

**Statement on behalf of the EEB to the 17<sup>th</sup> Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention at the Thematic Session on promotion of the principles of the Convention in International Forums, 27<sup>th</sup> February 2014**

**The Trans-Atlantic Trade Investment Partnership (TTIP)**

My name is Gita Parihar and I am speaking on behalf of the European Ecoforum and the EEB on the issue of the Trans-Atlantic Trade Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations between the European Union and the United States. These negotiations engage Aarhus obligations because they relate to environmental matters of core public interest, including regulation of chemicals, GMOs and energy..

It has been extremely difficult to access any text concerning the negotiations but from leaked information it is clear that the proposals on the table include mutual recognition of environmental standards-so that US products could be accepted even when they do not meet EU environmental law requirements and vice versa. As well as this, an Investor State Dispute Settlement Mechanism is proposed. One need only consider the case of the German government being sued by the company Vattenfall for its decision to ban nuclear energy for the dangers of this approach to become obvious. A third area of concern relates to the proposals for regulatory cooperation which include setting up a “regulatory council” that could be tasked with considering any proposed regulation from either party likely to have consequences on trade. Of course, environmental regulations are very likely to fall into this category.

Despite the clear potential environmental impacts of the negotiations, the EU’s submissions to the US have not been made available to the public and we understand that even EU member states have had difficulty accessing them. We call upon the EU to disclose these documents in fulfilment of its obligations under the Aarhus Convention, including Article 3(7) and the Almaty Guidelines and to ensure full public participation in the negotiations process.

The EEB and a number of other organisations have made a request for access to information on TTIP covered by the Aarhus Convention and we look forward to a positive response from the European Commission to this.