

EEA side event

in the context of 7th session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention

**Improving environmental data sharing under the European Green Deal
through digitalisation**

Tuesday, 12 October 2021, 10:00-12:00 (CET) - via MS Teams

The side event is organized by the European Environment Agency (EEA) in the context of the 7th session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) scheduled to take place 18-21 October 2021. The side event is planning to address the current initiatives and practices to facilitate environmental data and information sharing with support of digitalization, as well as the main policy developments and forward-looking ambitions foreseen in the context of the European Green Deal.



Fully engaged in this process, the European Environment Agency (EEA) and its Eionet network covering 38 European countries is aiming at identifying emerging initiatives driven by the digital transition in support of sustainability. Integration of environmental data and information from existing and new sources is key to make these ambitions happen at national, European and international levels.

As a scene-setting key-note speakers will provide you with the European data policy landscape and with some recent initiatives for advancing data and information management and exchange. Furthermore, the European picture will be complemented by the experiences acquired by the UNECE Task Force on access to information, while developing the recommendations on electronic information tools. See attached short bios of the invited speakers and panelists.

A panel discussion will follow to further broaden the topic by introducing several supporting initiatives, plans and policies taking place in the countries across Europe, EU and UNECE. All interventions will address the challenges and the benefits of facilitating the access and the use of environmental information through modern tools and technologies. Answering part of your questions in an interactive dialogue will complement the panel discussion.

We aim to conclude by identifying few major lines of actions for the coming period where each of us has a role to play and contribute to this challenge ahead of us.

Language: The event will be in English only




Technical platform: MS Teams. All interested participants are kindly invited to register [here](#)

DRAFT AGENDA

09:45-10:00	Participants joining via MS Teams	
10:00-10:05	Welcome and opening Objectives of the event	<i>Adriana Gheorghe</i> – Moderator of the event, Expert – International cooperation, (EEA)
10:05-10:15	The EU policy framework	<i>Vita Jukne</i> – Head of Unit E4- Compliance and Better Regulation, EC DG ENV
10:15-10:30	Green data and digitalisation	<i>Stefan Jensen</i> – Expert - Environmental Information Management, EEA
10:30-10:45	International developments and electronic tools	<i>Valentina Tapis</i> – Chair of UNECE Task Force on access to information
10:45-11:45	Panel debate with best practices in managing the environmental information in the pan-European context <i>The invited panelists - representatives of UN and EU bodies, partner countries, projects and NGO community - will present case studies and/or ongoing initiatives illustrating the connection between access to information, digitalisation and the ambitious goals set by the European Green Deal.</i>	<i>Panelists:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Maria-Teresa Pisani</i> - Acting Head, Sustainable Trade and Outreach Unit, UNECE• <i>Valentina Dimitrievska</i> – IT associate to Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of North Macedonia• <i>Kristian Meissner</i> – Director Strategic Programme for Environment Information, Finnish Environmental Institute• <i>Jiri Pilar</i>, Legal and Policy Officer, EC DG CONNECT• <i>Johannes Mayer</i>, Team Leader, Umweltbundesamt GmbH (UBA-Vienna)• <i>Steven Loiselle</i>, Senior Research Manager, Earthwatch Europe
11:45-11:55	Conclusions and way forward <i>Key messages to be brought forward to the Aarhus MOP plenary session</i>	<i>Adriana Gheorghe</i> – Moderator of the event, EEA
12:00	<i>Closure of the event</i>	



SPEAKERS/PRESENTERS BIOGRAPHIES

	<p>Adriana Gheorghe <i>Expert - Pan-European Cooperation, EEA</i></p> <p>Ms Adriana Gheorghe works as an expert on international cooperation at the European Environment Agency. She has a broad experience in working with countries and institutions across the pan-European region and was involved in major environmental activities and processes at regional and global levels. Prior joining the Agency, Ms Gheorghe worked both in the private and public sectors in Romania. Lawyer by profession she holds a PhD on international law.</p>
	<p>Vita Jukne <i>Head of Unit - Compliance and Better Regulation, EC DG ENV</i></p> <p>Ms Vita Jukne is Head of Unit – Compliance and Better Regulation in Directorate General for Environment of the European Commission. Prior to joining DG ENV, Ms Jukne worked in DG Justice and Consumers in the communication and strategic planning unit. Before that, she worked in DG Connect on legislative proposals of the European Commission, including the Regulation on Cross-border Portability of Online Content Services and in DG Competition, where Ms Jukne was the coordinator for European Competition Network cases. She assigned and supervised the work of the team reviewing envisaged decisions of national competition authorities where EU competition rules are applied. Prior to her job with the European Commission, Ms Jukne was a practicing lawyer in Lithuania. Vita Jukne graduated from Vilnius University (the Faculty of Law). She also holds an LL.M from the University of Cambridge.</p>
	<p>Stefan Jensen <i>Expert - Environmental Information Management, EEA</i></p> <p>Stefan Jensen (Geographer by education) works at the European Environment Agency (EEA) since 2001. After coordinating projects on electronic environmental reporting, he led the activities to establish the technical part of the European Water Information System. Since 2010, for 9 years as the head of the EEA group on data governance and now as senior expert, he helps building the EEA' spatial data infrastructure, leads EEA team supporting the implementation of INSPIRE and building the EEA's data reporting system. He represents EEA in UNGGIM Europe and other bodies. Next to his role as EEA digitalisation coordinator he also co-chairs an EU governance group on Green Data. Prior to working at the EU level, he started in the private sector on the application of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and worked for 10 years in the Lower Saxony Ministry of Environment in Hannover, building up the first state-wide spatial environmental information system.</p>



Valentina Tapis

Chair of UNECE Task Force on access to information

Ms Valentina Tapis is currently the Head of Air and Climate Change policies Division in the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional development and environment of the Republic of Moldova. Over the past five years she is also the chair of the Task Force on access to information operating under the Aarhus Convention. Chemist as background she has almost 30 years of experience in working with environment and climate related issues. Along the years she was involved in various activities such as policy development, drafting legislation and secondary legislation in areas such as climate change, water resources management, water supply and sanitation, air protection, access to environmental information and public participation in decision-making in environmental matters. She was also serving as National Focal Point for the UNFCCC, Convention on Long-range transboundary Air Pollution and the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. During her career Ms Tapes hold several position in the national administration, among them Deputy Minister and Minister of the Environment and State Secretary for Environmental Protection and Natural Resources.



Valentina Dimitrievska

IT associate to Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of North Macedonia

Ms Valentina Dimitrievska is an IT associate for technical support at the Macedonian Environmental Information Centre with the Ministry for Environment and Physical planning of North Macedonia since 2014. She has been active in the role of National Reference Centre for Environmental Information Systems (NRC EIS) for Republic of North Macedonia and has participated in several EU technical assistance projects.



Maria-Teresa Pisani

Acting Head, Sustainable Trade and Outreach Unit, UNECE

Maria Teresa Pisani is Economic Affairs Officer at the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division of UNECE, where she leads the work on policies and standards for sustainable trade facilitation, and is currently managing a global multi-stakeholder initiative on sustainable value chains in the clothing industry. At UNECE since 2011, she has been focusing on trade and environmental governance. Before joining the UN, Maria Teresa has been with the European Commission, and the ILO, and has managed World Bank funded projects for institutional reforms in emerging economies around the world.



**Jiří Pilař**

European Commission, Data Policy & Innovation

Mr Jiří Pilař is Legal & Policy Officer in Data Policy and Innovation Unit at the European Commission's Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content & Technology (DG CONNECT). Following the legal and journalism studies in the Czech Republic (Prague), Ireland (Limerick) and France (Paris), Jiří worked for several years at the Prague and Paris branches of the law firm Linklaters, focusing on commercial law transactions. After joining the European Commission, Jiří worked for five years in the unit that develops the policy and oversees the implementation of the EU's regulatory framework for electronic communications. For the last several years, he has been working on policy initiatives addressing new and emerging issues related to data (such as non-personal data access and re-use) and advancing the EU open data policy by ensuring the correct implementation of the Open Data and Public Sector Information (PSI) Directive.

**Kristian Meissner**

Director - Strategic Programme for Environment Information, Finnish Environmental Institute

Kristian Meissner is the director of SYKE's strategic research programme that advances the use of ML, citizen science and novel monitoring methods in environmental monitoring and assessment. Over 20 years' experience of working in research on water quality and environmental management issues with a focus on improving environmental monitoring. Mr Meissner recently coordinated the renewal of the national environmental monitoring strategy and will coordinate the national implementation of the environmental monitoring strategy that starts next year. He is also involved in European CEN standardization and chair a CEN working group that develops standards for eDNA and DNA methods for determining water quality.

**Johannes Mayer**

Team Leader, Umweltbundesamt - Environment Agency Austria

international activities of Environment Agency Austria. He acts as Austrian National Point of EEA since 1997 and has led many institutional capacity-building projects for EU Accession and Partner Countries. He currently is Vice Chairperson of the UNECE Working Group of Environmental Monitoring and Accession, and was the first chair-person of the Aarhus Convention Electronic Tools Task Force.



Steven Loiselle

Senior Research Lead at Earthwatch Europe

Prof. Steven Loiselle is a Senior Research Lead at Earthwatch Europe and an Associate Professor at the University of Siena (Italy). Through the FreshWater Watch global citizen science programme, he has worked with communities and in partnership with business, regulatory and research stakeholders on key local and global environmental challenges by increasing the exchange of information and knowledge between partners, in more than 40 countries across Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas.

