

**Experience of the Slovak Republic  
regarding promotion  
of the principles of the Aarhus  
Convention in the processes  
of preparation, accession  
and implementation  
the Minamata Convention on  
Mercury**

## **Rights under the Aarhus Convention and the Constitution of the Slovak Republic**

The Slovak Republic is one of the Party to the Aarhus Convention and based **on the article 3 paragraph 7** of the Aarhus Convention, Slovakia as other Parties to the Aarhus Convention shall **promote the Convention's principles in international forums.**

The Slovak Republic also fully realised the nature and importance of the basic human rights as **the right to protection of health and the environment** and it guarantees them in the **Constitution of the Slovak Republic (Constitutional Act No. 460/1992 Coll. Constitution of the Slovak Republic).**

The Constitution of the Slovak Republic specifies Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, concretely in:

- **Article 40** of the Constitution declares **the right for everyone to health.**
- **Article 44 paragraph 1** declares **the right for everyone to a favorable environment.**
- **Article 45** declares **the right for everyone to receive timely and complete information on the state of the environment and the causes and consequences of it.**

*Publicly available at:*

<http://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/1992-460>

<http://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/1992-460#hlava2>

# Public access to mercury information

The implementation of articles of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic is realized through a system of interconnected measures and activities, especially at the level of the Parliament, the Government and competent ministries.

The Parliament and the Government are publishing the agenda, the materials discussed and the resolutions adopted on their websites, thus providing the public with information about their activities in the field of mercury.

*Relevant websites:*

<https://www.nrsr.sk/web/>

<http://www.rokovania.sk/Rokovanie.aspx>

In addition the Parliament, the Government and competent ministries are also informing the public about regular briefings, attended by journalists who inform the public about the activities and documents they are discussing.

# Responsible authorities of the Slovak Republic

The authorities of the Slovak Republic responsible and competent for the mercury issues are four central bodies - ministries:

- **Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic**
- **Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic**
- **Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic**
- **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic**

**Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic** is responsible for legislation on chemicals which also includes mercury (REACH legislation).

**Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic** is responsible for environmental legislation and in the area of the mercury pollutant determines its limit concentrations in air and surface waters; under the EIA and PRTR procedure allows production processes using mercury and its compounds and determines the conditions of their operation and also determines ways in the field of waste management of wastes containing mercury and specifying the methods of temporary and permanent storage of mercury.

**Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic**, in its legislation, monitors the limit concentrations of mercury in drinking water, bathing water and for recreational purposes.

**Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic** is responsible for the solution of issue of mercury pollution in soils and is also responsible for determining the limit concentrations of mercury in food.

# Ways of public access to mercury information provided by responsible ministries

**Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic** provides information especially through internet and the information systems. There are 33 publicly accessible systems focused on various areas of environment.

All of them are available from one **on-line access point – Enviroportal** which is the most visited portal about environment and it serves as a basic platform for publishing outputs of information systems and provides daily updated and reliable information as well as quality-assured data including data of mercury.

The Ministry prepares annually a report called State of the Environment Report of the Slovak Republic which is also publicly accessible on the Enviroportal and this annual report includes information on the status and development trends of mercury pollution in air and surface water.

Relevant website:

<https://www.enviroportal.sk/spravy/kat21>



The screenshot shows the Enviroportal website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo 'enviroportal' and the text 'Informačný portál rezortu MŽP SR'. Below the navigation bar, there are several menu items: 'Environmentálne témy', 'Agendy', 'Informačné a monitorovacie systémy ŽP', 'Dokumenty', 'Videotéka', and 'Pýtate sa'. The main content area features a large banner for 'Prémyselné emisie 2016' with a photo of industrial smokestacks. Below the banner, there are several news items and event listings. One news item is titled 'L. Sólvyms: Obchodovanie so vzácnymi druhmi živočíchov a rastlín' and another is 'Ochrana morských druhov, tropického dreva, slonoviny či nosorožcov je páčivou témou debat v juhovýchodnom Johanesburgu'. There are also event listings for 'Priemyselné emisie 2016' and 'EKO Inovačné Slovensko'.

Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic provides the National Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) which, in addition to pollution prevention and control, also determines the conditions of operation of mercury production processes and its compounds in the mercury sector.

This register is publicly accessible on the ministry website:

<http://www.minzp.sk/sekcie/temy-oblasti/integrovana-prevencia-kontrola-znecistovania/narodny-register-znecistovania/>

## Ways of public access to mercury information provided by responsible ministries

**Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic** and its subordinate organization **The Chemicals and Preparations Center** is responsible for the preparation and implementation of chemical legislation on the placing on the market of substances, mixtures, detergents and biocidal products, and also provides mercury activities in fulfilling the tasks arising from REACH and CLP.

*Relevant website:*

<http://www.cchlp.sk/>

**Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic** monitors the quality of drinking water for the consumer and the quality of water for bathing and recreational purposes, and evaluates the pollution of these waters, both in terms of the occurrence and content of mercury.

*Relevant websites:*

<http://pitnavoda.enviroportal.sk/informacie-o-kvalite-pitnej-vody>

[http://www.uvzsr.sk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=156&Itemid=65](http://www.uvzsr.sk/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=156&Itemid=65)

[http://www.uvzsr.sk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2599&Itemid=66](http://www.uvzsr.sk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2599&Itemid=66)

**Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic** monitors food quality and also monitors mercury and publishes results of food quality analyzes in determining the occurrence and content of heavy metals in food.

*Relevant websites:*

<http://www.mpsr.sk/>

[http://www.slpk.sk/eldo/ax\\_10/sekcia3/05.pdf](http://www.slpk.sk/eldo/ax_10/sekcia3/05.pdf)

[www.mpsr.sk/download.php?fID=8951](http://www.mpsr.sk/download.php?fID=8951)

<http://www.mpsr.sk/index.php?ps=10&q=ortu%C5%A5+v+potravin%C3%A1ch&navID=45&pa=20&o=0&m=all&wm=wr&t=MPSR>

# Public participation in mercury decision-making processes

## *Subnational level*

The Slovak Republic was involved in five years process of the Minamata Convention text preparation through Intergovernmental negotiation committee with the possibility of influence the final text of the Convention directly by participation at the negotiation process and by the mechanism of expert groups of relevant stakeholders. Not only representatives of national delegations but also representatives of non-governmental organizations were involved directly in the preparation of the Minamata Convention text, by participation at five meetings of the International Negotiation Committee and could influence the preparation of Convention text. At the First meeting of the Minamata Convention parties, approximately 30% of all participants represented international NGOs and other international organizations (such as OECD, WHO, environmental and health non-governmental organizations ZERO MERCURY WORKING GROUP and others). International NGOs have had the opportunity to directly influence the Minamata Convention, and thus have participated in decision-making processes in the field of mercury at the international level.

Results of negotiation process was continuously negotiated at Slovak national level with relevant stakeholders including not only the experts from ministries but also relevant stakeholders from industry and non-governmental organizations (including environmental NGOs).

The Slovak Republic is also a one of the European Union Member State and based on this fact, we also coordinated with the EU and its Member States the Minamata Convention preparation, accession, implementation and signature processes, by using the existing EU Council and Commission bodies and working groups.

## ***National level***

During the negotiation process of drafting the text of the Minamata Convention, a working group of representatives of the relevant ministries, as well as of the non-governmental organizations represented by representatives of the Chemical Industry Union and the Chamber of Dentists, as well as producers of mercury and its compounds, was created at national level.

Representatives of non-governmental organizations and producers could use this working group to influence the text of the Minamata Convention as well as the prepared European and Slovak legislation on mercury. This working group is currently addressing the implementation of the Minamata Convention obligations as well as the implementation of the mercury obligations of the Slovak Republic resulting from the current EU legislation, Directive No 852/2017 on mercury.

The general public was regularly informed by the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic through briefings and media communications about the Minamata Convention activities and negotiation results. Meetings were organized with relevant stakeholders, producers and associations (such as association of the chemical industry, dentists) and NGOs.

In addition to being able to influence the text of the Minamata Convention, representatives of non-governmental organizations and the public have continued to be involved in mercury decision-making processes, including by raising comments on the submission of materials to the Government and the Parliament. Three documents have been submitted to the Government and the Parliament in the last period:

- Proposal to sign the Minamata Convention
- Proposal to ratify the Minamata Convention
- and Proposal for the participation of the Slovak Republic at the first meeting of the Minamata Convention.

Currently, the Proposal for the participation of the Slovak Republic at the second meeting of the Parties to the Minamata Convention is being prepared for the Government's negotiation. Preparation process of the proposal included publicly available documentation for decision making process for the second meeting of the Minamata Convention at level of the Government, with possibility of influencing the decision making process by general public, NGOs and other relevant organizations.



# Thank you for your attention

For more information please contact:

**Tatiana Tökolyová**

Slovak National Focal Point

Ministry of Environment

of the Slovak Republic

[tatiana.tokolyova@enviro.gov.sk](mailto:tatiana.tokolyova@enviro.gov.sk)