

26 January 2023

Mr. Juan Rubio Rubio
Ministry for the Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge
Spain

Dear Mr. Rubio,

Re: Communication to the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee concerning compliance by Spain with the provisions of the Convention in relation to access to information and public participation on mining concessions (ACCC/C/2017/153)

I write to inform you that the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee proposes to hold the hearing to discuss substance of communication ACCC/C/2017/153 at its seventy-eighth meeting to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 21–24 March 2023.

The hearing of the above communication is scheduled for **Wednesday, 22 March 2023**, starting at 10:30 am and concluding by 4.30 pm.

In accordance with chapter IX of the annex to decision I/7 of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, both the Party concerned and the communicants are entitled to participate in the hearing on the subject matter of the communication, though not in the preparation or adoption of any findings, measures or recommendations of the Committee.

According to the Committee's normal practice, the hearing of the communication, which will be held in open session, will be interspersed with at least one closed session in which the Committee will begin the process of preparing draft findings. It is envisaged that the open sessions of the hearing will take the following form:

- Introduction by the Chair;
- Opening of the hearing by the curator for the case (10-15 minutes);
- Concise presentations by the communicants and by the Party concerned (10-15 minutes each);
- Questions from Committee members, replies from the Party concerned and the communicants (30 minutes);
- Comments from other observers at the invitation of the Chair (10 minutes);
- Final comments by the communicants (5-10 minutes);
- Final comments by the Party concerned (5-10 minutes).

During the second part of the hearing (i.e. following the closed session), the Committee may pose additional questions to the parties or invite reactions to any tentative conclusions it has reached.

Further details concerning the timetable for the hearing will be provided in the provisional timeline for the meeting to be published on the meeting webpage nearer the time.

I would be grateful if you could confirm by **Thursday, 9 February 2023** that a representative of the Government of Spain will participate in the hearing. Thereafter, each participant wishing to attend the meeting should register online at <https://indico.un.org/event/1002054/> before **6 March 2023**.

I would also like to inform you that, following the change in the membership of the Committee at the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties (Geneva, 18–20 October 2021), the Committee has appointed Committee member Mr. Marc Clément to be curator of the communication going forward.

Finally, to ensure that the hearing will be as effective as possible, the Committee will shortly send a list of issues and/or a short list of questions to the Party concerned and the communicants for their written reply in advance of the hearing. This is so that at the hearing the Committee can focus on those aspects which it would not be possible to clarify fully in writing.

In this regard, the Committee has indicated that the hearing should not be used as an occasion to introduce substantial amounts of information that could or should have been provided to it at an earlier stage, unless this is unavoidable (e.g. because it concerns very recent developments). Should you wish to present any further substantial written material related to the matter, you should take into account that where such information is received less than two weeks before the meeting, it is doubtful whether the Committee will be able to take it into consideration when it is discussing the matter, even where the information is provided in English.

Please do not hesitate to contact the secretariat if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,



Fiona Marshall

Secretary to the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee

Cc: Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva
Mr. Ismael Antonio López Pérez, Asociación Autnómica e Ambiental Petón do Lobo, communicant of communication ACCC/C/2017/153
Ms. Ana Martina Varela Velo, Asociación Amigos y Amigas de los Bosques “O Ouriel do Anllóns”, communicant of communication ACCC/C/2017/153
Dr. Serafín J. González Prieto, Sociedade Galega de Historia Natural, observer
Mr. Xaquín Rubido Muñiz, Plataforma en Defensa da Ría de Arousa, observer
Ms. Elena Solis, Ecologistas en Acción, observer
Ms. Senra Rodriguez, observer
Ms. Ana Miranda, observer
Ms. Tatjana Ždanoka, observer
Ms. Diana Riba i Giner, observer
Mr. Fernando Barrena Arza, observer