http://mercuryconvention.org)
* [European Environment Agency State of the Environment 2020 report](https://www.eea.europa.eu/soer-2020)
* [European Environment Agency Mercury report](https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/mercury-in-europe-s-environment)

The **European Environmental Bureau, (EEB)**, [www.eeb.org](http://www.eeb.org) , is the largest network of environmental citizens‘ organisations. We bring together over 160 civil society organisations from more than 35 European countries. We stand for sustainable development, environmental justice and participatory democracy.

The **Zero Mercury Working Group**(ZMWG), [www.zeromercury.org](http://www.zeromercury.org) , is an international coalition of more than 110 public interest environmental and health non-governmental organizations from over 55 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 and implement the Minamata convention.