

**PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION ON ADMISSIBILITY OF COMMUNICATION
CONCERNING ALLEGED VIOLATION OF THE CONVENTION BY ALBANIAN
AUTHORITIES IN A DECISION-MAKING ON PLANNING OF AN INDUSTRIAL
PARK IN VLORA (REF. ACCC/C/2005/12)**

May 24, 2005

Background to the determination

Before considering the substantive merits of any communication, the Committee needs to decide whether to accept the communication, taking into account the admissibility criteria set out in paragraph 20 of the annex to decision I/7. According to paragraph 20, the Committee must take into account whether the communication is:

- (a) anonymous,
- (b) an abuse of the right to make such a communication,
- (c) manifestly unreasonable, or
- (d) incompatible with the provisions of decision I/7 or with the Convention.

A further possible criterion is:

- (e) lack of relevance to the subject matter of the Convention

In addition, the Committee, in its paper on communications from the public, identified two further criteria for deeming a communication inadmissible:

- (f) when the communication is made with respect to a State which is not a Party to the Convention, or where the significant events with which the communication is concerned occurred before the Convention had entered into force for the Party, and
- (g) when the communication is made with respect to a Party which has opted out of having communications from the public concerning its compliance considered by the Committee.

Should the Committee find that a communication falls under one of these criteria, it may find it inadmissible.

Furthermore, in accordance with paragraph 21 of the annex to decision I/7, the Committee “should at all relevant stages take into account any available domestic remedy unless the application of the remedy is unreasonably prolonged or obviously does not provide an effective and sufficient means of redress”. The Committee’s view is that this provision does not imply any strict requirement that all domestic remedies must be exhausted, i.e. the Committee would not be precluded from considering a case even where the application of the remedy was not unreasonably prolonged. On the other hand, the failure by a communicant to make use of available domestic remedies might be grounds for the Committee to advise that the matter be pursued at the level of domestic procedures rather than (for the time being) through the compliance mechanism.

The communication in question does not provide sufficient information to enable the Committee to evaluate the extent to which domestic remedies were used. The Committee considers it important to establish:

1. whether domestic judicial or similar remedies exist or not,
2. whether such remedies were used by the communicant or not,
3. whether, if such remedies were not used, it was because they would unreasonably prolong protection of the communicant's asserted rights or because they would obviously not provide an effective and sufficient means of redress (see paragraph 21 of the annex to decision I/7),
4. whether such domestic judicial or similar remedies are adequate under Article 9 of the Convention

and hereby invites the communicant to provide this information in addition to the other information requested by the secretariat on 27 April 2005.

Preliminary determination

Having considered the communication, the preliminary view of the Committee is that it does not fall under any of the four negative criteria listed in paragraph 20 of the annex to decision I/7. The communication is not anonymous and the contact information for the communicant is provided. The Committee does not find that the communication represents an abuse of the right to make communications, or that it is manifestly unreasonable. Nor does the content of the communication, or the process through which it has been submitted, appear to be incompatible with the provisions of decision I/7 or with the Convention.

More specifically regarding compatibility with the Convention:

1. While the Committee at this stage finds it premature to comment on the actual substance of the communication, it does relate to the procedures and obligations regulated by the provisions of the Aarhus Convention, and therefore the content of the communication could not be considered to be irrelevant.
2. Albania deposited its instrument of ratification of the Convention on 27 June 2001 meaning that the Convention entered into force for Albania on 30 October 2001, i.e. the collective date of entry into force, and it appears that significant events referred to in the communication occurred after that date.
3. Furthermore, Albania has not opted out of the aspects of the compliance mechanism relating to communications from the public.

Accordingly, the preliminary determination of the Committee, subject to review following any comments received from the Party concerned, is that the communication is admissible. However, in deciding how to proceed with the case, the Committee will take account of any further information provided by the communicant with regard to the availability and adequacy of domestic remedies, and any use made thereof.