

Defending the defenders 2021

Side event of non-governmental organizations at
MOP7 of the Aarhus Convention – Geneva

11 October 2021, 15:00–17:00 CEST (online)

Please, register at: <https://english.arnika.org/aarhus-convention/aarhus-7-mop-geneva-2021>

Since the Meeting of Parties held in 2017, the situation has aggravated. More and more persons exercising environmental rights are persecuted or harassed. The most alarming examples can be witnessed in Belarus, but similar infringements happen in other countries, including the EU member states. The global pandemic has contributed to the negative development: some states have begun to restrict democratic mechanisms in legislation. The side event will present the situation in the region. Discussion will focus on what can be done to alleviate the pressure on defenders and how the existing human rights mechanisms and planned Rapid Response Mechanism could help.

Agenda:

OPENING REMARK: Jonas Ebbesson, Chair Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee, professor of Environmental Law – Stockholm University

OPENING PRESENTATION: Brave women of Kruštica: From persecution of environmental defenders to saving the rivers / Maida Bilal, winner of the Goldman Environmental Prize 2021, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Panel 1: Erosion of democratic framework

Environmental destruction in times of coronavirus / Zuzana Vachňová, Arnika

ARMENIA: Restrictions on environmental information / Inga Zafaryan, Ecolur

GREECE: Modernization of environmental legislation and recent developments in the covid period / George Chasiotis, WWF Greece

SLOVENIA: Law changes weakening environmental protection / Senka Šifkovič Vrbica, Legal-Informational Centre for NGOs

Panel 2: Persecution and protection

BELARUS: Dismantling of environmental CSOs and persecution of the defenders / Sergey Magonov, liquidated NGO Ecohome

UKRAINE: Recent persecution cases / Olena Kravchenko, Environment People Law

Opportunities under the Rapid Response Mechanism under the Aarhus Convention to address, prevent the persecution of environmental defenders / Yves Lador, EarthJustice

Actions that should be taken to ensure the compliance of Art. 3.8 of the Aarhus Convention / Magdolna Tóthné Nagy, Guta Association of Environmental Law

Discussion

More information: <https://english.arnika.org/aarhus-convention/aarhus-7-mop-geneva-2021>