

Twenty-seventh meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention

Statement delivered by Maëlle Lécoreuil under item 7 on Promotion of the Convention and other relevant developments and interlinkages

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– Check against delivery –

The opportunities for Aarhus States Parties to build upon the UN recognition of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment

This Working Group of the Parties constitutes the first meeting since the historic recognition of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, through a Resolution that was adopted last July 2022 by the United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/76/300), building on a prior recognition by the Human Rights Council in 2021 (A/HRC/RES/48/13).

The ultimate objective of the Aarhus Convention - as explicitly laid out in its text - is specifically to contribute to the protection of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Indeed, while the Preamble states that the Convention recognizes the “right to live in an environment adequate to his or her health and well-being”, Article 1 provides that the rights to access information, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters aim at contributing to “the protection of every person of present and future generations to live in an environment adequate to his or her health and well-being”.

The UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council Resolutions both reflect the principles contained in the Aarhus Convention. The preambles of the Resolutions specifically recognize the rights to seek, receive and impart information, to participate effectively in the conduct of government and public affairs and to an effective remedy.

There is no doubt that this historic recognition is fully relevant to the implementation of the Convention and that Aarhus principles and objective must be taken into account in guaranteeing the universally recognized right to a healthy environment. Therefore, we look forward to further exploring opportunities to strengthen synergies between the promotion of the Aarhus protected rights and all relevant multilateral processes seeking to further protect the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment - at the international but also at the regional level, under the auspices of the Council of Europe.¹

We particularly expect Aarhus Parties to work collectively to further promote the Convention, its objective and principles, in all relevant international processes, related to the legal protection of the right to a healthy environment, including at the regional level.

¹Drafting Group on Human Rights and the Environment of the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH)' (Council of Europe) <<https://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-intergovernmental-cooperation/environment-and-human-rights>>.