

**FOURTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE  
MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE  
CONVENTION ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN  
DECISION-MAKING AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN ENVIRONMENTAL  
MATTERS (AARHUS CONVENTION)<sup>1</sup>**

Palais des Nations, Geneva  
28 June 2019

**REPORT OF THE MEETING**

**ATTENDANCE:**

*Bureau members:* Ms. Maia Bitadze (Georgia, Chair), Ms. Nicolette Bouman (Netherlands, Vice-Chair), Ms. Malaj Enkelejda (Albania), Ms. Chiara Landini (Italy), Ms. Maryna Shimkus (Ukraine).

*Observers:* Mr. Jeremy Wates (NGO observer, European Environmental Bureau (EEB) representing European ECO Forum), Mr. Adam Nagy (European Union) for Ms. Angelika Wiedner (European Union); and Mr. Jan Darpö, Chair of the Task Force on Access to Justice and Ms. Anna Josefsson, a representative of Sweden, for agenda item 2.

*Apologies:* Ms. Beate Berglund Ekeberg (Norway, Vice-Chair), Ms. Angelika Wiedner (European Union).

**I. OPENING AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

1. The Bureau took note of an introduction by the Chair and adopted the provisional agenda of the meeting.

**II. MANDATE OF THE TASK FORCE ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

2. At the request of the Chair of the Task Force on Access to Justice, the Bureau considered the issue of mandate of the Task Force in relation to an analytical study on information cases, which is being prepared under the Task Force's auspices. The Bureau exchanged initial views on this item, focusing on the scope of the mandate as laid down in decision VI/3.<sup>2</sup> The Bureau agreed to continue deliberating on this matter after the meeting, including at a tele/audio meeting in September 2019.

**III. MATTERS RELATED TO ARTICLE 3.8 OF THE CONVENTION**

3. The Bureau considered a letter received from the Chair of the Ecoforum of NGOs of Kazakhstan concerning potential harassment of environmental activists in Kazakhstan and allegations of non-compliance by Kazakhstan with article 3.8 of the Convention. The Bureau agreed to send a letter to Kazakhstan as to seek clarifications regarding those allegations.<sup>3</sup>

4. Pursuant to relevant discussions at the 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Convention's Working Group of the Parties and the discussion on the previous item (see para. 3), the Bureau considered the issue of a rapid response mechanism under the Convention, as highlighted by

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<sup>1</sup> This document was not formally edited.

<sup>2</sup> See

[https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/mop6/Decison\\_Excerpts\\_EN/AarhusConv\\_MoP6\\_Decision\\_VI\\_3\\_AJ\\_e.pdf](https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/mop6/Decison_Excerpts_EN/AarhusConv_MoP6_Decision_VI_3_AJ_e.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> See (tab "Correspondence"): <https://www.unece.org/env/pp/bureau.html>.

NGOs during the meeting, to deal with cases related to article 3.8 of the Convention. The Bureau requested the secretariat to prepare a note on this subject for its next meeting, including *inter alia* various options and examples of such mechanisms under other treaties and relevant international instruments, and an estimation of possible financial implications.

#### **IV. FINANCIAL REPORTING**

5. Pursuant to the request of the Bureau made at its 43<sup>rd</sup> meeting,<sup>4</sup> the secretariat reported about steps taken by UNECE to address the Bureau concerns related to financial reporting. In this regard, the secretariat reported that UNECE recognises this challenge and is exploring a possibility to find a solution (through Umoja, a UN-wide electronic administrative system) so as to allow to produce reports that serve the needs of Member States. Such solution is currently planned to be implemented by the end of the year.

#### **V. CLOSING**

6. The Chair thanked the Bureau for its constructive work and the secretariat for its support and closed the meeting.

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<sup>4</sup> See Report of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bureau meeting, paragraph 6, available at:  
[https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/bureau/ACB-43\\_meeting\\_report.pdf](https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/bureau/ACB-43_meeting_report.pdf)