

# Promotion of the Aarhus Convention's principles in the international trade negotiations

Olga Ponizova, Eco-Accord/European ECO-Forum



WTO: is becoming greener, more open for the public, but slow and not enough.

- More opportunities for public participation in UNCTAD, FAO, UNEP, others.
- Sub-regional and national levels:
  - European Union:
    - is more open,
    - mandatory Sustainability Impact Assessment of trade agreements (good practice - Association Agreements with the EU of Armenia, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine);
  - Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia:
    - Lack of involvement in Eurasian Economic Union, the Belt and Road Initiative\$
    - Lack of CSO involvement in trade agreements at the national level;
    - Good practice - discussions on the environmental implications of accession to the WTO (initiated by NGOs).

## What to do:

- ▶ • Promote principles of transparency and effective public participation on environmental issues in :
  - ▶ WTO, UNCTAD (using the 2021 ministerial conferences);
  - ▶ Eurasian Economic Union, "One Belt - One Road " Initiative
  - ▶ bilateral trade agreements of all countries of the UNECE region.
- ▶ • Exchange of experience and best practice on environmental CSOs involvement in trade policy and negotiations;
- ▶ • Develop programs to increase the capacity of EECCA countries on the relationship between trade and sustainable development and the involvement of civil society organizations in these processes, using the principles of Sustainability Impact Assessment of trade agreements.