

1. Good afternoon, dear colleagues!

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the 27th meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and to inform you about Ukraine's achievements in the field of compliance with the Aarhus Convention in such a difficult time for our country.

Given the difficult circumstances caused by Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, in which we have to work and operate, Ukraine has made great progress in informing the public about every event that affects the environment because every citizen has the right to know what kind of environment they are in and what threats there are to their lives.

2. Today, despite the war, the team of the Ministry of Environment continues to implement ambitious plans to further digitalize environmental protection. After all, digitalization is primarily about transparency, accessibility and efficiency. For this purpose, we have created the EcoSystem digital platform, which provides administrative services in the field of environment and access to registers maintained by the Ministry of Environment and central authorities that we coordinate.

3. The EcoSystem was created to ensure a high level of awareness of Ukrainians about the state of the environment; facilitate the implementation of the e-government mechanism; guarantee transparency in the activities of executive authorities; simplify the generalization and systematization of information on the environment held by government authorities at various levels; promote the coordination of stakeholder positions and enhance public participation in decision-making related to environmental policy. In this way, Ukraine fulfills its obligations under the Aarhus Convention.

4. On the next slide, you can see statistical information about services, business entities, users, etc. that is already available on the EcoSystem platform.

5. At the same time, the work on this project is not over, but is developing every day and is planned to be updated in the near future. By October 2023, the National Pollutant Release and Transfer Register on the EcoSystem platform will be launched, which we will integrate with the European PRTR. We have already asked the Committee for assistance in integrating the Register to ensure that the integration process goes quickly and smoothly.

The main difficulties in complying with the Aarhus Convention in Ukraine, which were caused by the martial law, relate primarily to the dissemination of information about existing critical infrastructure and key industries that could be used against the national interest and security of Ukraine.

For example, the Ministry of Environment is the holder and administrator of the public Unified Register of Environmental Impact Assessment, namely, it ensures its maintenance, and is responsible for the technical, technological and software support of the Register, as well as the storage and protection of data contained in the Register. The Register contains all information (technical documentation, location, geographical coordinates, mapping materials) on the types of planned activities and facilities that may have a significant impact on the environment, including critical infrastructure facilities that are important for the economy, national security and defense of the state. For example, in connection with the introduction of martial law in Ukraine, pursuant to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 263, the Ministry of Environment approved the Order "On Temporary Restriction of Access to the Unified Register of Environmental Impact Assessment". After that, we processed the information contained in the register and opened it, but access to information that may pose risks to the country's security was restricted, and a procedure was developed for obtaining such data as soon as possible by submitting

an application with the elements of the applicant's identification. In practice, this procedure has been implemented and the public can receive the requested information within two days. We informed the Committee about this way of solving the problem, sent a request for consultation, and consider this issue to be generally settled in Ukraine.

Also, holding full-fledged public discussions today has certain limitations. This is primarily due to the lack of shelters in the premises for public discussions, so the discussions are held online.

In addition, we would like to add one more issue to the list. This is the prioritization of the Ministry's actions. We understand that there are still unresolved issues related to access to information, namely the implementation of Decision VII/8r. However, due to the war, we are constantly faced with higher-priority issues that arise every day on our way and do not allow us to fully and quickly fulfill our obligations. These include calculations of environmental damage, procedures for dealing with waste from military operations, how to save and preserve our resources, operational actions in emergency situations and environmental disasters, and other issues that in one way or another affect our country's economy. Therefore, we would like to say that the implementation of the Decision is under control, we have the developments of the Working Group to resolve this issue and in the near future we will be able to implement all the recommendations of the Committee, but as you can see, we have a number of priorities.

In addition, after developing an action plan for the implementation of Decision VII/8r, we will apply to the Aarhus Convention Committee for assistance in implementing the Decision, namely, after analyzing our legislation and the provisions of the Aarhus Convention, we need to conduct trainings with the support of the Committee for Ukrainian state officials and representatives of the judiciary. Examples of issues requiring consultations and trainings include clarification of the provisions of the Compliance Committee's conclusions and recommendations on the implementation of public participation procedures for prospecting, exploration and extraction of mineral resources; clarification of the provision of PSA texts upon public requests; training for judges to clarify the right of non-governmental organizations to challenge the legality of environmental impact assessment conclusions and decisions on planned activities in court.

7. Continuing our presentation, we would like to introduce our new system for controlling and monitoring the environmental situation – EcoZagroza.

This system has a full-fledged monitoring system, reporting on eco-crimes and the Ukrainian Air Quality and Radiation Exposure Index (AQI).

8. This platform aims to disseminate life-saving information. This includes air raid alerts, chemical hazards, radiation hazards, air pollution, mines, water pollution, hazardous waste, soil contamination, illegal landfills, disaster instructions, and the effects of military operations on the environment.

Anyone can join the defense by sending the known information in one click. Every citizen can communicate with the state online and monitor the state of the environment on their smartphone.

9. As of today, EcoZagroza has received more than 2,000 citizen appeals, 48.1 billion euros in calculated damages, 89 countries have used the service, there are 750 radiation hazard monitoring posts in Eastern Europe, and more than 4,000 monitoring posts for the chemical composition of water, air, and soil in Eastern Europe.

10. In view of the above information, we would like to devote a few words to the tragedy that occurred in Ukraine, namely the explosion of the Kakhovka Dam. These actions of the Russian military caused irreparable damage to the environment of Ukraine. Today, the verification of data

on the extent of the damage is ongoing, but we can already talk about some figures after the russian terrorist attack:

At least 150 tons of oil and lubricants are drifting along the Dnipro River and may reach the Mediterranean Sea; more than 50,000 hectares of forests have been flooded and half of them will die; approximately 95,000 tons of dead fish cover the shallow Kakhovka Reservoir; bodies of dolphins from the Ukrainian coast are already being found on the Black Sea in Bulgaria and Turkey, and more than 150 such cases have been recorded.

The EcoZagroza portal we presented provides up-to-date information on environmental damage. The results of air, water and soil monitoring are updated around the clock. Information is provided on the consequences of the dam blowing up (short-term and long-term), as well as on the priority measures to overcome the consequences. Along with EcoZagroza, the Ministry of Environment has a telegram channel that constantly updates information. Ukrainian television currently has a separate channel broadcasting news about the course of military operations and the consequences of these actions for Ukraine around the clock. After the tragic events, the Minister of Environmental Protection reports almost every day on the work done by the Ministry, with the support of the Ministry of Emergencies, so that citizens have full information about the consequences of the environmental disaster.

11. It is important for the Ministry of Environment that, in the context of russia's constant terrorist and information attacks, Ukrainians have access to full analytics on the damage caused to our environment, whether it is damage from russian equipment, the explosion of infrastructure, forest burning, waste pollution, etc.

The Aarhus Convention does not define the specifics of ensuring public access to environmental information and public participation in environmental decision-making during martial law or active hostilities. However, we believe that Ukraine has made, is making, and will continue to make every effort to ensure full and non-discriminatory instruments for the realization of the rights provided for in the Convention.

Thank you very much for your attention!