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04. 07. 2007

Ref. : EU Mercury-legislation will reach second reading 12.07.2007

«Letter_opening» «Lastname»,

in October last year we asked you and some of your colleagues for your support before the first reading, to ensure that antique mercury barometers in museums, technical collection and with private collectors could have a future in Europe to be maintained.

Our request was honoured, for which we are truly grateful; mercury barometers and old (50 years and more) mercury containing measure instruments are restricted from the ban. Also the production of new barometers was, though restricted and licensed. A very wise decision, we think, with which all parties could have lived.

If, - yes if not a mysterious power in the back would have pulled some strings to make a change in the text which will put an end to new production within two years time. After this time what then, I ask you?

Looking national this does not affect Germany and the most other European countries, as there are, at least officially, no manufactories for mercury barometers left in Germany. But nowadays we should think European, and so I feel once again forced to warn you for a fatal mistake which Europe is making if the production of mercury barometers is to be forbidden.

We, “friends of old weather instruments” are a webportal for German speaking collectors with world-wide reputation and advise our friends from the beginning for dealing with mercury without danger and with regard for the environment.

Mercury is the heaviest liquid element and is obviously toxic, that’s why it should be in the hands of professionals. Barometer and instrument makers which use mercury on a daily basis are such professionals.

A liter water weighs 1 kilogram, a liter mercury weighs 13,6 kilogram. The yearly demand for mercury for new mercury barometers and repair is 200 kg for whole Europe, about 15 liter bottles. This is very little compared with the 200.000 kg the industry uses. These 200 kg are not "wasted". The 200 kg, regained from recycling is just put from one container (bottle) in an another glass container (the barometer) . If serviced well this mercury will never come in the waste circuit.

This shows how little the impact of the ban has on the reducing of the mercury pollution. The great European scientists like Torricelli, Huygens, Hooke, Amontons and many others whose names are connected to the history of European barometers would turn in their grave for such stupidity.

The result will be, that the few manufactures that still exist (France 1, Belgium 1, Netherlands 2, England 5, Portugal 1) will have to close there businesses. Service points and all the know how of dealing with mercury barometers will disappear.

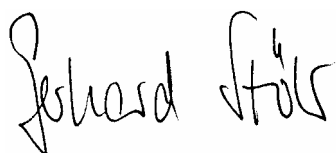
Defect barometers will end in the dump or on attics and in barns, spilling their mercury around. Consumers will have to look for illegal workshops in garages and basements by hearsay or internet tips. Maintenance and production will go from professionals in to the hand of amateurs.

If Europe wants a controlled waste management for mercury, which I think is obvious, a network of service points and collecting points is necessary. In this chain, the traditional barometer makers and his widespread dealership are very important. It would be a great mistake not to use this network but to kill it by European law.

I hope that I have been to the point and that my information, so short for the decisive term, will make you aware of the problems. Please discuss it with your colleagues because every vote counts.

«Text_1» please make your personal decision on July 12, follow your conscious for the well-being of European citizens. Please think of the group of traditional barometer makers with a more than 350 years European history of craftsmanship who are well aware of the dangers of mercury pollution and are willing, as they have been for years, to help dispose mercury waste. Don't waste this capital of knowledge and recycle resource.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gerhard Stöhr". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Gerhard Stöhr
<http://www.freunde-alter-wetterinstrumente.de>.