Minamata Convention on Mercury

2016/0021(NLE) - 22/03/2017 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the report by Stefan ECK (GUE/NGL, DE) on the draft Council decision on the conclusion on behalf of the European Union of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

The committee recommended the European Parliament to **give its consent** to the conclusion of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

The Minamata Convention on Mercury, adopted on 10 October 2013 in Kumamoto (Japan), is a global treaty under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It is the main international legal framework for cooperation and measures to control and limit the use and anthropogenic emissions of mercury and mercury compounds to air, water and land. With its immensely debilitating health impacts, mercury is among the world's worst pollutants.

The Minamata Convention addresses the whole life cycle of mercury. It provides, for instance, for a ban on new and the phase-out of existing mercury mines, the phase-out and reduction of mercury use in a number of products and processes, control measures on emissions and releases, and the regulation of artisanal and small-scale gold mining. The Convention also addresses the storage of mercury, its disposal as waste, and mercury contaminated sites.

The rapporteur therefore welcomed the draft Council Decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. It considered that the ratification of the Convention will be an important step towards a higher level of protection of human health and the environment from mercury and it will allow the EU to take an active role in shaping a global mercury-free policy.