



Fifth meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention

(Maastricht, 30 June-2 July 2014)

Agenda item 7 (d): Financial Arrangements

Tuesday, 1 July 2014

Contribution by the EU and its Member States.

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Bureau for preparing the draft decision on financial arrangements and the Contracting Parties and other participants for the constructive dialogue on the issue.

Taking this opportunity, we would also like to reiterate at this MOP our gratitude to the organisers of this Meeting as well as our hosts, the government of the Netherlands, for taking the initiative to support and host the 5th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention.

We would like to acknowledge the progress in our discussions towards an agreement regarding the Financial arrangements and thank all parties for their constructive efforts and contributions. We can confirm that we are in a position to accept the compromise text.

In line with the discussions that we have had during and following the 18 WGP, we recognise that there is a necessity for financial arrangements based on the principles of a fair sharing of the burden, predictable sources of funding, accountability and sound financial management. At the same time we have to be aware of the budget constraints of the Parties in the current financial situation that have led us to support the maintenance of the current interim voluntary scheme of contributions.

Furthermore, we believe that the discussion on how to ensure a long-term sustainable and predictable financing should not solely focus on how to generate a more predictable financial flow, but also on more creative ways of achieving our goals as well as on how to increase cost efficiency. To this end, it would be desirable to clearly distinguish the operational costs (which are absolutely necessary for the effective operation of the Convention, such as staff costs not covered by the UN regular budget and the cost of mandatory meetings) from the costs of non-operational activities (which the Parties may agree to undertake pursuant to the Convention's objectives and subject to the availability of resources). This distinction, that should be evident in the workplan, would allow Parties to better understand the operational costs of the Convention and would promote savings by more precisely differentiating between required expenses and possible expenses, as reflected in the relevant proposed paragraph. .

We support the request to the UNECE to consider the balance in the use of regular-budgetary resources between the different sub-programmes and to explore the possibility to allocate more resources to the Aarhus Convention, as also proposed in a new paragraph.

Finally, we suggest that if the work programme continues to lead to budget deficits, further efforts should be made to prioritise activities within the work programme, to maximise efficiencies and /or explore other funding mechanisms, to provide a sustainable basis for the work programme.
