

**25th Meeting of the Working Group to the Aarhus Convention
(Virtual, 7-8 June 2021)
Agenda item 9 (c): Access to Justice**

Norway

Thank you Chair,

Norway would like to thank the Bureau and the Secretariat for the draft decision access to justice.

We support the draft as originally proposed.

We have the following comments to the amendments proposed by EU and its Member States and ECO Forum:

Paragraph 3 bis: Norway does not support the proposal by ECO Forum to add paragraph 3 bis as it stands. We are not among the active proponents of global recognition of a right to a healthy environment. If a reference to efforts for the recognition of such a right is to be kept, we request that the word "*welcomes*" is replaced by "*takes note of*".

Paragraph 3 tris: Norway does not support the proposal by ECO Forum to add paragraph 3 tris as it stands. If it is to be included, we propose to amend it to read as follows:

"3 tris. Calls on the Parties to ~~take additional measures as needed to~~ ensure that access to justice for members of the public is provided effectively in accordance with the relevant provisions of Aarhus Convention, also during the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent economic recovery phase, **taking into account** ~~in accordance with~~ the guidance provided by the Compliance Committee statement of 2 September 2020 ECE/MP.PP/C.1/2020/5/Add.1;

Paragraph 14(a)(iii): Norway can accept the alternative wording proposed by the EU and its Member States with the addition of spatial planning as proposed by ECO Forum.

Paragraph 14(1)(iv): Norway is not quite sure about the meaning of the wording "*further challenging information cases*" in the amendment proposed by ECO Forum. We can support that the Task Force also focuses on access to information cases when it exchanges information, experiences, challenges and good practices relating to access to justice. In addition, we do not think that the word "*monitoring*" is appropriate considering the different mandates of the Task Force and the Compliance Committee. If this proposed additional paragraph is to be included, it should be rephrased accordingly.

Thank you Chair.