



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

Agenda item 7: Promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums

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 promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums.

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the draft decision prior to its finalisation for the seventeenth meeting of the Working Group.

We recognize the importance of Aarhus Convention and its principles as of a cross-cutting nature and we consider it as added value to transparent environmental governance including international forums.

In order to make the provisions of draft decision on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums more feasible and efficient, we wish to make the following substantive comments:

In paragraph 6, we suggest to emphasize the role of expert assistance as an important powerful tool by adding the word “*important*”.

In paragraph 7 we suggest replacing the text with the words “*Considering the challenges in implementing article 3, paragraph 7, of the Convention*” in order to recognize both the work that is already being done and the challenges of balancing the promotion of the Convention’s principles against environmental priorities in the context of other MEAs.

We suggest to replace the wording “*undertake concrete*” by “*further*” in the 5th (a) bullet point in order to highlight the importance of further applying the Almaty Guidelines, while avoiding any establishment of additional obligations for the Parties. The EU already takes into account the Almaty Guidelines at international negotiations and the same applies for each MS separately. The potential establishment of national action programmes etc. would only lead to further bureaucracy and red tape without any further added value.

We request the amendment of the 5th (b) bullet point to read “***Promote appropriate coordination*** *within and between its ministries to inform officials involved in other relevant international forums about article 3, paragraph 7, of the Convention and the Almaty Guidelines;*”.

We suggest the deletion of the phrase “*evaluate those practices’ effectiveness and share the evaluations with other Parties*” in the 5th (c) bullet point and its replacement with the phrase “*and share their experience with other Parties*”

We request the replacement of the words “*take steps*” with the verb “*Continue*” in the 5th (d) bullet point. We should not underestimate the progress made so far.

We request to amend the two bullet points below, as follows:

6(a)(i): “*Providing help assisting and following the efforts of Parties Signatories and stakeholders to implement the article 3 par.7 of the Convention and the Almaty Guidelines with a particular consideration to the Environmental MEAs and any International negotiations dealing with the environmental issues;*” and

6 (a) (ii):“*Sharing experiences from recent forums and Conferences and sharing opportunities and strategies for promoting public participation in international upcoming negotiations following the working group of the Parties*”.

As far as the bullet points 8, we suggest the replacement of the phrase “*allocate sufficient funds*” with the phrase “*continue supporting the implementation of article 3, Paragraph 7 of the Convention*” . Additionally, we request the deletion of the bullet points 8 (a), 8 (b) & b(c).
