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Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on
Access to Information, Public Participation
in Decision-making and Access to Justice
in Environmental Matters

Compliance Committee

Seventy-sixth meeting
Geneva, 13–16 September 2022

Report of the Compliance Committee on its seventy-sixth meeting*

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Introduction

1. The seventy-sixth meeting of the Compliance Committee under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) was held from 13–16 September 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland.

A. Attendance

2. Eight of the nine Committee members were present throughout the meeting: Ms. Áine Ryall (Chair); Ms. Fruzsina Bögös; Mr. Marc Clément (Vice-Chair); Mr. Peter Oliver; Mr. Thomas Schomerus and Ms. Eleanor Sharpston were present in person while Ms. Heghine Grigoryan and Mr. Dmytro Skrylnikov (Vice-Chair) participated virtually. Mr. Jerzy Jendroška (Vice-Chair) did not attend the meeting on 15 and 16 September but was present for the rest of the meeting. Members having declared a conflict of interest with respect to particular cases did not participate in closed sessions deliberating on those cases.

3. Mr. Michel Forst, the Special Rapporteur on environmental defenders under the Aarhus Convention, took part, through virtual means, in the open session on 16 September 2022 on relevant developments regarding his mandate.

4. Representatives of the Party concerned of communication ACCC/C/2022/192 (Belgium) took part in the open session on preliminary admissibility on 13 September 2022, in person and through virtual means, and on 16 September 2022, in person. A representative of the communicant of communication PRE/ACCC/C/2022/192 (Belgium) took part in the open session on preliminary admissibility on 13 September 2022, through virtual means.

5. Representatives of the Party concerned and the communicant of communication PRE/ACCC/C/2022/193 (Ireland) took part in the open sessions on preliminary admissibility on 13 and 16 September 2022, through virtual means.

6. Representatives of the Party concerned and the communicant of communication PRE/ACCC/C/2022/194 (United Kingdom) took part in the open session on preliminary admissibility on 13 September 2022, in person. Representatives of the Party concerned also took part in the open sessions on 13 and 16 September, through virtual means.

7. Representatives of the Party concerned and the communicant of communication ACCC/C/2017/150 (United Kingdom) took part in the hearing held on 14 September 2022 to discuss the substance of the communication. A representative of the communicant of communication PRE/ACCC/C/2022/194 (United Kingdom) participated in the hearing, as an observer, in person.

8. Representatives of the European Union and the communicant of communication ACCC/C/2014/102 (Belarus) participated in the open session on 13 September 2022 on the review of developments regarding decisions of the Meeting of the Parties on compliance, through virtual means.

9. Representatives of Ireland, Spain, and the communicant of communication ACCC/C/2014/102 (Belarus) participated in the open session on 16 September 2022 on review of developments regarding the Special Rapporteur on environmental defenders, through virtual means.

10. A representative of the non-governmental organization (NGO) Earthjustice participated in most open sessions as an observer, in person. Representatives of the NGOs Justice and Environment and the Irish Environmental Network participated as observers in most open sessions, through virtual means.

B. Organizational matters

11. The Chair of the Compliance Committee, Ms. Ryall, opened the meeting.

12. The Committee adopted its agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.PP/C.1/2022/6.

13. The Chair reported that, since its seventy-fifth meeting (Geneva, 14–17 June 2022), the Committee had held one virtual meeting on 29 July 2022. At that meeting, the Committee had finalized and adopted its findings on request ACCC/M/2021/5 (Republic of Moldova), had discussed how it would proceed with respect to request for advice ACCC/A/2022/3 (Ukraine) and had continued its deliberations on its draft findings on communication ACCC/C/2016/140 (Romania) and its draft advice on the implementation of decision VII/8m concerning the Netherlands.

14. Regarding communications received before 2 August 2022 (the deadline for receipt of communications for the seventy-sixth meeting), the Chair reported that she and Vice-Chairs Mr. Clément, Mr. Jendroška and Mr. Skrylnikov had held a virtual meeting on 16 August 2022 to determine which of the communications received by the deadline sufficiently met the required format to be forwarded to the Committee for consideration as to their preliminary admissibility. At the virtual meeting, the Chair and Vice-Chairs had decided that communications PRE/ACCC/C/2022/192 (Belgium), PRE/ACCC/C/2022/193 (Ireland), and PRE/ACCC/C/2022/194 (United Kingdom) should be forwarded to the Committee for consideration of preliminary admissibility at its seventy-sixth meeting and had requested the secretariat to post these communications on the Committee's website in advance of the meeting.

I. Submissions by Parties

15. The Committee noted that it had not received any submissions from Parties, either concerning their own compliance or concerning the compliance of another Party, since its seventy-fifth meeting.

II. Referrals by the Special Rapporteur on environmental defenders and other relevant developments

16. The Chair congratulated Mr. Forst on his election by the Meeting of the Parties at its third extraordinary session (Geneva, 23-24 June 2022), by consensus, as the first Special Rapporteur on environmental defenders under the Aarhus Convention. The Committee expressed its great willingness to cooperate with him and to support him in his important work. The Committee noted that it had to date received no referrals from the Special Rapporteur on environmental defenders.

17. Mr. Forst expressed his commitment to the mandate entrusted to him by the Meeting of the Parties and provided an update on his activities since his election to date. Mr. Forst reported that since his election he had held a number of meetings with environmental defenders and had participated in various events and meetings with Parties and other States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to raise awareness of his mandate and the situation of environmental defenders. Mr. Forst also informed the Committee that, on 23 November 2022, he would hold a meeting at the Palais des Nations with the Convention's national focal points and other interested Member States and stakeholders to present his vision for his mandate.

III. Referrals by the secretariat

18. The Committee noted that it had to date received no referrals from the secretariat.

IV. Requests from the Meeting of the Parties

19. Regarding request ACCC/M/2021/4 (European Union), on 1 July 2022 the Party concerned had submitted a draft plan of action, on 15 July 2022 it had provided an update on its public consultation thereon and on 31 July 2022, it had submitted the final version of its plan of action. The Committee agreed to review the Party concerned's plan of action at an upcoming meeting.

20. With respect to request ACCC/M/2021/5 (Republic of Moldova), the Committee noted that it had finalized and adopted its findings at its virtual meeting on 29 July 2022, which had thereafter been sent to the Party concerned. The Committee agreed that the findings should be published as a formal pre-session document to its seventy-seventh meeting (Geneva, 13-16 December 2022).

V. Requests from Parties for advice or assistance

21. Concerning request for advice ACCC/A/2022/3 (Ukraine), on 27 June 2022, Ukraine had submitted a request to the Committee seeking its advice on whether the forms of access to information and public participation proposed by the Party concerned in environmental impact assessment procedures during the ongoing military invasion by the Russian Federation were in line with the Convention. The Party concerned had also requested the Committee to share its experience and provide recommendations on the ways and means of respecting the rights of the Convention during hostilities. At the current meeting, the Committee continued its deliberations on its draft advice and agreed to continue those deliberations at an upcoming meeting.

VI. Communications from members of the public

22. The Committee agreed that the deadline for the receipt of new communications to be considered for preliminary admissibility at its seventy-seventh meeting would be 1 November 2022.

23. Regarding communication ACCC/C/2014/113 (Ireland), the Committee noted that the Court of Appeal's judgment in *Heather Hill Management Company CLG v. An Bord Pleanála* had been handed down in October 2021,¹ but that judgment was itself currently under appeal before the Supreme Court. The Committee agreed, once the Supreme Court had delivered its judgment, to invite the parties to comment on the implications of that judgment for the communication and to decide how to proceed with the communication taking into account the comments received.

24. Concerning communication ACCC/C/2014/119 (Poland), the Committee noted that at its seventy-fifth meeting, it had agreed that the findings should be published as a formal pre-session document to its seventy-seventh meeting.

25. With respect to communication ACCC/C/2015/126 (Poland), the Committee agreed to defer its deliberations on its draft findings to an upcoming meeting.

26. Regarding communication ACCC/C/2015/132 (Ireland), the Committee agreed to defer its deliberations on its draft findings to an upcoming meeting.

27. Concerning communication ACCC/C/2015/133 (Netherlands), the Committee agreed to defer its deliberations on its draft findings to an upcoming meeting.

28. With respect to communication ACCC/C/2016/139 (Ireland), the Committee noted that on 19 August 2022, the communicant had sent a letter stating that, despite previously taking the view that no hearing was needed, it considered a hearing in this case was now warranted. The Committee agreed to inform the parties that the Committee was at an advanced stage of deliberating on its draft findings, that it would not revisit its decision to proceed without a hearing, and that parties should refrain from sending further comments or documentation unless requested by the Committee. The Committee continued its deliberations on its draft findings at the meeting and agreed to continue those deliberations at an upcoming meeting.

29. Regarding communication ACCC/C/2016/140 (Romania), the Committee agreed to defer its deliberations on its draft findings to an upcoming meeting.

¹ [2021] IECA 259.

30. Concerning communication ACCC/C/2017/146 (Poland), the Committee noted that it had agreed to send questions to the parties for their written reply. It agreed to defer its deliberations on its draft findings to an upcoming meeting and to take into account the replies once received.
31. Regarding communication ACCC/C/2017/148 (Greece), the Committee noted that it had agreed to send questions to the parties for their written reply. It agreed to defer its deliberations on its draft findings to an upcoming meeting and to take into account the replies once received.
32. With respect to communication ACCC/C/2017/149 (Greece), the Committee agreed that it would decide how to proceed with the communication at an upcoming meeting.
33. Regarding communication ACCC/C/2017/150 (United Kingdom), the Committee held a hearing to discuss the substance of the communication in open session on 14 September 2022, during the current meeting. Representatives of the Party concerned and the communicant participated in the hearing. Following the hearing, the Committee commenced its deliberations on its draft findings in closed session and agreed to continue those deliberations at an upcoming meeting.
34. Concerning communication ACCC/C/2016/151 (Poland), the Committee noted that it had agreed to send questions to the parties for their written reply. The Committee agreed to defer its deliberations on its draft findings to an upcoming meeting and to take into account the replies once received.
35. With respect to communication ACCC/C/2017/153 (Spain), the Committee agreed that it would decide how to proceed with the communication at an upcoming meeting taking into account the voluminous information received.
36. Regarding communication ACCC/C/2017/154 (Poland), the Committee noted that it had agreed to send questions to the parties for their written reply. The Committee agreed to defer its deliberations on its draft findings to an upcoming meeting and to take into account the replies once received.
37. Concerning communication ACCC/C/2017/156 (United Kingdom), the Committee agreed to defer its deliberations on its draft findings to an upcoming meeting.
38. Regarding communication ACCC/C/2018/158 (Poland), the Committee noted that it had agreed to send questions to the parties for their written reply. It agreed to defer its deliberations on its draft findings to an upcoming meeting and to take into account the replies once received.
39. Concerning communication ACCC/C/2017/159 (Spain), the Committee agreed that it would decide how to proceed with the communication at an upcoming meeting.
40. With respect to communication ACCC/C/2018/161 (Bulgaria), the Committee agreed that it would decide how to proceed with the communication at an upcoming meeting.
41. Regarding communication ACCC/C/2019/162 (Denmark), the Committee noted that it had agreed to ask the Party concerned to submit the texts of the relevant case law referred to in its response to the communication.
42. Concerning communication ACCC/C/2019/163 (Austria), the Committee agreed that it would decide how to proceed with the communication at an upcoming meeting.
43. With respect to communication ACCC/C/2019/164 (Ireland), the Committee noted that it had agreed to invite the communicant to comment on the submissions on admissibility made by the Party concerned in its response to the communication dated 22 August 2019 and to decide how to proceed with the communication at an upcoming meeting, taking into account the information received.
44. Regarding communication ACCC/C/2019/168 (Iceland), the Committee agreed that it would decide how to proceed with the communication at an upcoming meeting.
45. Concerning communication ACCC/C/2019/173 (Sweden), the Committee noted that it had agreed to send questions to the Party concerned for clarification and that it would

decide how to proceed with the communication at an upcoming meeting, taking into account the information received.

46. With respect to communication ACCC/C/2019/174 (Sweden), the Committee agreed that it would decide how to proceed with the communication at an upcoming meeting.

47. Regarding communication ACCC/C/2020/177 (Bosnia and Herzegovina), the Committee noted that it had agreed to ask the Party concerned to expand upon its response of 23 November 2020 and also to clarify whether it challenged the admissibility of the communication. The Committee agreed that it would decide how to proceed with the communication at an upcoming meeting, taking into account the information received.

48. Concerning communication ACCC/C/2020/178 (Germany), the Committee noted that it had agreed to invite the communicant to comment on the submissions on admissibility made by the Party concerned in its response to the communication dated 13 August 2020 and to decide how to proceed with the communication at an upcoming meeting, taking into account the information received.

49. With respect to communication ACCC/C/2020/179 (Serbia), the Committee agreed to decide how to proceed with the communication at an upcoming meeting.

50. Regarding communication ACCC/C/2020/181 (Netherlands), the Committee agreed to decide how to proceed with the communication at an upcoming meeting.

51. Concerning communication ACCC/C/2020/182 (Belarus), on 9 September 2022 the communicant had submitted a letter asking the Committee to proceed to consider the merits of the communication, notwithstanding the impending withdrawal from the Convention by the Party concerned to enter into effect on 24 October 2022. The Committee agreed to invite the Party concerned to provide its comments on the communicant's request and to decide how to proceed with the communication at an upcoming meeting taking into account any comments received.

52. With respect to communication ACCC/C/2020/183 (Spain), the Committee agreed to decide how to proceed with the communication at an upcoming meeting.

53. Regarding communication ACCC/C/2021/186 (Portugal), on 4 April 2022, the Party concerned had submitted its response to the communication and in its response, it had challenged the admissibility of the communication. After considering the Party's comments on the admissibility of the communication and the communicant's comments thereon in closed session, the Committee agreed to send questions to the Party concerned for its written reply and to decide how to proceed with the communication at an upcoming meeting, taking into account the reply received.

54. Concerning communication ACCC/C/2021/187 (Netherlands), the Committee agreed to decide how to proceed with the communication at an upcoming meeting.

55. With respect to communication ACCC/C/2021/189 (Bosnia and Herzegovina), the secretariat had forwarded the communication to the Party concerned on 21 February 2022 for its response by 21 July 2022. The Committee noted that, to date, the Party concerned had not yet submitted its response. It requested the secretariat to write to the Party concerned regarding its outstanding response.

56. Communication PRE/ACCC/C/2022/191 (Ukraine) had been submitted on 24 December 2021 by Ecoclub, an environmental NGO. The communication alleged non-compliance with articles 6 (4) and (6) (e) and 7, in conjunction with article 3 (1), of the Convention, in connection with the Kronospan wood processing plant. The Committee noted that, upon the instructions of the Chair, the secretariat had written to the Party concerned and the communicant on 10 September 2022 to inform them that, in the light of the ongoing war against Ukraine, the Committee proposed to further postpone its session on preliminary admissibility of the communication until its seventy-seventh meeting.

57. Communication ACCC/C/2022/192 (Belgium) had been submitted on 8 August 2022 by the NGO Aktiekomitee Red de Voorkempen, and two members of the public, Mr. Philip Roodhooft and Ms. Nathalie Van Sande. The communication alleged non-compliance with articles 6, 7, 8 and 9 (2)–(3) of the Convention in connection with the validation of sectoral

conditions for wind turbines. The Committee heard the views of the Party concerned and the communicants on the preliminary admissibility of the communication in open session. After considering in closed session the information received, the Committee determined that the communication was admissible on a preliminary basis and requested the secretariat to forward the communication to the Party concerned for its response.

58. Communication ACCC/C/2022/193 (Ireland) had been submitted on 13 May 2022 by Mr. Brendan Heneghan, a member of the public. The communication alleged non-compliance with articles 6 (2)–(4) and (6) of the Convention in connection with the decision-making on the proposed development of bus corridors in the city of Dublin, in particular the Clongriffin bus corridor. The Committee heard the views of the Party concerned and the communicant on the preliminary admissibility of the communication in open session. After considering in closed session the information received, the Committee noted that the decision-making procedure on the Clongriffin bus corridor had not yet concluded. For that reason, the Committee determined the communication to be inadmissible in accordance with paragraph 20 (d) of the annex to decision I/7 of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention for not being compatible with the provisions of decision I/7 of the Convention.

59. Communication ACCC/C/2022/194 (United Kingdom) had been submitted on 10 August 2022 by WWF UK and seven other organizations and associations. The communication alleged non-compliance with article 8 of the Convention in connection with the negotiation of free trade agreements. The Committee heard the views of the Party concerned and the communicants on the preliminary admissibility of the communication in open session. After considering in closed session the information received, the Committee determined that the communication was admissible on a preliminary basis and requested the secretariat to forward the communication to the Party concerned for its response.

VII. Follow-up on specific cases of non-compliance

60. The Committee took note of the developments since its seventy-fifth meeting with respect to decisions VII/8a–s of the Meeting of the Parties.

61. With respect to decision VII/8a (Armenia), on 30 June 2022, the Party concerned had submitted the plan of action that it had been requested by the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 4 (a) of the decision, to submit by 1 July 2022. The Committee agreed to review the Party concerned's plan of action at an upcoming meeting.

62. Concerning decision VII/8b (Austria), on 1 July 2022, the Party concerned had submitted a draft of its plan of action that it had been requested by the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 2 (e) of the decision, to submit, in final form, by that date. The Committee noted that the Party concerned had also not yet submitted the review of its national law that the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 2 (c) of decision VII/8b, had requested it to submit as a matter of urgency and by no later than 1 July 2022. The Committee instructed the secretariat to ask the Party concerned to submit the review of its national law and the final version of its plan of action as soon as possible.

63. Regarding decision VII/8c (Belarus), the Committee noted that the Party concerned had not yet submitted the plan of action that the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 10 (a) of the decision, had requested it to submit by 1 July 2022. The Committee also noted that, on 26 July 2022, Belarus had deposited its instrument to withdraw from the Convention with the UN Treaty Section, pursuant to which Belarus would cease to be a Party to the Convention ninety days thereafter, that is on 24 October 2022. On 3 August 2022, the communicant of communication ACCC/C/2014/102 had submitted a statement regarding the withdrawal by Belarus from the Convention² and, on 9 September 2022, the communicant had written to the Committee regarding the status of the Party concerned's pending cases, namely communication ACCC/C/2020/182 (Belarus) and decision VII/8c, after the entry into effect of its withdrawal. On 14 September 2022, observers Center for International Environmental Law, European Environmental Bureau, Guta Association, Journalists for Human Rights,

² Available on the webpage of the seventy-sixth meeting, see <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/seventy-sixth-meeting-aarhus-convention-compliance-committee>.

Justice and Environment, Ökobüro and Women Engage for a Common Future submitted a joint statement concerning the withdrawal by Belarus from the Convention.³ The Committee agreed to decide how to proceed with the Party concerned's pending cases at an upcoming meeting.

64. With respect to decision VII/8d (Bulgaria), on 1 July 2022, the Party concerned had submitted the plan of action that it had been requested by the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 7 (a) of the decision, to submit by that date. The Committee agreed to review the Party concerned's plan of action at an upcoming meeting.

65. Concerning decision VII/8e (Czechia), on 1 July 2022, the Party concerned had submitted a draft of the plan of action that it had been requested by the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 7 (a) of the decision, to submit, in final form, by that date. The Committee instructed the secretariat to ask the Party concerned to submit the final version of its plan of action as soon as possible.

66. Regarding decision VII/8f (European Union), on 1 July 2022, the Party concerned had submitted a draft of the plan of action that it had been requested by the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 11 (a) of the decision, to submit, in final form, by that date. On 31 July 2022, the Party concerned had submitted the final version of its plan of action. The Committee agreed to review the Party concerned's plan of action at an upcoming meeting.

67. With respect to decision VII/8g (Germany), on 15 June 2022, the Party concerned had submitted the plan of action that it had been requested by the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 3 (a) of the decision, to submit by 1 July 2022. The Committee agreed to review the Party concerned's plan of action at an upcoming meeting.

68. Concerning decision VII/8h (Hungary), the Committee noted that the Party concerned had not yet submitted the plan of action that the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 3 (a) of the decision, had requested it to submit by 1 July 2022. The Committee instructed the secretariat to ask the Party concerned to submit its plan of action as soon as possible.

69. Regarding decision VII/8i (Ireland), on 30 June 2022, the Party concerned had submitted the plan of action that it had been requested by the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 5 (a) of the decision, to submit by 1 July 2022. The Committee agreed to review the Party concerned's plan of action at an upcoming meeting.

70. With respect to decision VII/8j (Italy), the Committee noted that the Party concerned had not yet submitted the plan of action that the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 3 (a) of the decision, had requested it to submit by 1 July 2022. The Committee instructed the secretariat to ask Party concerned to submit its outstanding plan of action as soon as possible.

71. Concerning decision VII/8k (Kazakhstan), on 14 July 2022, the Party concerned had submitted the plan of action that it had been requested by the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 3 (a) of the decision, to submit by 1 July 2022. The Party concerned had also informed the secretariat that it had in fact already sent its plan of action to the secretariat in approximately March 2022, although the secretariat had no record of that earlier correspondence. The Committee agreed to review the Party concerned's plan of action at an upcoming meeting.

72. Regarding decision VII/8l (Lithuania), on 28 June 2022, the Party concerned had submitted the plan of action that it had been requested by the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 3 (a) of the decision, to submit by 1 July 2022. The Committee agreed to review the Party concerned's plan of action at an upcoming meeting.

73. With respect to decision VII/8m (Netherlands), on 30 June 2022, the Party concerned had submitted the plan of action that it had been requested by the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 4 (a) of the decision, to submit by 1 July 2022. At its virtual meeting on 29 July 2022, the Committee had continued its deliberations on its draft advice to the Party concerned concerning the implementation of paragraph 3 (a) of decision VII/8m and had thereafter agreed its draft advice through its electronic decision-making procedure on 18 August 2022. On 24 August 2022, the Committee's draft advice had been forwarded to the Party concerned

³ Ibid.

and the communicant of communications ACCC/C/2014/104 and ACCC/C/2014/124 for their comments. On 8 September 2022, the Party concerned had asked for an extension of time to submit its comments and had also asked whether other Parties to the Convention would be invited to comment on the draft advice. On 13 September 2022, the secretariat wrote to the Party concerned to inform it that the Chair of the Committee had granted an extension of the commenting period and to confirm that all Parties to the Convention would be notified of the possibility to submit comments on the draft advice by the stated deadline. The Committee agreed to review the Party concerned's plan of action at an upcoming meeting and to finalize its advice on the implementation of paragraph 3 (a) of decision VII/8m, taking into account the comments received.

74. Concerning decision VII/8n (Republic of Moldova), on 4 July 2022, three days after the deadline, the Party concerned had submitted the plan of action that it had been requested by the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 3 (a) of the decision, to submit by 1 July 2022. The Committee agreed to review the Party concerned's plan of action at an upcoming meeting.

75. Regarding decision VII/8o (Romania), on 20 July 2022, nineteen days after the deadline, the Party concerned had submitted the plan of action that it had been requested by the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 3 (a) of the decision, to submit by 1 July 2022. The Committee agreed to review the Party concerned's plan of action at an upcoming meeting.

76. With respect to decision VII/8p (Spain), on 1 July 2022, the Party concerned had submitted the plan of action that it had been requested by the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 2 (c) of the decision, to submit by that date. The Committee agreed to review the Party concerned's plan of action at an upcoming meeting.

77. With respect to decision VII/8q (Turkmenistan), the Committee noted that the Party concerned had not yet submitted the plan of action that the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 4 (a) of decision VII/8q, had requested it to submit by 1 July 2022. The Committee instructed the secretariat to ask the Party concerned to submit its outstanding plan of action as soon as possible.

78. Regarding decision VII/8r (Ukraine), the Committee noted that the Party concerned had not yet submitted the plan of action that the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 3 (a) of the decision, had requested it to submit by 1 July 2022. The Committee also noted the exceptional circumstances due to the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation and the consequent ongoing war. The Committee asked the secretariat to follow up with the Party concerned regarding its outstanding plan of action.

79. Concerning decision VII/8s (United Kingdom), on 1 July 2022, the Party concerned had submitted the plan of action that it had been requested by the Meeting of the Parties, in paragraph 9 (a) of the decision, to submit by that date. The Committee agreed to review the Party concerned's plan of action at an upcoming meeting.

VIII. Programme of work and calendar of meetings

80. The Committee noted that it had agreed, subject to the availability of conference services, to hold its seventy-seventh meeting on 13–16 December 2022. The Committee also agreed to schedule a virtual meeting prior to that meeting in order to proceed with its review of the plans of action submitted by those Parties subject to a decision or request of the Meeting of the Parties concerning their compliance.

IX. Other business

A. Reporting requirements

81. The Committee noted that the Meeting of the Parties, at its seventh session (Geneva, 18–20 October 2021), had urged Parties that had not yet submitted their national implementation reports – i.e. Azerbaijan, Malta, the Netherlands, the Republic of Moldova

and Tajikistan – to do so by 1 December 2021 at the latest, and in the required format. The secretariat informed the Committee that three of those five Parties had subsequently submitted their reports (i.e.: Azerbaijan, on 19 October 2021; Malta, on 11 November 2021; and Republic of Moldova, on 2 December 2021). At the time of the meeting, only the Netherlands and Tajikistan had failed to submit their national implementation reports for the 2021 reporting cycle.

X. Report and closure of the meeting

82. The Committee agreed to adopt its report through its electronic decision-making procedure after the meeting. The Chair then officially closed the seventy-sixth meeting.
