

Statement for Item 2. War in Ukraine and implementation of the Convention.

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### **Public participation in EU enlargement process and post war green recovery of Ukraine**

We are proud that EU accession process is successfully going on and the negotiations with Ukraine are officially opened last week.

But we worry about losing the green component, not enough attention to environmental issues on high official level in Ukraine, which is caused by weak environmental policy in Ukraine in general.

**We are sure that the recovery of Ukraine should take place on the basis of sustainable development, taking into account the principles of green reconstruction, and improvement of the environmental policy is vital for European integration, for defeating the Russian aggressor, and for the further development of our country.**

We are sure that public participation provisions of Aarhus Convention should be taken into account, even in the war time. Understanding the reasons of some limitation on access to environmental information during war time, we see a strong need to strengthen public involvement into the EU accession process and post war recovery of Ukraine.

Members of two pro-european platforms prepared several policy papers, appeals, statements for our high officials with recommendations about measures to be done for improving the situation. Unfortunately, our opinion was not heard and our recommendations were not included into further programs, documents or draft laws. Which is against of the Aarhus principles.

We distributed our statements at important international events, like URC24 in Berlin.

Our position was included into the Joint Declaration of EU-UA CSP, this document goes as a recommendation to DG Near. Ukrainian CSOs also involved into regular consultations provided by Informal working group of DG NEAR Ukraine Service.

Accession countries have now a good opportunity to participate in the regular work of the EESC, in a status of ECM (enlargement candidate members). This initiative is very new for us and for EESC as well, for today it is a kind of a pilot project, and we discuss together with our colleges from EU part of CSP its' first steps and further development. We believe this initiative which is now very actively discussed only by Ukrainian CSO, will be useful for all other accession countries as well. And this is an example of following principles of Aarhus convention, respecting the people right to public participation.

Another example of our pro-european platforms activities – arranging a dialog space for discussions about systematic environmental policy problems with the Parliament committee on environmental policy. We expect to have one more instrument to influence to parliamentarians and government and bring our position to high governmental level. Last week we arranged an open discussion called “The loss of the green component in recovery of Ukraine as a consequence of the secondary nature of environmental policy” and press briefing afterward.

We are starting now a new initiative “Towards the EU in the environmental field: assessing the Ukraine’s progress of implementation of the recommendations of the European Commission Report on enlargement project”, in the frame of EaP CSF project.

**For decisions:**

**To support efforts of Ukrainian CSOs on strengthening public participation in green agenda and green recovery of Ukraine.**