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Ministry of the Environment
Environmental Assessment Division

UNECE Secretariat
Espoo Convention
Environment Division
Palais des Nations
8–14 avenue de la Paix
CH-1211 Geneva 10

Dear Mr. Romas Svedas, Chair of the Implementation Committee,

Thank you for your letter concerning the Swedish responses to the questionnaires for the report of Sweden on the implementation of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo, 1991) and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Kyiv, 2003).

Sweden has been requested to provide clarifications on how Sweden as an affected party ensures public involvement in the environmental impact assessment procedure under articles 3 (8) and 4 (2) of the Convention.

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) is the designated competent authority according to article 1 (ix) of the Convention. In the Swedish Ordinance (2017:966) on Environmental Assessment it is stipulated in Section 24 that the SEPA has the responsibility to perform the obligations set out in article 2 (4–6), article 3 (1–3, 5–8), article 4 (2) and article 5–7 of the Convention and article 10 of the Protocol.

When SEPA is notified of a proposed activity from a part of origin, SEPA considers if there is certain part of the public, normally in a specific geographic region, which is subject to direct impact. SEPA announces information about proposed projects with significant adverse transboundary effect in its website. Information is given about the procedure and the possibility for the public to make comments.

Information about notifications on proposed activities with significant adverse transboundary effect is also announced in media. When there is a certain part of the public likely to be affected, information is announced in the local newspaper. The announcement to the public includes brief information about the project and where further information can be found. Information is also given about the procedure and how to make comments. When transboundary impact is likely to affect a broader public, information is announced in national newspapers. Environmental organizations meeting the requirements under Swedish law that might have an interest in the activity and its consequences are always being informed directly.

The public is always given the possibility to make written comments. There is not an obligation in Swedish legislation of always arranging public hearings when Sweden is an affected party. Such obligation neither exists in the Convention. However, SEPA is always discussing with local authorities and the party of origin about the practicalities around ensuring the public of the affected party the possibilities of receiving information, making comments and objections. If and how public hearings are being arranged is decided on a case by case basis, often in cooperation with the country of origin.

Public hearings are arranged in Sweden when found to be the most suitable alternative. In some cases, when a public hearing is arranged in the party of origin and the geographical distance is short, it has been found suitable and sufficient to invite the Swedish public to the public hearing of the party of origin. Interpretation is then being arranged.

In the light of the above, we believe that the Swedish implementation of the Convention ensures public involvement in the environmental impact assessment under articles 3 (8) and 4 (2) of the Convention. Should you need any further information on the matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Anna Berglund

Focal Point for Administrative Matters regarding the Espoo Convention