

8. Implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025, including financial matters - Statement by Frederik Hafen on behalf of the European ECO Forum

We have heard about this topic many times already in the past days but now it's finally the right agenda item.

In short, the ECO Forum is dismayed at the state of underfunding in the Secretariat.

We have heard both the meeting's chair Mr Saladžius and the Compliance Committee's chair Ms Ryall use the strongest language possible to urge for financial contributions. And we have seen the Bureau's [letter](#) sent to the National focal points. To use Ms Ryall's words: We call upon all parties to provide resources on a long time basis and as a matter of urgency – I cannot emphasise this any more than she has aptly done herself.

I won't reiterate all the reasons why additional funding for the compliance framework is needed but just to list a few here:

- Over 60 pending ACCC cases
- Increasing number of MOP follow-ups
- Increasing requests for advice from parties
- The Special Rapporteur even stated his travel budget will run out before the summer

The secretariat is the backbone of this support, but Fiona's and Anastasia's contracts cannot be renewed on the basis of rounds of applause in this room. It is crucial that this important work can be carried out in the best possible conditions, which implies securing human resources and staff contracts. This can only be achieved via financial contributions which are earmarked broadly for the implementation of the convention or the compliance framework so that the secretariat can allocate them as needed.

We appeal to those representing Aarhus Parties here today to do their best in their internal discussions with their ministries and governments. Financial contributions for this year can still be made but time is of the essence, and we urge utmost expediency.

The Working Group of the Parties must also consider modifying the current financial scheme from voluntary to mandatory contributions. To ensure that contributions are predictable, arrive early in the year, and that their levels do not fluctuate each year, guidance should at least be issued by the Working Group of the Parties as to the amount required from each Party, in accordance with the principle of equity.

Believe me when I say that us NGOs have a list of about 100 substantive Aarhus issues we'd much rather use our speaking time for than to beg for money. Especially when we aren't even asking for money for ourselves. We call upon all parties to put their money where their mouth is.