

## Fact sheet for MEP's

# EEC Directive will ban an exemplary green product in the name of environmental benefit.

**Mercury barometers, which have been made in Europe for more than 350 years without any significant proof to cause hazard for the well-being of human beings or contributing to the existing mercury waste problem will be banned if an EEC Parliamentary amendment tabled by Martin Callanan does not succeed its second reading in the middle of November.**

We need your vote for this amendment, please read the following 10 reasons why mercury barometers should **not** be added to the list of mercury-filled products to be banned.

1. **Product.** A mercury barometer is a long lasting instrument that can function for centuries, if serviced once in approximately every fifty years. The numerous numbers of antique barometers still around prove this statement. Repair, recycling is easy and relatively cheap. Breaking is a thing that hardly happens, in which case the spilled mercury can be collected easily and without harm and can be used again to be filled in the same instrument. In contrary to the alternatives (digital) a mercury barometer does not use energy and does not cause e-waste. All together a mercury barometer is a green product that should not be banned for environmental reasons.
2. **Manufactures.** Mercury barometers are made by people that also do repair, service and give information to the public. They take in waste mercury and broken down instruments from third parties (laboratory's, industry and public). This logical and economic mercury-waste intake would be stopped abruptly. A covenant with the manufactures, as done with batteries, would be much more effective to stop the mercury-waste.
3. **European Heritage.** The old craftsmanship of the barometer maker which has a European tradition since 1644 will disappear. The barometer is historically connected to great European names like Torricelli, Boyle, Decarte, Huygens, von Guericke, Hooke and Fahrenheit.
4. **mercury figures.** New mercury barometers made in all of Europe use only about a maximum of 560 kg of mercury of which most is collected and recycled from other sources. Compared to the estimated total of 200.000 kg. a year used for all mercury measure devices the use in barometers is less than marginal.
5. **waste problems.** The banning of new mercury barometers will not stop already made ones to exist. An estimate of over a million barometers (barometers were made from the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century till today and they don't wear out) are still around. If the manufactures with their skills and specialist knowledge will disappear to prevent them from coming in the common waste streams a problem will be created.

6. **illegal trading.** To make a barometer you have to have skills but no great investments or facility is needed. Stopping the controlled manufactures will make way for illegal production in barns and attics by non-professionals.
7. **the future.** Those in favour of a ban on barometers think this will eventually lead to the intake of all existing mercury barometers in the future. This is a very simplistic and wrong presumption. Barometers are expensive (200 to 1000 euro a piece) Antique ones are much more expensive and very sought after. Most people come by a barometer by heritage, gift or bought it on a special occasion (marriage, jubilee etc) so it has a strong emotional value. The presumption that this will end recollectd by mercury intake places is wrong. If it becomes unfunctional it could end in a closet or on an attick where mercury spills can cause environmental problems.
8. **ecomical.** Banning the mercury barometer would not only have a great financial impact on the manufactures but also to there clients, the dealers. If sale is forbidden their stock will become worthless. How must this be compensated? A mercury barometer that does not function loses value. This could have a great financial impact on the trade of antique barometers. Antique dealers and investors are faced up to loss of capital. How will the EEC will deal with this?
9. **fairness.** Mercury emission to the environment is a severe problem. There is no scientific study to state that mercury barometers have any contribution to this problem. The real polluters are well known: industrial products, alkali industry, amalgam in human teeth, coal burning etc. It is unfair to ban an innocent product because of the problems causes by others. The simple facts that it contains mercury and that there are alternatives available does not justify a severe measurement like a ban.
10. **common sense.** Please vote for the derogation by Martin Callanan November 13.