



**KESKKONNAMINISTEERIUM
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT
REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA**

**Subject: Aarhus Convention Access to Justice Handbook and Workshop, Tallinn,
Estonia, 17-19 September 2001**

To: Focal Points to the Aarhus Convention,

04.07.2001 No. 20-1/73

Dear Madam, Sir,

As the lead country for the Aarhus Convention Access to Justice task force, I hereby invite you to contribute to the handbook on access to justice which will be compiled within the sphere of the task force and to participate in the workshop being held among other things to review the draft handbook.

The main objective of the handbook is to identify and report on a range of examples of access to justice matters under Aarhus with a view to practical implementation. Other goals include reflecting the wide scope of Article 9, identifying obstacles and most importantly highlighting elements of good practice. The handbook will take a 2-track practical approach – a) analysis of key issues arising under Article 9, drawing upon b) up to 30 brief (2-4 pages) case studies from countries in the UNECE region.

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) is the main co-ordinator for the handbook with support from the European ECO Forum and the American Bar Association's Central and Eastern European Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI). The United Kingdom has offered financial support for the research to prepare the handbook. A sub-regional case study development meeting for the handbook, organized by the REC and Charitable Foundation Ecopravo-Lviv and funded by the United Kingdom, was held from 3-5 June 2001 in Lviv, Ukraine.

The focal points are asked to send casestudies relating to Article 9 of the Convention to the general co-ordinator REC (Stephen Stec, Tel. No. +36 26 504000, Fax. No.: +36 26 311294, E-mail sstec@rec.org) with copies to the lead country (Fax. no.: +372-626 2801, E-mail: rita.annus@ekm.envir.ee) by the end of July 2001. Case studies should be written according to a standard format, showing concrete solutions to Article 9 implementation issues and highlighting good practice and innovative techniques. Other involved parties should be consulted for wider views. Contact information should be included. The standard format is attached to this letter for your convenience.

The draft handbook will be discussed at a workshop in Tallinn, Estonia, on 17-19 September 2001. The aim of the workshop will be to highlight some of the findings in the draft handbook, and also to discuss further activities of the Task Force to be recommended to the

Meeting of the Signatories. A provisional agenda for the workshop will be sent to you nearer the time of the workshop.

The Workshop is being hosted by Estonia, with the financial assistance of Finland. Some limited funds are available for providing travel assistance upon request for the participation of one-two representatives from each of the Newly Independent States and the Balkan Stability Pact countries. A certain amount of funding is also available to support the participation of NGOs. Priority will be given to applicants involved in the preparation of case studies.

Please find enclosed the registration form, where you are also invited to indicate if you apply for financial support.

We look forward to your participation in the workshop. Kindly note that the registration form must be sent **by 6 August 2001** to Ms. Kaidi Tingas (Fax. no.: +372 62 62 801, E-mail: kaidi.tingas@ekm.envir.ee)

To create a good forum for discussion and exchange of experiences, it is suggested that you invite members of the judiciary and representatives from Ministries of Justice to participate in the workshop alongside the environmental officials responsible for implementing this aspect of the Aarhus Convention. In these circumstances, applications for financial support for a second participant would be considered.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

(Original signed by Rita Annus)

Rita Annus
National Focal Point for the Aarhus Convention
Director of Legal Department