

**Economic Commission for Europe**

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on  
Access to Information, Public Participation  
in Decision-making and Access to Justice  
in Environmental Matters

**Working Group of the Parties****Twenty-seventh meeting**

Geneva, 26–28 June 2023

Item 6 of the provisional agenda:

**Thematic session on the promotion of the principles  
of the Convention in international forums**

**Promotion of the principles of the Convention on Access to Information, Public  
Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus  
Convention) in international forums<sup>1</sup>**

**Provisional programme for the thematic session<sup>2</sup>**

to be held on Tuesday 27 June, noon–1 p.m. and 3–5.30 p.m. Geneva time

Chair: Ms. Marie-Hélène Sa Vilas Boas

**Introduction**

*Timing: noon–12.10 p.m.*

The Chair of the session will introduce organization of work during the thematic session and the main topics for discussion. The thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums will include panel discussion followed by a general discussion. The topics for discussion are based on decision VII/4 on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums (ECE/MP.PP/2021/2/Add.1), adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session, and the outcomes of the previous thematic sessions. The session will be focused on:

- (a) environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context
- (b) international trade-related decision-making; and
- (c) the issue of balanced and equitable participation and different modalities for engaging stakeholders in international decision-making.

Additional topics will include updates on:

- (a) subjects considered at the previous meetings of the Working Group of the Parties, such as promotion of the principles of the Convention in relation to a legally binding instrument on business and human rights under the Human Rights Council, in Sustainable Development Goals-related processes and in climate- and plastic-related international forums; and
- (b) subjects to be addressed by upcoming forums, including environmental-related processes under the General Assembly, such as the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, scheduled for September 2023, and the Summit of the Future, scheduled for September 2024.

<sup>1</sup> This document was not formally edited.

<sup>2</sup> Background information on work area on promoting the principles of the Convention in international forums is available from: <https://www.unece.org/env/pp/ppif.html>.

## **I. Environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context**

*Timing: 12.10–1 p.m.*

This item will focus on promoting the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international processes dealing with environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context.

*Panellists: 30 min (12.10-12.40)*

- *Ms. Branka Pivčević Novak, Head of Service for general climate protection policy, Directorate for Climate Activities, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Croatia*
- *Ms. Tea Aulavuo, Secretary to the Economic Commission for Europe's Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention)*
- *Mr. Ly Kongmeng, Ecosystem and Wetland Specialist, Environmental Management Division, Mekong River Commission for Sustainable Development (online)*
- *Ms. Attracta Ui Bhroin, Irish Environmental Network/European ECO Forum*

*Discussion 20 min (12.40-1pm)*

## **II. International trade-related decision-making**

*Timing: 3–3.50 p.m.*

This item will focus on promoting the principles of the Aarhus Convention in the processes on international trade-related decision-making.

*Panellists: 25 min (3-3.25pm)*

- *Ms. Beate B. Ekeberg, Specialist Director, Ministry of Climate and Environment, Norway*
- *Mr. Bernard Kuiten, Head of External Relations, World Trade Organization*
- *Mr. Frederik Hafen, European Environmental Bureau/European ECO Forum*

*Discussion 25 min (3.25-3.50pm)*

## **III. Balanced and equitable participation and different modalities for engaging stakeholders in international decision-making**

*Timing: 3.50–4.50 p.m.*

This item will focus on the issue of balanced and equitable participation and different modalities for engaging stakeholders in international decision-making. The Chair will also present the results of a survey circulated among the Parties to the Aarhus Convention, other interested Member States, international forums, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, Aarhus Centres, Regional Environmental Centres, academia, judiciary and other stakeholders to explore good practices and modalities contributing to ensuring balanced and equitable participation of members of the public as defined in the Almaty Guidelines<sup>3</sup> as well as relevant challenges.

The Working Group will consider in this regard a number of issues, including what was undertaken by the Aarhus Parties, international forums and other stakeholders in order to adapt and structure international processes and mechanisms as to ensure meaningful and equitable international access, types of modalities used and criteria applied for engaging various stakeholder groups, efforts in capacity-building to facilitate meaningful and equitable international access, as well as accompanying challenges faced.

*Panellists: 25 min (4.00-4.25pm)*

- *Ms. Angeliki Kylili, Environment Officer, Department of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, Cyprus*
- *Mr. Ilias Mavroeidis, Programme Management Officer - Governance, UN Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan Coordinating Unit, Barcelona Convention secretariat (online)*
- *Mr. Sébastien Duyck, Center for International Environmental Law/European ECO Forum*

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<sup>3</sup> See decision II/4 ([ENG](#) [FRE](#) [RUS](#))

*Discussion 25 min (4.25-4.50pm)*

#### **IV. Additional Topics**

*Timing: 4.50–5.10 p.m.*

This item will include an update on: (a) subjects considered at the previous meetings of the Working Group of the Parties, such as promotion of the principles of the Convention in relation to a legally binding instrument on business and human rights under the Human Rights Council, in Sustainable Development Goals-related processes and in climate- and plastic-related international forums; and (b) subjects to be addressed by upcoming forums, including environmental-related processes under the General Assembly, such as the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, scheduled for September 2023, and the Summit of the Future, scheduled for September 2024. Participants will be invited to exchange views on these topics.

#### **V. General discussion**

*Timing: 5.10–5.20 p.m.*

Participants will be invited to exchange views on other relevant matters.

#### **VI. Concluding remarks by the Chair of the thematic session**

*Timing: 5.20–5.30 p.m.*

The Chair of the thematic session will make concluding remarks.

#### **Documents and background material**

Decision VII/4 on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums (ECE/MP.PP/2021/2/Add.1), the Almaty Guidelines on Promoting the application of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums (ECE/MP.PP/2005/2/Add.5) and other relevant documents, presentations and outcomes of the previous sessions are available at: <https://unece.org/public-participation-international-forums>

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2023/5)

2021 Synthesis Report on the status of implementation of the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/2021/6) available from [https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/Aarhus\\_Convention\\_MoP7](https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/Aarhus_Convention_MoP7) (tab Category II pre-session documents) and 2021 national implementation reports available from <https://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org/national-reports/reports>

Relevant resources in [the Aarhus Clearinghouse](#)

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