

EU agrees dental amalgam ban in children, pregnant and breastfeeding women

Brussels 8 December 2016,

European civil society has endorsed this week's provisional agreement by the three EU institutions (European Parliament, European Commission and the Council of the European Union) to ban dental amalgam fillings for children under 15 and for pregnant and breastfeeding women as of 1 July 2018.

The text, which must now be approved by both Parliament and Council, also requires each Member State to set a national plan by 1 July 2019 on how it will reduce amalgam use. The Commission will report by mid-2020 on the feasibility of phasing out dental amalgam preferably by 2030 to be accompanied by a legislative proposal, if appropriate. The action is part of a broader package to ratify and implement the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

Charlie Brown, President of the World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry said:

"The children of Europe have won. The next generation in Europe will be safe from mercury dental fillings."

Elena Lymeridi-Settimo of the European Environment Bureau said:

"With this agreement Europe takes an important step towards returning to world leadership in implementing the Minamata Convention. These steps towards a phase out of dental amalgam will now resonate across the world."

U.K. dentist Graeme Munro-Hall, chair of the Transition and Training task force of the World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry, said:

"Amalgam is a primitive polluting device. It is technically inferior to today's modern alternatives. Dentistry's amalgam era is over, a fact embraced enthusiastically by thousands of European dentists and accepted by the others."

Philippe Vandendaele of Health Care Without Harm Europe said:

"We welcome this agreement with mixed feelings. Such a decision should not only lead to a reduction of mercury in the EU, but it is also an open acknowledgement that mercury fillings should not have a place in our society. We regret that the measures for a full phase out of dental amalgam proposed by Stefan Eck (Rapporteur), did not survive the trilogue discussion. It is a missed opportunity to actually reduce the largest presence of mercury in the EU at its very source: dental amalgam."

Genon Jensen of Health and Environmental Alliance said:

"This partial ban on dental amalgams is excellent news, especially for children's health. It will not only help protect the health of mothers and children but also contribute to reducing everyone's environmental exposure to mercury. Several Member States either disallow amalgam use or have already reduced it to less than 10% of all dental fillings. We hope each Member States will now take seriously its duty to reduce amalgam use for everyone."

Notes to the editor:

Mercury and its compounds are highly toxic to humans, especially to pregnant women and the developing nervous system. Amalgam consists of 50% mercury, which under certain conditions can transform to neurotoxic methylmercury.

Joint NGO press release, 29 November 2016, [Civil society calls on EU decision makers to phase out dental amalgam](#)

A Joint NGO letter was sent on 15 November, to [EU Environment ministers](#), to the [EU Health Ministers](#), and to [the European Commission](#).

For more information contact:

Elena Lymberidi-Settimo, Project Coordinator 'Zero Mercury Campaign', European Environmental Bureau, 0032 (0)2 289 1301, elena.lymberidi@eeb.org

Philippa Nuttall Jones, EEB Communications Manager, 0032 (0)2 289 1309, philippa.jones@eeb.org

Philippe Vandendaele, Chemicals Policy Advisor, Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) Europe, 0032 (0) 2503 0481, philippe.vandendaele@hcwh.org

Aidan Long, Press & Communications Officer, HCWH Europe, 0032 (0) 2503 0481 / 0032 (0)465 100 940, aidan.long@hcwh.org

Diana G. Smith, Communications and Media Adviser, Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), 0033 (0)1 55 25 25 84 / 0033 (0)6 33 04 2943, diana@env-health.org