

11 September 2018

Mr. Kevin McCormick
Aarhus, Bioeconomy and Environmental Policy and Awareness Division
Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
Ireland

Dear Mr. McCormick,

Re: Communication to the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee concerning compliance by Ireland with articles 3, 4 and 9 of the Convention in relation to its system for reviewing decisions to refuse access to environmental information (ACCC/C/2016/141)

I write to inform you that the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee proposes to hold the hearing to discuss the substance of communication ACCC/C/2016/141 at its sixty-second meeting to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 5-9 November 2018.

The hearing of the above communication is scheduled for **Thursday, 8 November 2018**, starting at 10:30 am and concluding by 4.30 pm.

In accordance with chapter IX of the annex to decision I/7 of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, both 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 communication, which will be held in open session, will be interspersed with at least one closed session in which the Committee will begin the process of preparing draft findings. It is envisaged that the first part of the hearing in open session will take the following form:

- introduction by the Chair;
- opening of the hearing by the curator for the case (10-15 minutes);
- concise presentations by the communicant and by the Party concerned, including possible joint proposals (10-15 minutes each);
- questions from Committee members, responses from the Party concerned and the communicant (30 minutes);
- comments from other observers at the invitation of the Chair (10 minutes);
- final comments by the communicant (5-10 minutes);
- final comments by the Party concerned (5-10 minutes).

Further details concerning the timetable for the hearing will be provided in the provisional timeline for the meeting to be published on the meeting webpage nearer the time.

During the second part of the hearing (i.e. following the closed session), the Committee may pose additional questions to the parties or invite reactions to any tentative conclusions it has reached. In accordance with its usual practice, the Committee may also invite the Party concerned to indicate whether, should the Committee ultimately find the Party to be in non-compliance, it would agree to the Committee making its recommendations to it directly, in accordance with paragraph 36(b) of the annex to decision I/7.

I would be grateful if you would confirm by **Tuesday, 25 September 2018** that a representative of the Government of Ireland will participate in the hearing. Thereafter, each participant wishing to attend the meeting should register online at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=49360> before **27 October 2018**.

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 when it is discussing the matter, even where the information is provided in English.

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 Ireland to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva
Fred Logue, solicitor, representing the communicant of communication ACCC/C/2016/141