



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Brussels, 25 September 2008
13373/08 (Presse 268)

Council adopts rules on EU exports and safe storage for metallic mercury

The Council today¹ adopted a regulation in order to ban exports of metallic mercury and to provide for its safe storage, with a view to reducing risks of exposure to population and to the environment (3638/08).

Under the regulation, the ban will apply to exports of metallic mercury, cinnabar ore, mercury chloride, mercury oxide and mixtures of metallic mercury with other substances, including alloys of mercury, with a mercury concentration of at least 95% weight will be prohibited as from March 2011.

Since this date, mercury stemming from the three major sources – chlor-alkali industry, natural gas cleaning and non-ferrous metal production – will be considered as a waste. Therefore it will have to be safely stored within the EU in order to make sure that it does not re-enter into the internal market.

¹ The decision was taken, without discussion, at the Competitiveness Council meeting. The regulation is deemed adopted after the approval by the Council of all the amendments voted by the European Parliament at second reading under the Council-Parliament codecision procedure.

P R E S S

Mercury has been recognized world wide to be toxic, especially when transformed during its life cycle into methylmercury.

Background

In 2005, the Commission adopted a strategy addressing all aspects of the mercury life cycle made up of twenty actions and, the following year, presented a proposal on the banning of exports and safe storage of metallic mercury (14629/06) in line with two key actions identified in the strategy.

In December 2007, the Council adopted its common position and the Parliament voted in second reading in May 2008.

