

**Question for written answer P-012141/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Karima Delli (Verts/ALE)

Subject: EU response to health risks posed by mercury in dental amalgams

The Minamata Convention on Mercury was adopted in October 2013 and is due to be ratified shortly by the European Union. Under the Convention signatories are required to phase down the use of dental amalgams, which consist of 50 % mercury. However more is needed to provide long-term protection for dentists and dental assistants exposed to mercury vapours in their surgeries.

A publication in 2003 by the INRS, the French Occupational Safety Research Institute, stated that dental practitioners have a high level of exposure to mercury vapours, particularly when working on patients' fillings and when standing or sitting next to amalgam separators that are inadequately sealed. Many scientific articles have proven that mercury vapours are at the root of a variety of disorders, notably neurocognitive ones, in dentists and that they affect the fertility of women dentists and women dental assistants in particular. Therefore, for the good of these EU workers, can the Commission answer the following:

1. What is the Commission's position regarding this health risk? What measures is it considering to tackle them? Is the Commission considering banning mercury in dental amalgams? If not, why not?
2. Does the Commission believe the dental professions can be made to adopt practices that will protect them when working on old fillings? Is it planning to take measures to make them comply with these practices? If not, what alternative measures is it considering adopting?
3. Will the Commission launch the EU Strategy on Health and Safety at Work again for the period 2014-2020 in order, in particular, to take stock of chemical health hazards at work?