

31 October 2023

Hristo Stoev
National focal point for Aarhus Convention
Ministry of Environment and Water
Bulgaria

Dear Mr. Stoev,

Re: Invitation to hearing to discuss substance of communication ACCC/C/2018/161 (Bulgaria)

I write to inform you that the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee proposes to hold a hearing to discuss the substance of communication ACCC/C/2018/161 at its eighty-first meeting to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 12-15 December 2023.

The hearing of the above communication is proposed for **Wednesday, 13 December 2023**, starting at 10:30 am and concluding by 4:30 pm.

In accordance with chapter IX of the [annex to decision I/7](#) of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention, both the Party concerned and the communicant are entitled to participate in the hearing on the subject matter of the communication, though not in the preparation or adoption of any findings, measures or recommendations of the Committee.

According to the Committee's normal practice, the hearing of the communication, which will be held in open session, will be interspersed with at least one closed session in which the Committee will begin the process of preparing draft findings. It is envisaged that the open sessions of the hearing will take the following form:

- Introduction by the Chair;
- Opening of the hearing by the curator for the case (10-15 minutes);
- Concise presentations by the communicant and by the Party concerned (10-15 minutes each);
- Questions from Committee members, replies from the Party concerned and the communicant (30 minutes);
- Comments from other observers at the invitation of the Chair (10 minutes);
- Final comments by the communicant (5-10 minutes);
- Final comments by the Party concerned (5-10 minutes).

During the second part of the hearing (i.e. following the closed session), the Committee may pose additional questions to the parties or invite reactions to any tentative conclusions it has reached.

Further details concerning the timetable for the hearing will be provided in the provisional timeline for the meeting to be published on the meeting webpage nearer the time.

I would be grateful if you could confirm by **Tuesday, 12 November 2023** that a representative of the Government of Bulgaria will participate in the hearing. Thereafter, each participant wishing to attend the meeting should register online at <https://indico.un.org/event/1002261/> before **Tuesday, 5 December 2023**.

Please note that, in accordance with paragraph 113 of the [Guide to the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee](#), in sending the present invitation to participate in the hearing to discuss the substance of the communication, the Committee thereby confirms its determination that the communication is admissible. It will therefore not be necessary for either the Party concerned or the communicant to make submissions on the issue of admissibility at the hearing.

Finally, the Committee has indicated that the hearing should not be used as an occasion to introduce substantial amounts of information that could or should have been provided to it at an earlier stage, unless this is unavoidable (e.g. because it concerns very recent developments). Should you wish to present any further substantial written material related to the matter, you should take into account that where such information is received less than two weeks before the meeting, it is doubtful whether the Committee will be able to take it into consideration when it is discussing the matter, even where the information is provided in English.

Please do not hesitate to contact the secretariat if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,



Fiona Marshall

Secretary to the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee

Cc: Permanent Mission of Bulgaria to the United Nations Office and specialized institutions in Geneva
Environmental association "Za Zemiata", communicant of communication ACCC/C/2018/161
ClientEarth, as observer