

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Office of the First Vice-President Mr Frans Timmermans

Head of Cabinet

Brussels, 19. 01. 2016
Ares (2015) 5867802

Dear Mr Wates,

The First Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Better Regulation, Interinstitutional Relations, Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, Mr Frans Timmermans, has asked me to thank you, and the co-signatories, very much for your letter of 14 December 2015 concerning the ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury by the EU and its Member States.

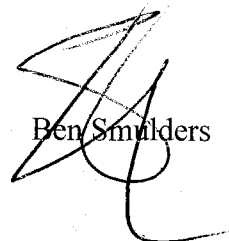
The EU has indeed played an instrumental role in concluding the Convention and is fully committed to its rapid ratification and effective implementation. We agree that a swift ratification by the EU and its Member States can trigger the early entry into force of the Convention that would bring numerous benefits both at European and global level.

Better regulation is among the top priorities for the new Commission, underpinning all new legislative proposals, enhancing transparency and consultation for better EU law making. This may have caused some delay, especially as the new Commission had to go through a prioritisation exercise for all pending legislative proposals. However, we have now gone through that phase and the Commission services are working full speed for the finalisation of the remaining procedural steps.

The Commission intends to present a legislative proposal in early 2016, including a draft Council decision for the ratification. Should co-decision proceed swiftly, the EU should be in a position to ratify end 2016, or early 2017, i.e. prior to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the EEB and your partner organisations for your continued support in this process.

Yours sincerely,



Ben Smulders

Mr Jeremy WATES
Secretary General
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

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