Minamata Convention on Mercury

2016/0021(NLE) - 11/05/2017 - Final act

PURPOSE: to approve, on behalf of the Union, the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision (EU) 2017/939 on the conclusion on behalf of the European Union of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

CONTENT: with this Decision, the Council **approved, on behalf of the European Union, the Minamata Convention on Mercury**. The EU must now deposit the instrument of approval with the United Nations.

The Convention was adopted in Kumamoto (Japan) under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It provides for a **framework** for the control and limitation of the use, and of anthropogenic emissions and releases, of mercury and mercury compounds to air, water and land, with a view to protecting human health and the environment.

Mercury is a **chemical of global concern** owing to its long-range atmospheric transport.

In its conclusions of the 14 of March 2011, the Council reaffirmed its commitment to the overall objective of protecting human health and the environment from releases of mercury and its compounds by minimising and, where feasible, ultimately eliminating global anthropogenic mercury releases to air, water and land.

The Convention covers the **full life cycle of mercury**. It provides for example:

- a ban new mercury mines and phase-out existing ones;
- restrictions on primary mercury mining and the international trade in mercury;
- control measures on emissions and releases;
- measures to prohibit the manufacture, import or export of mercury-added products;
- measures to phase-out and phase-down the use of mercury in a number of mercury-added products and processes, specifically its use in dental amalgam;
- measures to reduce mercury emissions from artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing;
- measures to ensure the safer storage and proper management of mercury waste to occur in an environmentally sound manner as well as reduce the risks of contaminated sites.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 11.5.2017.