

Statement for the Seventeenth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention

Geneva, 26-28 February 2014

Ladies, gentlemen,

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to updating you on what activities the European Investment Bank, as the EU Bank and the largest IFI in the world, is carrying out to promote the principles of the Convention.

As you know, the European Investment Bank has recently updated its Environmental and Social Handbook (the Handbook representing an operational translation of the policies and principles contained in the 2009 EIB Statement of Environmental and Social Principles and Standards) following a 12-month consultation process with internal and external stakeholders. The revision of the Handbook was completed following an in-depth review aimed at clarifying its structure and taking into account current changes in practices and realities that influence environmental sustainability and human well-being.

The Handbook consists of two parts. Part I of the Handbook provides external actors with a description of the standards to achieve, grouped across 10 thematic areas covering the full scope of environmental, climate and social impacts and issues. Part II describes the internal environmental and social due diligence processes and practices of the Bank, to ensure that all financing activities are consistent with its environmental and social standards. The revised Handbook is effective as of January 1st 2014.

In addition, and in the spirit of the Convention, we have recently started to work on solutions to increase the amount of environmental information that we systematically publish on our website – and to make theme easily accessible to the public. As a result, starting with 2nd of January 2014, the EIB Public Register is up and running providing for active dissemination of the environmental, and social, information related to the projects we finance. For each of our new operations, around 350 each year, the public will be able to access documentation that contains our assessment regarding the project's environmental and social aspect and other environmental documents (Non-Technical Summaries, Environmental and Social Impact Assessments, Etc.). The Register includes retrospectively all documents related to projects financed in 2013 and will as of 2014 publish them on a routine basis.

Let me eventually inform you that we will be reviewing our Transparency Policy (which was approved by the Bank's Board of Directors in 2010 and reflects the key principles of the Convention being also based on relevant EU legislation) this year, including a public consultation - and we would be pleased to receive input from as many stakeholders as possible. Information about the review will shortly be available on our website.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Felismino Alcarpe
European Investment Bank