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Press release | 12.01.2017

Mercury

Beginning of the end for the use of dental amalgams in the EU

The European Parliament's Environment committee has today voted to approve the new law agreed during interinstitutional negotiations on the Regulation of Mercury. The new law will reduce the trade and use of mercury, the risk of contamination, and bring legislation in line with the Minamata Convention on Mercury signed in 2013.

While the Environment Committee had taken a stronger stance, including a specific timeline for banning the use of mercury in dentistry altogether, the final agreement still represents significant progress.

Green member of the environment committee **Bas Eickhout** said:

"The European Parliament significantly strengthened the Commission proposal on mercury. The revised law is the beginning of the end for the use of dental amalgam in the EU. While Parliament wanted mercury to be banned in dentistry throughout Europe by the end of 2022, the Member States could not agree to this. However, we have obtained a ban on using dental amalgams from July 2018 on children younger than 15 and on pregnant and breast-feeding women. Member States will have to adopt national action plans on the phase-down of mercury in dentistry and the Commission will study the feasibility of a compete phase-out in the long-term, preferably by 2030.

"Importantly, as far as mercury waste is concerned, we put an end to the hazardous temporary storage of liquid mercury underground. Liquid mercury is highly toxic, and thousands of tonnes need to be disposed of in the near future. It would be completely irresponsible to store it underground. Such waste will now have to be converted into a solid before final disposal under strict conditions.

"We also succeeded in imposing a precise date to end the use of mercury as a catalyst to produce biodiesel, as practised by Evonik and BASF in Germany."

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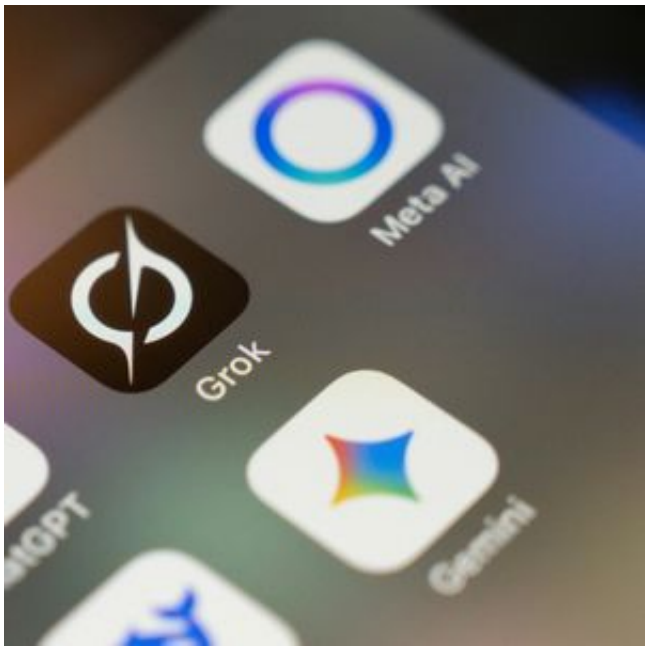


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Responsible MEPs

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