

Agenda item 3: Status of ratification

Thank you Chair for giving me the floor.

As representatives of civil society in the Aarhus Countries,
we send a warm welcome to Guinea-Bissau.

It is a tribute to the hard work within the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol
that countries are still acceding to it and give these rights to their citizens.
It is an achievement that the regional range is getting bigger.

But at the same time we are concerned
that Belarus decided to withdraw from the Convention.
We are concerned that the citizens of Belarus - our friends and colleagues -
have lost these rights and the protection of the Aarhus Convention.

In the face of the climate crisis, biodiversity crisis, plastic crisis
and man-made environmental disasters,
at a time when environmental defenders have to fear for their lives:
It needs all of our combined efforts –
and we are glad that the efforts of Guinea-Bissau are joining us in this.

Thank you.