



Ms Fiona Marshall
Secretary to the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Palais des Nations, Room 429-4
CH-1211 GENEVA 10
Switzerland

24 November 2023

Re: Plan of Action for Decision VII/8i Progress Report

Dear Ms Marshall,

1. By way of further update to the Plan of Action for Decision VI/8i, which was submitted to the Committee on 30 June 2022, as regards Recommendation Paragraph 4 (b) (i) and (b) (ii) of Decision VII/8i, Ireland wishes to inform the committee that the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications' (DECC) preparation of Regulations which will amend the existing European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007 – 2018 is at an advanced stage. The purpose, inter alia, of amending Regulations is to address the findings and recommendations in ACCC/C/2016/141 and ACCC/C/2014/112
2. In February 2021 a review of the AIE regulations was undertaken in order to ensure compliance with the Aarhus Convention and to improve the overall effectiveness of the Regulations. The review included a public consultation, and 33 submissions were received from members of the public, public authorities and eNGOs.
3. Following the public consultation and where appropriate the draft regulations were updated with input from the States' law officers.
4. The draft regulations contain the following provisions in order to address paragraphs 4 (b) (i), paragraph 4 (c) (i) and paragraph 4(b)(ii) of decision VII/8i



(10) (8) (a) A decision by the Commissioner under paragraph (5) shall be made in a timely manner and, insofar as practicable, not later than four months after the date of receipt by the Commissioner of the application for the review concerned.

(11) (5) Public authorities shall comply with any order of a court requiring information to be issued to the person making the request concerned.

5. In order to address paragraph 4 (c) (i) of decision VII/8i, DECC have continued to organise training events for public authorities with regards to Access to Environmental Information. The next event is organised for January 2024.
6. A second public consultation on the proposed revised Access to Information on the Environment Regulations is currently taking place and will close on Monday 18 December 2023. Informed by the submissions, the new regulations will be finalised and implemented in Quarter One of 2024.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine Kennedy', is positioned above the printed name.

Elaine Kennedy
National Focal Point - Aarhus Convention