

Minamata Convention, short report 2023

Answer to question 3.3.i

Description of the endeavours

The Ministry of Environment of Finland has made efforts to identify possible sources of mercury supply and stocks continuously. The mercury related industrial sector in Finland is small and thus the information has been gathered by the government officers with individual direct contacts with the industry stakeholders and companies. The results of these endeavours are not recorded or published in a compiled manner, but the results are reported in the internal memorandums of the Ministry of the Environment to the Parliament and in the Government proposals related to the national legislative acts. The documents are only available in Finnish and partly restricted.

The first endeavour was carried out in 2005 when the European Commission carried out open stakeholder consultations as part of preparations of the Mercury Export Ban Regulation. Further data was collected from EU Member States in 2007, again by the European Commission, for an “Impact assessment to the proposal for a regulation of the European parliament and the Council on the banning of exports and the safe storage of metallic mercury” (SEC (2006) 1369). Finland supported such a legislative act which then entered into force on 22 October 2008 (EC N:o 1102/2008).

In preparations of the current EU Regulation on Mercury (Regulation (EU) 2017/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on mercury, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1102/2008), the European Commission carried out a study on EU implementation of the Minamata Convention. Finland, amongst other countries replied to a questionnaire by the Commission, including information on sources and stocks of mercury. Based on the survey, in 2016 the European Commission carried out an impact assessment on the adaptations of the EU mercury legislation required to comply with the Minamata Convention and enable the EU to ratify it. In this context, the Ministry of the Environment again carried out a survey with the industry in order to respond to the questionnaire and to inform the Parliament on the national implementation of the new EU regulation.

In 2020 an additional effort was made to compile and go through the results of the earlier endeavours and to gather other existing information on mercury.

Results of the endeavours regarding stocks and sources

There are two facilities in Finland which are relevant under this question – a chlor-alkali facility and a zinc smelter. According to EU Regulation on Mercury, mercury from both facilities is considered to be waste and does not enter the market.

The mercury process in the chlor-alkali facility was shut down already in December 2017 as required by EU Regulation on Mercury, but the last shipment of mercury removed from the cells was sent to stabilization and final disposal during the reporting period. The zinc smelter generates mercury, amount of which varies annually. In 2021 and 2022 it exceeded 10 metric tons.