



**17th Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (WGP 17)**  
**(Geneva, 26-28 February 2014)**  
**Agenda item 3(b): Public participation in decision-making**

Contribution by the EU and its Member States

The EU and its Member States thank the Bureau for preparing the draft decision on promoting effective public participation in decision-making (PPDM). Additionally, we welcome the opportunity to comment on the draft decision prior to its finalisation for WGP 17.

Moreover, we appreciate the preparatory work undertaken by the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making regarding the environmental matters.

The draft decision on PPDM constitutes a constructive text. However we wish to make the following substantive comments:

- We suggest the removal of the word “*significant*” in the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph in order not to undervalue the work done so far.
- Regarding bullet point 2, we suggest the replacement of the term “*practical tool*” with the word “*guidance*” as well the replacement of the verb “*further*” with the verb “*improve*”. We appreciate the work done, however we express our reservation on the word “*endorse*” since we had not the opportunity to consider and comment on the Recommendations. Therefore we suggest the replacement of the word “*endorse*” with the phrase “*takes note of*”
- In bullet point 5, we suggest the addition of the words “*where possible*” before “*to make resources available*” in order to reflect the limitations on resources available to Parties, Signatories and other stakeholders.
- In Bullet point 11 (c) we suggest the replacement of the word “*implementation*” with the word “*use*”.
- Regarding bullet point 11 (f), we would like to point out that the Task Force should focus on decision-making on large scale projects, including the nuclear sector, climate change and sustainable development related decision making in the context of implementing the Convention’s existing requirements. Therefore we suggest the amendment of the paragraph as follows: “*While taking care to allow sufficient time to address the implementation of articles 6, 7 and 8 generally, investigate possibilities for focusing in greater depth on collaboration with relevant partner organizations, as appropriate, on implementation of the Convention public participation requirements in decision-making*”

*in those fields of activity considered to be of particularly high priority at the current time, for example, decision-making for sustainable development; climate-change related decision-making and the nuclear domain”.*

- Regarding bullet point 11 (g), while we welcome the role of the task force as a significant factor to strengthen the implementation of the provisions of the convention, we would like to clarify that the role of the task force is not to elaborate on the existing provisions of the Convention. Emphasis should mainly be on the implementation of the existing legal obligations rather than the developing new ones. Therefore, we request the deletion of the bullet point 11 (g).

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