

## **Agenda item 7. Promotion of the Convention and other relevant developments and interlinkages**

Statement by Magdolna Tóthné Nagy, Guta Environmental Law Association, on behalf of the European ECO Forum

Chair, Distinguished delegates,

We welcome the progress made by the Parties to the Escazú Agreement and its stakeholders, that at the recent extraordinary Conference of Parties (COP) in Buenos Aires, on April 19-21, 2023 the members of the Committee to Support Implementation and Compliance were elected, and that the compliance mechanism of the Agreement will now start to function as an important pillar supporting its application. In many respects, this mechanism is similar to that of the Aarhus Convention's Compliance Committee, including the possibility of the communication by the public.

We also appreciate the dynamic and inclusive work on the implementation of Decision I/6 on human rights defenders in environmental matters, under the Agreement. After the First Annual Forum on human rights defenders in environmental issues, held in Quito on November 22-23, 2022, an open-ended ad hoc working group on human rights defenders in environmental matters started to work. This ad hoc working group prepared an Annotated Index of the Action Plan on human rights defenders on environmental matters. Currently, this document is open for public consultation until the beginning of July 6, 2023, and will serve together with the outcome of the forum, as a basis for the next Annual Forum, as well as for the next COP.

Though the approach of the Escazú Agreement on the protection of human rights defenders in environmental matters is somewhat different from that of the Aarhus Convention's, in many respects, the results of the current work under the Agreement could be relevant and beneficial to follow, and learn from it.

We express our thanks to the Secretariat, the Aarhus Parties and stakeholders who support and help the implementation of the Escazú Agreement. It is worth to mention that Jonas Ebbesson, the former Chair of the Aarhus Convention's Compliance Committee was invited to attend the recent COP of the Escazú Agreement and share the Aarhus Convention's Compliance Committee's experience.

During the current meeting of the Working Group of Parties and as well as earlier, some areas have been highlighted where the cooperation and exchange of experiences could be mutually beneficial between the Escazú Agreement and Aarhus Convention. These include the work of the two Compliance Committees, the protection of environmental defenders, as mentioned above, as well as also, public participation in international fora (PPIF), but there could be also other areas of interest.

We propose to take concrete steps and develop proposals for the cooperation between the two agreements in these areas, and call on Parties, all stakeholders, the Secretariat and donor countries to support these initiatives!

Thank you for the attention!