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Ref: ACCC/C//2014/111

5 June 2015

Mr. Joseph Van der Stegen  
Attaché of Public Service of Wallonia,  
Department of European Policies and International Agreements  
Rue d'Arlon, 53  
B-1040 Brussels  
Belgium

Dear Mr. Van der Stegen,

**Re: Communication to the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee concerning compliance by Belgium in connection with costs for access to justice (ACCC/C/2014/111)**

On 12 May 2014, the secretariat of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) received the above communication addressed to the Compliance Committee of the Convention. The communication concerns compliance by Belgium with the provisions of the Convention in connection with its obligations under article 9, paragraph 3 and 4 of the Convention in relation to the costs for access to justice. The communication was submitted in accordance with the provisions of chapter VI of the annex to decision I/7 of the Meeting of the Parties.

At its forty-fifth meeting (Maastricht, 29 June – 2 July 2014), the Committee agreed to defer its preliminary determination of admissibility in order to seek further clarification from the communicants. The communicants re-submitted their communication, including their responses to the Committee's questions, on 8 September 2014 in French. At its forty-sixth meeting (Geneva, 22-25 September 2014), the Committee agreed to defer its preliminary determination of admissibility to its forty-seventh meeting in order to consider the communicants' response once translated. Upon receipt of the translated response prior to the forty-seventh meeting, the Committee agreed using its electronic decision-making procedure to seek further clarification from the communicants. On 12 December 2014, the communicants provided additional information in response to the Committee's questions.

The Compliance Committee considered the admissibility of the communication at its forty-seventh meeting (16-19 December 2014) and determined it to be admissible on a preliminary basis in accordance with paragraph 20 of the annex to decision I/7.

Please find enclosed herewith a copy of the communication as re-submitted on 8 September 2014 together with the additional information submitted on 12 December 2014, which are being forwarded to you at the request of the Committee in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 22 of the annex to decision I/7. A copy of the preliminary determination on admissibility is also attached. Please note, however, that the Committee has not reached any conclusions with respect to the compliance issues referred to in the communication.

The communication has been registered under the symbol ACCC/C/2014/111, which you are invited to cite in future correspondence on the matter. The main documentation relating to the communication will be shortly available on the Committee's web site at: <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/pubcom.html>.

Having regard to paragraph 23 of the annex to decision I/7, you are kindly invited to submit to the Committee, as soon as possible but at the latest within five months of the date of this letter (i.e. by **5 November 2015**), any written explanations or statements clarifying the matter referred to in the communication and describing any response that may have been made in the meantime.

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

Yours sincerely,



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Fiona Marshall  
Secretary to the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee

- Cc: Permanent Mission of Belgium to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva  
Mr. Alain Lebrun, on behalf of the communicants, "Ardennes liégeoises" and "Terre wallonne"
- Enc: Communication ACCC/C/2014/111, as re-submitted on 8 September 2014 (including 12 supporting documents)  
Additional information submitted by communicants on 12 December 2014 (including 4 supporting documents)  
Preliminary determination on admissibility