

International Mercury Conference

How to reduce mercury supply and demand



European Commission

Brussels
26-27 October 2006

International mercury conference

How to reduce mercury supply and demand

Brussels, 26-27 October 2006

Centre de Conférences Albert Borschette – Rue Froissart 36

The European Commission is hosting an international conference on managing international supply and demand of mercury. Policy makers, industry representatives, Non Governmental Organisations and scientists will participate in this event. The conference brings together experts and stakeholders from around the world to discuss, in an open dialogue, the way forward to reduce mercury supply and demand.

The Issue at Stake

Mercury is considered a major risk to human health and the environment and is acknowledged as a serious global environmental problem. Mercury emissions into the environment are transported regionally and globally in the atmosphere and mercury and its compounds have numerous and well-documented adverse effects on human and animal health. One of the most critical effects for the general public is widely accepted to be interference with brain development functions in the foetus, resulting in impaired learning ability of the child. Mercury is accumulated in fish and other marine foods and this is the main route of human exposure for those who are not additionally exposed to mercury in the working environment or from local mercury release sources.



The EU's Mercury Strategy

In January 2005, the European Commission presented its Community Mercury Strategy, a comprehensive plan addressing mercury pollution regionally, as well as globally. In the Strategy, the European Commission proposes further restrictions in the use of mercury, and an export ban for metal mercury from the EU. An important feature of the Strategy is support for and promotion of international actions, one element of which is to be reduction of global mercury supply, trade and demand.

The Global Framework and UNEP

The UNEP Governing Council concluded, at its 22nd session in February 2003, that there is sufficient evidence of significant global adverse impacts from mercury to warrant further international action to reduce the risks to humans and wildlife from the release of mercury to the environment. The Governing Council decided that national, regional and global actions should be initiated. A number of such actions at international level were subsequently launched by the UNEP Chemicals division in its Global Mercury Programme. The Governing Council continued its considerations of the mercury issue at its 23rd assembly in 2005, and decided, among other things, to strengthen the mercury programme with more activities, and to assess, at the 24th session of the Governing Council in February 2007, the need for further action on mercury by considering a full range of options, including the possibility of a legally binding instrument, partnerships, and other actions.





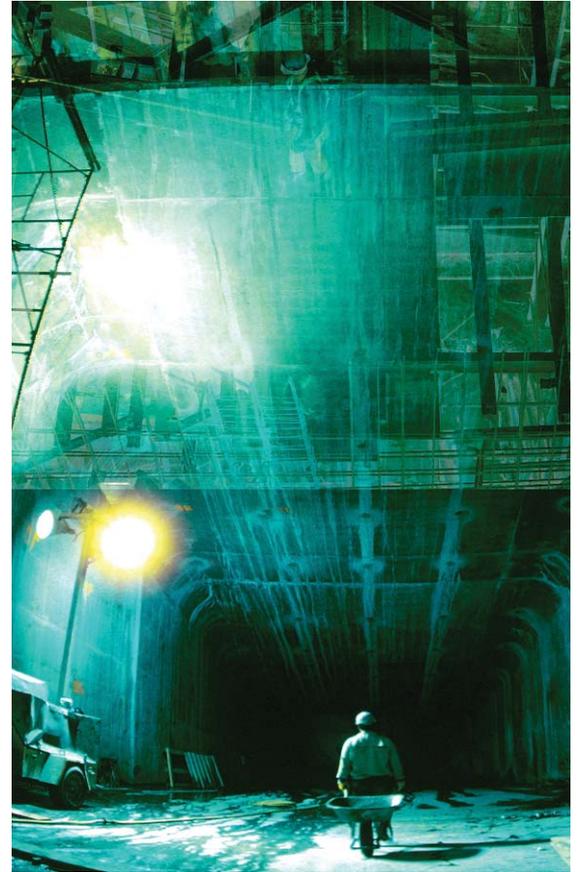
Conference programme and venue

The international conference on Mercury will focus on how to reduce the trade, supply and demand of mercury. The aim is to increase international awareness of mercury issues and to facilitate contacts between mercury producing and exporting countries on the one side, mercury using countries and countries with significant problems resulting from mercury exposure on the other. This should stimulate an informal exchange of views and positions between all parties concerned at government, industry and green NGO level.

Target audience are mercury policy makers, industry and NGOs representatives from around the world. Representatives from countries still mining mercury or using mercury in artisanal and small-scale gold mining are considered as priority target audience.

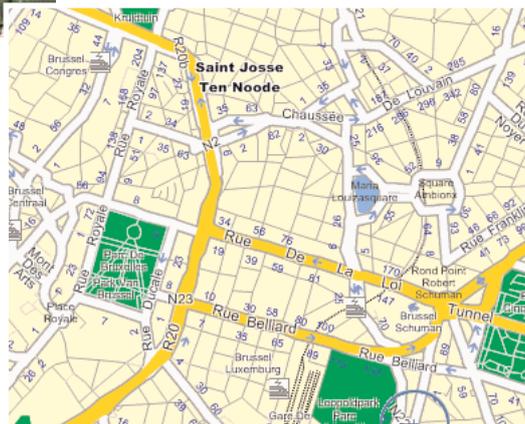
The debate shall be informal. No formal outcome (declaration or resolution) is intended. A summary report on the outcome of the conference shall be submitted to the 24th UNEP Governing Council for information. The one and a half day conference programme will include presentations from a range of key experts and policy makers and provide an excellent opportunity for a lively exchange of perspectives, opinions and scientific expertise.

The aim is not to arrive at a formal set of conclusions, but rather to facilitate an informal and constructive debate. The Commission encourages the participation of government representatives, scientists and other stakeholders.



Participation is free of charge.

The conference will be held in Brussels in the European Commission's Borschette Building (CCAB), Rue Froissart 36, B-1000 Brussels.



PROGRAMME

Thursday 26 October

12.30 – 13.30 Registration Centre de Conférences Albert Borschette 36, rue Froissart

SESSION 0 – OPENING SESSION – SETTING THE STAGE

The International Mercury Conference needs to be positioned within the broader UNEP Framework, the EU's Mercury Strategy and the current EU environmental initiatives that are taken forward by the Presidency and the Commission.

13.30 – 13.50 Mr. Stavros Dimas, European Commissioner in charge of Environmental policies
Setting the Stage in the light of the EC Mercury Strategy

13.50 – 14.10 Ms. Lea Kauppi, Director General, Finnish Environment Institute
Mercury - background for abating mercury pollution

SESSION 1 – WHY DO WE NEED A GLOBAL EFFORT NOW?

Why are global efforts for reduction of demand and supply of mercury needed? What are the adverse health and environmental impacts globally and what are the main sources of the problem? And what do we actually know about the global demand/supply situation for mercury?

Chair/Moderator: Mr. Stefan Scheuer, EU Policy Director, European Environmental Bureau

14.10 – 14.30 Mrs. Milena Horvat, Jozef Stefan Institute, Slovenia
Global cycling and adverse impacts of mercury

14.30 – 15.00 Mr. Michael T. Bender, Mercury Policy Project /Zero Mercury Workgroup
Key Reasons for addressing Mercury now

15.00 – 15.20 Mr. Philippe Grandjean, Professor, University of South Denmark and Harvard University, USA
Newest research findings on Mercury's health effects

15.20 – 15.40 Chinese representative invited
Mercury - in a Chinese perspective

15.40 – 16.15 *Discussion on Impacts of Mercury*

16.15 – 16.45 *Coffee/tea break and informal networking*

16.45 – 17.15 Mr. Peter Maxson, Director Concorde East/West, Brussels, Belgium
Taking stock on the global demand and supply of mercury

17.15 – 17.45 *Discussion on the Mercury Demand and Supply Situation Globally
(with all speakers from this session)*

17.45 – 18.00 Chair: Mr. Stefan Scheuer, EU Policy Director, European Environmental Bureau
Conclusions from this session

20.00 – 22.00 *Cocktail, Dinner and Entertainment In authentic and historic 'Halles St. Géry' ambiance
With "Mankani Quartet"*



Friday 27 October

SESSION 2 – CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES

What are the key challenges and obstacles when addressing mercury? What is the socio-economic significance of mercury for producers, recyclers and suppliers? In particular, what are the challenges in reducing mercury demand and using substitutes in small scale gold mining and other fields in the developing world? Special room will be provided to developing countries.

Chair & Moderator: Mr. Julian Oliver, Secretary General, Euractiv

- 9.10 – 9.20** Mr. Stefan Scheuer, EU Policy Director, European Environmental Bureau
Wrap-up from Session 1
- 9.20 – 09.50** Mr. Kevin Telmer, Associate Professor, University of Victoria, Canada, GEF/UNDP/UNIDO Global Mercury Project
Small scale gold mining - magnitude and challenges worldwide
- 9.50 – 10.10** Ms. Sérgia de Souza Oliveira, Ministry of the Environment, Brazil
Mercury – in a Brazilian perspective
- 10.10 – 10.30** Mr. Satish Sinha, Chief Coordinator, Toxics Link, Delhi, India
Challenges and lessons learned on Mercury substitution in India
- 10.30 - 10.50** Mr. Jaime Alejandro Martinez, Director General, Environmental Quality and Assessment, Ministry of Environment, Madrid, Spain
Expected socio-economic impacts for the Almadén mines
- 10.50 – 11.15** *Coffee/tea break and informal networking*
- 11.15 - 11.35** Mr. Kubanychbek Noruzbaev, Head, Division of Nature Management, Department of Ecology and Nature Kyrgyzstan
Social and economic aspects of reductions of mercury mining in Kyrgyzstan
- 11.35 – 11.55** Ms. Maria Doa, Director, National Program Chemicals Division, Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics, US Environment Protection Agency Representative
Challenges and ways forward in addressing reduction of demand and supply of mercury worldwide
- 11.55 – 12.15** *Discussion on Regulatory/management issues globally and nationally*
- 12.15 – 13.45** *Lunch*

SESSION 3 – STEPS FORWARD IN REDUCING DEMAND AND SUPPLY

How could reduction of demand and supply of mercury be forwarded globally, in an innovative, socially acceptable, cost-effective and sufficient manner? What is the time-scale to consider? What are the substitution and reduction options and solutions to the socio-economic challenges? And what are the regulatory and management solutions nationally and internationally?

Chair/Moderator: Mr. Timo Makela, Director, Sustainable Development & Integration, DG Environment, European Commission

- 13.45 – 14.00** Mr. Julian Oliver, Secretary General, Euractiv
Main Conclusions and Wrap-up from Session 2
- 14.00 – 14.20** Mr. Lars Hylander, Associate Professor, Uppsala University, Sweden
Possibilities for substituting and reducing mercury
- 14.20 – 14.40** Mr. Paul Bardolf, Vice Chairman, Susila Dharma International. Implementing NGO for GEF/UNDP/UNIDO's small scale gold mining project
Ways forward at local level in gold mining communities
- 14.40 – 15.00** Mr. Maged Younes, Director of UNEP Chemicals
Summary of UNEPS' Governing Council considerations and ongoing/planned activities
- 15.00 – 15.30** *Coffee/tea break with Group Discussions on the key question: What are the next steps in addressing Mercury supply and demand?*
- 15.30 – 16.15** *Plenary Discussion*
- 16.15 – 16.45** Chair: Timo Makela /DG Environment
Visions for ways forward in global mercury reductions and Conclusions of the conference
- 17.00** End of the conference



For more information on “International mercury conference”,
check our website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/mercury/conference.htm>

In addition, a month after the International mercury conference, you will be able to find on the
DG Environment website all the presentations of the Conference,
pictures taken during the event and more.



European Commission