

PARCOM Decision 82/1 on New Chloralkali Plants using Mercury Cells

(Source: PARCOM 4/9/1, paras 3.5-3.8)

3.5 In conclusion, the Commission decided that authorisations for new plants may be granted by all Contracting Parties only if such authorisations contain a reference to the standards corresponding to the best technical means available for preventing discharges of mercury. Whatever the method it adopts, the Contracting Party, where for technical reasons the intended measures do not conform to the best technical means available, shall provide the Commission, before an authorisation, with the justifications for these reasons. The Commission will at its next meeting examine the justifications given. The Paris Commission stated that the application of the best technical means available makes it possible to limit discharges of mercury from the site of a new industrial plant using the recycled-brine process to less than 0.5 g/tonne of installed chlorine production capacity.

3.6 The Commission confirmed that these arrangements for the authorisation of new plants should be applied by all Contracting Parties whether they follow the EQO or the UES approach.

3.7 The Commission confirmed that its decision would be effective from 1 July 1982. It also clarified its intention that by “new plant” it meant, on the one hand, an industrial plant which becomes operational after 1 July 1982 and, on the other hand, an existing industrial plant whose capacity for the electrolysis of alkali chlorides is substantially increased after 1 July 1982.

3.8 Furthermore, the Commission agreed that when the construction of new plants is being considered, the use of mercury-free technology, in particular membrane cells should be encouraged whenever circumstances permit. The Commission also agreed that it would consider at its meeting in 1985 whether stricter rules, including the possibility of prohibiting the use of mercury cells, would then be appropriate.