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ECONOMIC COMMISSION
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Palais des Nations, Room 429-4
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9 February 2016

Robert Konrad
Head of Unit, DG Environment,
Unit F3, Communication
European Commission

Angelika Wiedner
Aarhus Team Leader, DG Environment
Unit A2, Compliance promotion, governance and legal issues
European Commission

Dear Mr. Konrad, Ms. Wiedner,

Re: Communication to the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee concerning compliance by the European Union in connection with the proposed construction the “High Speed 2” railway (ACCC/C/2014/101)

I write to inform you that the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee will discuss the substance of communications ACCC/C/2014/100 and ACCC/C/2014/101 at its fifty-second meeting (Palais des Nations, Geneva, 8-11 March 2016).

Due to the closely related subject matter of the above communications, the Committee proposes to hold the hearings of both communications on the same day, namely **Thursday, 10 March 2016**, starting at 9.30 am and concluding by 5.30 pm.

In accordance with chapter IX of the annex to decision I/7 of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, the parties are entitled to participate in the hearing on the subject matter of the communication, though not in the preparation or adoption of any findings, measures or recommendations of the Committee.

According to the Committee's normal practice, the hearing of the communications, which will be held in open session, will be interspersed with several closed sessions in which the Committee will begin the process of preparing draft findings.

It is envisaged that the first part of the hearing, to be held in open session, will discuss communication ACCC/C/2014/100 in accordance with the following format:

- introduction by the Chair;
- opening of the hearing by the curator for communication ACCC/C/2014/100 (10 minutes);
- concise presentations by the communicants and by the Party concerned of communication ACCC/C/2014/100 (10-15 minutes each);
- comments from observers at the invitation of the Chair (5 minutes);
- questions from Committee members, responses from the Party concerned and the communicants (30 minutes).

There will thereafter be a closed session during which the Committee will begin its process of preparing draft findings on communication ACCC/C/2014/100, before the Committee will commence the hearing in open session of communication ACCC/C/2014/101, according to the following format:

- introduction by the Chair;
- opening of the hearing by the curator for communication ACCC/C/2014/101 (10 minutes);
- concise presentations by the communicants and by the Party concerned of communication ACCC/C/2014/101 (10-15 minutes each);
- comments from observers at the invitation of the Chair (5 minutes);
- questions from Committee members, responses from the Party concerned and the communicants (30 minutes).

Following the lunch break, the Committee will hold a joint open session on communications ACCC/C/2014/100 and ACCC/C/2014/101 during which time it may pose additional questions to the communicants or the Parties concerned, or invite reactions to any tentative conclusions it has reached. At the close of the afternoon open session, the Chair may invite observers to make any further short remarks (3-5 minutes) before the communicants and Parties concerned of each communication will be invited to make their closing remarks (5-10 minutes each). Further details concerning the timetable for the hearing will be provided in the provisional timeline for the Committee's 52nd meeting which will be sent to you nearer the time.

In order to facilitate arrangements for the hearing, I would be grateful if by **16 February 2016** you could confirm the participation of one or more representatives of the European Commission in the hearing, and thereafter the attached registration form should be completed for each nominated representative and sent to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, attention of Ms. Maricar de la Cruz (aarhus.compliance@unece.org), by **23 February 2016**.

The Committee has indicated that the meeting should not be used as an occasion to introduce substantial amounts of information that could or should have been provided to it at an earlier stage, unless this is unavoidable (e.g. because it concerns very recent developments). Should you wish to present any further substantial written material related to the matter, you should take into account that where such information is received less than two weeks before the scheduled meeting, it is doubtful whether the Committee would be able to take it into consideration at the meeting.

Please do not hesitate to contact the secretariat if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,



Fiona Marshall
Secretary to the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee

Cc: Permanent Mission of the European Union to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva
Christopher Stanwell, Nabarro LLP, representing the communicants of communications ACCC/C/2014/100 and ACCC/C/2014/101

Enc: Registration form for the fifty-second meeting of the Compliance Committee

