



**PRTR Protocol to the Aarhus Convention
3rd Meeting of the Working Group of the Parties
(Geneva, 20-21 November 2013)
- Position by the EU and its Member States -**

Item 7(b)(vi). Draft elements for the Maastricht Declaration

The EU and its Member States thank the Chairs of the Meetings of the Parties for preparing with the assistance of the Secretariat these draft elements for the Maastricht Declaration.

This important draft document has however only been made available very recently and we have not been in a position to analyse it in all the depth necessary. Therefore we consider that more time is required for the examination of such an important document in order to prepare suggestions for amendments to the text of the draft Declaration. In terms of substance, we need to carefully assess the main political messages that we wish to include and make sure that they are relevant and timely. In terms of process, we need to bear in mind that the draft Maastricht Declaration is a joint declaration by the two MOPs and therefore strong coordination between the Aarhus Convention and PRTR Protocol National Focal Points is required.

We will therefore limit our intervention to a number of key considerations and suggest that Parties are given sufficient time to provide the Chairs of the Meeting of the Parties with their detailed comments on the draft Declaration. This would allow the Chairs, in consultation with the Bureau members, to prepare a revised version for a second round of comments and to provide the final draft well in advance of the Maastricht Meeting of the Parties.

We welcome the fact that the draft Declaration reflects the commitments of the Convention's and Protocol's Parties to transparency for furthering environmental democracy, sustainable development and improving the state of the environment.

It should focus in priority on achievement of full implementation by the Parties and accession of further countries, rather than on further elaboration of the Protocol's text, whilst welcoming progress in other regions of the world.

Whilst the most important issues related to the objectives of the Convention and the Protocol are addressed in the text of the draft Declaration, we strongly believe that it should remain focused on the obligations and objectives of the Convention and the Protocol. Language referring to issues that fall outside the scope of both instruments should be reconsidered.

Furthermore, the language of paragraph 3 of the Declaration should be based on the relevant parts of "The Future We Want", i.e. the section related to "Engaging major groups and other stakeholders" and in particular its paragraph 43 on public participation and access to information and judicial and administrative proceedings.

We will provide detailed written comments from the EU and its Member States after this meeting, which will cover the points we have mentioned as well as a number of further drafting suggestions including regarding the title of the document.

Chair, we are in your hands for the setting of a reasonable deadline for the presentation of written comments on this important document.
