



**17th Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (WGP 17)
(Geneva, 26-28 February 2014)**

Agenda Item 8(d): Financial Arrangements

Contribution by the EU and its Member States

- (1) The EU and its Member States wish to thank the Bureau for the draft decision on financial arrangements under the Convention. We also welcome the opportunity to comment on the proposed draft.
- (2) We have had thorough internal discussions on the matter. 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. We consider that the sustainability and predictability on financing the Aarhus Convention is an essential element for effective and efficient International Environmental Governance. In addition, the increase of cost efficiency and the promotion of structural changes constitute significant elements in the same direction. Thus, the discussion on how to ensure a sustainable and predictable financing should not only focus on how to generate a more predictable flow, but also on how to increase cost efficiency.
- (3) We believe that we need to start with a close consideration of the costs required for the effective functioning of the Convention. 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 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. If it were not possible to do this for the next MOP, a paragraph could be included in the draft decision of the MOP in order to request the Secretariat and the Bureau to introduce this distinction for the following budgetary and financial term.
- (4) We support the introduction of a suggested minimum annual contribution of \$500 for all Parties.

(5) We request the UNECE to consider the balance in the use of regular budgetary resources between the different sub-programmes and to allocate more resources to the Aarhus Convention and the PRTR Protocol.

(6) In this regard, we request the following substantive amendments:

- In the third paragraph we suggest the replacement of the word “*establish*” with the word “*ensure*”.
 - In bullet point 1, we request the replacement of the words “*establishes a mandatory*” by “*continue to use the existing interim*”. We believe that this is a gradual process which would require work during the intersessional period to foster the predictability, sustainability and fair sharing of the burden in line with Decision IV/7. Therefore, while supporting the principle of an equitable sharing of the burden and recognising the necessity for stable and predictable sources of funding, we cannot at present support the establishment of a mandatory scheme of contributions.
 - Additionally, we request the deletion of bullet points 1 (a) to 1(d), 8 (c) as well as the annex and renumbering accordingly.
 - We request the amendment of bullet point 7 to read as follows: “*to ensure the equitable distribution of the financial responsibility for implementation of the work programme and requests the Bureau to liaise with Parties where appropriate concerning the achievement of this goal*”.
 - We suggest the addition of the words “*Requests an estimation of the operational costs needed for the effective functioning of the Convention and a clear distinction from the cost of other activities which are subject to the availability of resources*” in bullet point 9.
 - We request the addition of a new bullet point 12 as follow: “*Requests the UNECE to allocate more resources to the Aarhus Convention and the PRTR Protocol considering inter alia the balance in the use of regular budgetary resources in the different subprogrammes.*”.
-