



Economic and Social Council

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Economic Commission for Europe

Executive Committee

126th meeting

Geneva, 13 January 2023

Item 8 of the provisional agenda

**Matters relating to the Convention on Access to Information,
Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to
Justice in Environmental Matters**

**Decision relating to the “Implementation of the rapid
response mechanism for the protection of environmental
defenders under the Convention on Access to information,
Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice
in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)”**

Revised draft decision

The Executive Committee decides to submit the draft decision related to the “Implementation of the rapid response mechanism for the protection of environmental defenders under the Convention on Access to information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)”, as contained in the annex of this document, to the seventieth session of the Commission for its consideration.



Annex

Implementation of the rapid response mechanism for the protection of environmental defenders under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)

The Commission,

Acknowledging the essential role of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) in furthering effective and inclusive public access to information, access to justice and public participation in environmental matters across different sectors and processes;

Also acknowledging that the Aarhus Convention is thereby playing an important role in the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 16, by empowering the public with the right to access to information and to justice, and participate effectively in decision-making on a wide range of issues addressed by the Goals;

Recognizing that the implementation of the Convention also supports countries efforts in implementing many other international commitments, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); and a number of Human Rights Council resolutions and processes with direct relevance to environmental matters;¹

Welcoming the tangible positive changes across the ECE region and beyond in promoting access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters, stimulated by the Aarhus Convention since its adoption in 1998;

Noting that the number of the Parties to the Convention was progressively growing;

Also noting the adoption, at the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties, of the **Decision VII/9** establishing a rapid response mechanism for the protection of environmental defenders;

Recognizing the importance of adequate financing for the implementation of the rapid response mechanism for the protection of environmental defenders in order to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as other relevant global and regional commitments;

1. Requests the Secretary-General to increase the support by ECE, in order to strengthen the secretariat's capacity to facilitate the implementation of the rapid response mechanism for the protection of environmental defenders under the Aarhus Convention;
2. Decides to transmit to the Economic and Social Council at its session of 2023 a draft resolution on this issue for consideration and possible adoption.

¹ In particular resolutions 37/8 on human rights and the environment (A/HRC/RES.37/8), 40/11 on recognizing the contribution of environmental human rights defenders to the enjoyment of human rights, environmental protection and sustainable development (A/HRC/RES/40/11), 42/21 on the protection of the rights of workers exposed to hazardous substances and wastes (A/HRC/RES/42/21), and processes such as universal periodic reviews and special procedures.

Draft resolution of the Economic and Social Council on the implementation of the rapid response mechanism for the protection of environmental defenders under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)

The Economic and Social Council,

Noting the adoption by the seventieth session of the Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva, 18–19 April 2023) of decision xx (70) on the implementation of the rapid response mechanism for the protection of environmental defenders under the Aarhus Convention by which the Economic Commission for Europe recommended to the Economic and Social Council endorsing the said decision,

Endorses decision xx (70) of the Economic Commission for Europe **and requests the Secretary-General to increase the support by ECE, in order to strengthen the secretariat's capacity to facilitate the implementation of the rapid response mechanism for the protection of environmental defenders under ~~on the implementation of~~** the Aarhus Convention.
