

Economic Commission for Europe

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

Working Group of the Parties

Twenty-eighth meeting

Geneva, 2-4 July 2024

Item 5 of the provisional agenda:

Thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums

Promotion of the principles of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) in international forums¹

Provisional programme for the thematic session²
to be held on Wednesday, 3 July, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–3.30 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Marie-Hélène Sa Vilas Boas

Introduction

Timing: 10–10.05 a.m.

The Chair of the session will introduce organization of work during the thematic session and the main topics for discussion. The topics for discussion are based on decision VII/4 on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums (ECE/MP.PP/2021/2/Add.1), adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session, and the outcomes of the previous thematic sessions. The thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums will include panel presentations and round table discussion focusing on international decision-making with regard to energy; carbon-trading and other market-based mechanisms; and new or emerging technologies.

Additional topics will include updates on subjects considered by the Working Group of the Parties at its previous meetings, namely, promotion of the principles of the Convention in (a) the work of the International Seabed Authority; (b) stakeholder engagement in International Financial Institutions; (c) stakeholder engagement and access to information policies of the United Nations Environment Programme and United Nations Environment Assembly; (d) stakeholder engagement in Sustainable Development-related Processes; and (e) stakeholder engagement in UNFCCC processes, with the focus on carbon-trading and other market-based mechanisms.

¹ This document was not formally edited.

² Background information on work area on promoting the principles of the Convention in international forums is available from:
<https://www.unece.org/env/pp/ppif.html>.

I. Energy

Timing: 10.05–11 a.m.

This item will be organized in the format of a panel presentation and round-table discussion. The focus of this session is on promoting the principles of the Aarhus Convention vis-à-vis Parties' obligations in international decision-making related to energy.

Panellists

- **Ms. Sophie Bunyan**, Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications of Ireland
- **Ms. Francesca Carlsson**, Policy Manager for Environmental Law and Justice, European Environmental Bureau / European ECO Forum

Discussion

II. Carbon-trading and other Market-based Mechanisms

Timing: 11–11.30 a.m.

This item will be organized in the format of a panel presentation and round-table discussion. The focus of this session is on promoting the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international decision-making related to carbon-trading and other market-based mechanisms aiming to support implementation of the UNFCCC Paris Agreement.

Panellists

- **Ms. Laura Gornicioiu**, Deputy Head of Unit ENV.E4, Environmental Rule of Law & Governance, Directorate-General Environment, European Commission
- **Ms. Lien Vandamme**, Senior Campaigner Human Rights and Climate Change, Center for International Environmental Law / European ECO Forum

Discussion

III. New or Emerging Technologies

Timing: 11.30 a.m.–12.15 p.m.

This item will be organized in the format of a panel presentation and round-table discussion. The focus of this session will be on promoting the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international decision-making related to new or emerging technologies, such as geoengineering.

Panellists

- **Ms. Nino Gokhelashvili**, Head, Sustainable Development Division, Environment and Climate Change Department, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia
- **Mr. David Fahey**, Director, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Chemical Sciences Laboratory, United States of America (*online*)
- **Ms. Alison Hough**, Head of Access to Justice Observatory, Environmental Justice Network Ireland / European ECO Forum

Discussion

IV. General Discussion and Additional Topics

Timing: 12.15–1 p.m. and 3–3.20 p.m.

Participants will be invited to exchange views on other relevant matters, including on written updates on promotion of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in processes under International Financial Institutions; Stakeholder engagement and access to information policies of the United Nations Environment Programme and the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly; Sustainable Development-related Processes and UNFCCC processes, with the focus on carbon-trading and other market-based mechanisms.

This item will include a panel discussion on promoting principles of the Aarhus Convention in the work of the International Seabed Authority (ISA).

Panellists

- **Mr. David Pusztai**, Legal Officer, ISA Secretariat (*video statement*)
- **Ms. Hannah Lily**, Group of Independent Experts on ISA

Discussion

V. Concluding Remarks by the Chair of the Thematic Session

Timing: 3.20–3.30 p.m.

The Chair of the thematic session will make concluding remarks.

Documents and background material

For written updates and other relevant material, see Tab “Thematic session on Public Participation in International Forums”: <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/twenty-eighth-meeting-working-group-parties-aarhus-convention>

Decision VII/4 on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums (ECE/MP.PP/2021/2/Add.1), the Almaty Guidelines on Promoting the application of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums (ECE/MP.PP/2005/2/Add.5) and other relevant documents, presentations and outcomes of the previous sessions are available at: <https://unece.org/publicparticipation-international-forums>

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/4)

2021 Synthesis Report on the status of implementation of the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/2021/6) available from https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/Aarhus_Convention_MoP7 (tab Category II pre-session documents) and 2021 national implementation reports available from <https://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org/national-reports/reports>

Relevant resources in the [Aarhus Clearinghouse](#)
