

# Introduction to the Workshop

Workshop on Electronic Information Tools to Support the Implementation of the Aarhus Convention in South-Eastern Europe

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# Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

- Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration
- Open for signature at Aarhus, Denmark, 25 June 1998
- **Entry into force: 30 October 2001**
- Objective: *“In order to contribute to the protection of the right of every person of present and future generations to live in an environment adequate to his or her health and well-being, each Party shall guarantee the **rights of access to information, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters in accordance with the provisions of this Convention**”*



## Right of Access to Information and Public Participation in decision-making

- **Right of Access to Environmental Information:**
  - Everyone without stating an interest
  - Upon request (Art 4)
  - Restrictive interpretation of exceptions and test of public interest served by disclosure
  - Active collection and dissemination (Art. 5)
- **Right of Public Participation:**
  - Public concerned
  - In decisions on specific activities (Art. 6 + Annex I – List of activities)
  - Concerning plans, programmes and policies relating to the environment (Art. 7)
  - During the preparation of executive regulations and/or generally applicable legally binding normative instruments (Art. 8)



## Right of Access to Justice

- Access to information review procedure (Art. 9 (1))
- Public participation in decision making-process review procedure (Art. 9 (2))
- Breach of national environmental legislation administrative or judicial procedures (Art. 9 (3))
- Adequate and effective remedies, including injunctive relief and be fair, equitable, timely and not prohibitively expensive. Decisions of courts shall be publicly accessible. (Art. 9 (4))
- Information to the public and assistance mechanisms to remove or reduce financial and other barriers (Art. 9 (5))



## **Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters**

40 Signatories - **44 Parties**: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, European Union, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland



## Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers Protocol to the Aarhus Convention

- Art. 5 (9) and art. 10 (2) of the Aarhus Convention
- Adopted on 21 May 2003 by the Extraordinary Meeting to the Parties to the Aarhus Convention in Kiev from 21-23 May 2003
- Open for signature at Kiev, Ukraine, 21 May 2003
- **Entry into force: 8 October 2009**
- Objective: “(...) to enhance public access to information through the establishment of coherent, integrated, nationwide pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTRs) in accordance with the provisions of this Protocol, which could facilitate public participation in environmental decision-making as well as contribute to the prevention and reduction of pollution of the environment”



## **Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers Protocol to the Aarhus Convention**

**38 Signatories - 27 Parties:** Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland



## **Electronic information tools**

Art. 5(3) of the Convention:

Each Party shall ensure that environmental information progressively becomes available in electronic databases which are easily accessible to the public through public telecommunications networks.





## Electronic Information Tools Task Force

- 1st MoP – Decision I-6 - Promoting the use of electronic and other information tools (2002)
- 2nd MoP – Decision II-3 on Electronic Information Tools and the Clearinghouse Mechanism, including Recommendations on the more effective use of electronic information tools to provide public access to environmental information (2005)
- 3rd MoP – Decision III-2 – Electronic Information Tools and the Clearinghouse Mechanism (2008)



The Clearinghouse showcases information on laws and practices relevant to the public's right to:

- ▶ access environmental information
- ▶ participate in environmental decision-making
- ▶ achieve justice on environmental matters



### Which type of resource?

Events



### What is the purpose?

Access to Information



### Who is the source?

Government



### Where in the world?

AFRICA



▶ [Advanced search...](#)

### Convention News

Nuclear power, mining and road disputes dominate Aarhus Compliance Committee hearings. 27 Mar 2010

Austria becomes 25th Party to the Kiev Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers. 25 Mar 2010

### New Resources

**United States** | National Broadband Plan: Connecting America  
*Federal Communications Commission (FCC), 2010*

**United States** | Greening Justice: Creating and Improving Environmental Courts and Tribunals interactive book launch  
*World Resources Institute, 2010*

## Welcome to PRTR.net

This website provides a global portal to Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) information and activities from countries and organisations around the world. The website aims to assist countries in the development, implementation and improvement of PRTR programmes.

It has been developed and is maintained by the Task Force on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Environment Programme / GRID-Arendal.

### What is a PRTR?

A Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) is a national or regional environmental database or inventory of potentially hazardous chemical substances and/or pollutants released to air, water and soil and transferred off-site for treatment or disposal.

- The industrial or business facilities quantify and report the amounts of substances released to each environmental medium (air, water, soil) or transferred off-site for waste management or wastewater treatment.
- Some PRTRs also include estimates of releases from diffuse sources, such as agriculture and transport and from the end use of products. These data are normally compiled by environmental authorities.

PRTRs provide public access to data via the Internet, CD-ROMs, publications and annual reports.

- PRTR data may be presented geographically, either in a fixed form or interactively on Internet;
- PRTR data may be presented by industry sectors, by facility, by a chemical substance or groups of substances;
- Additional information is often provided to help better understand the PRTR data;
- National PRTRs may vary in terms of the hazardous chemicals and pollutants reported, industry or business categories that must report and the destination of releases.

### PRTR in the news

#### [Parliament urged to be tough on IPPC](#)

ENDS Europe (subscription)

Rather than spending years conducting impact assessments to determine where to apply such limits, the EU should use the available E-PRTR data

#### [UN agreement to allow people to check](#)

Spero News

The 2003 Kiev Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

(PRTR) entered into force last October and currently, 23 countries and the European ...

#### [Umweltinformationen österreichischer](#)

oekonews.at

Im österreichischen

Schadstofffreisetzungs- und

Verbringungsregister PRTR (Pollutant Release and Transfer Register) macht das Umweltbundesamt ...

#### [España, elegida miembro del Bureau](#)

ABC.es

El Protocolo sobre Emisiones y Transferencias de Contaminantes, conocido como Protocolo PRTR (Pollutant Releases and Transfers Registers, en inglés), ...

[Related Articles »](#)



## Objectives of this Workshop

- Build capacities on the use of EIT when implementing the Aarhus Convention
- Promote the implementation of existing good practices and recommendations
- Facilitate the exchange of experiences
- Provide responses to specific and practical implementation questions
- Train participants on how to use and contribute to the Aarhus Clearinghouse



**Thank you for your participation!**

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Aarhus Convention website:

<http://www.unece.org/env/pp/welcome.html>

Aarhus Clearinghouse:

<http://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org>

<http://aarhusclearinghouse.org>

PRTR.net: <http://www.prtr.net>