



DET KONGELIGE
MILJØVERNDEPARTEMENT

*Royal Ministry of the Environment
The Minister*

European Commission

Att:

Commissioner Barroso
Commissioner Dimas
Commissioner Wallström

Your ref

Our ref

Date **12 SEPT 2006**

Export of mercury

Dear Commissioners,

Mercury is the most dangerous of the heavy metals, since it is both very toxic, non-degradable and globally mobile. Mercury poses an equivalent threat to human health and the environment as the persistent organic pollutants (POPs) regulated through the Stockholm Convention. The reports of the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme show increasing levels of mercury in the Arctic environment. A legally binding instrument on mercury is therefore necessary, and will be the Norwegian position at the upcoming UNEP Governing Council in February 2007.

I therefore welcome the Community strategy on mercury and the conclusions and comments made by the Council and the European Parliament on this issue.

It has come to my knowledge that the legislative proposal for a ban on mercury exports from the European Community, as outlined in the Community Strategy, Action 5, is delayed.

This proposal would be a significant step towards similar action at the global level. Since timing is of great importance here, I therefore urge the European Commission to move forward on presenting the legislative proposal on an export ban for mercury in the European Community.

Yours sincerely,


Helen Bjørnøy