

21 August 2019

Mr. Georgi Serbezov
Non-profit Association Civil Control – Animal Protection
Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Dear Mr. Serbezov,

Re: Communication to the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee concerning compliance by Bulgaria in connection with public participation and access to justice in relation to an amendment of the General Spatial Plan of Plovdiv (ACCC/C/2016/144)

I write to inform you that the Committee proposes to hold a hearing to discuss the substance of communication ACCC/C/2016/144 at its sixty-fifth meeting to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 4-8 November 2019.

The hearing of the above communication is scheduled for **Wednesday, 6 November 2019**, 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 webpage for the sixty-fifth meeting nearer the time.

During the second part of the hearing (i.e. following the closed session), the Committee may pose additional questions to you or the Party concerned, 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 before **Monday, 16 September 2019** that a representative of the communicant will participate in the hearing. All participants are encouraged to cover their own costs as far as possible, but in case you would require financial support to cover travel and subsistence costs for one representative in order to be represented at the meeting, please notify me by return and in any case no later than **4 October 2019**. Thereafter, each participant wishing to attend the meeting should register online at <https://uncdb.unece.org/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=YD5uoj> before **28 October 2019**.

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.

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 Republic of Bulgaria to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva
Ms. Rositza Karamfilova, national focal point for the Aarhus Convention, Ministry of Environment and Water, Bulgaria