

## **Aarhus Convention, Working Group of the Parties (WGP-28) Geneva, 2-4 July 2024**

### **Agenda Item 2: War against Ukraine**

#### **Statement by Ukraine**

Dear Chair, delegates and participants!

Thank you all for being able to represent Ukraine in this room today, thank you for your support of our country in one way or another for more than two years and allowing us to report and remind you about the terrible consequences of military actions.

Ukraine, a European state, today is the epicenter of ecological terrorism, and as we are already used to saying - ecocide. Active hostilities not only destroy cities and people's lives, but also have a catastrophic impact on the ecological state of the environment and air quality in Ukraine and beyond.

During the third year of the full-scale invasion, 4,800 cases of environmental damage were recorded, which in monetary terms is over 2.4 trillion hryvnias.

Emissions into the atmospheric air as a result of hostilities on the territory of Ukraine already amount to 180 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>.

The total direct losses of enterprises are estimated at \$13.1 billion. In total, at least 426 large and medium enterprises and tens of thousands of small enterprises have been damaged or destroyed since the beginning of the war. (due to data from February 2022-January 2024 Kyiv School of Economics).

Last year, at the meeting of the Working group of the Parties, we presented our official web resource and mobile application of the Ministry of the Environment - EkoZagroza, thanks to which everyone will be able to find out reliable information about the state of air, water, soil and other environmental data. In the application, on the interactive map of Ukraine, you can see: data of monitoring systems regarding air quality and the level of radiation pollution throughout Ukraine; actual facts of environmental threats caused by the Russian invaders. Ukrainians can also report all the facts of environmental crimes against the environment that they have witnessed. For example, about the burning of military equipment; forest fires; spillage of petroleum products or poisonous substances into the soil or water body; emission of poisonous substances (chlorine, ammonia, hydrogen sulfide, hydrocyanic acid, nitric acid) into the air.

Until now, the World hasn't been faced the scale of environmental destruction that Ukraine has as a result of Russian armed aggression. In recent decades, the focus of war damage assessment has been on infrastructure losses, human losses, and destroyed military equipment. However, our calculations show that the environmental damage of the war is no less expensive than the infrastructural damage.

Despite the state of war, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine is trying to fulfill its international obligations under the Aarhus Convention.

We understand the importance in the conditions of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine, to promptly not only record, but also analyze the real volumes of damage to the environment, and to inform civil society about this, so that every person has up-to-date environmental information and knows his rights regarding making important environmental decisions.

Therefore, from the last annual achievements, Ukraine adopted the Law on the state system of environmental monitoring and environmental information to determine, analyze and forecast the impact.

A comprehensive and systematic collection of environmental data will allow its appropriate analysis. After all, we strive not only to collect environmental data and open it, as stipulated by the Aarhus Convention, but also to properly systematize it. And all this information will be available on the single ecological platform of the Ministry of Environment "EkoSystem".

Despite the war, the Ministry of Environment continues to open access to environmental information through the open data portal "EkoSystem", on which 44 environmental sets have been published today. The development of environmental open data is a guarantee of free access to information about the state of the environment for everyone.

In October 2023, the National Pollutant Release and Transfer Register became operational part of the EcoSystem, and already this year we will create the first comprehensive report on emissions and waste, which we will send to the Secretariat of the Aarhus Convention and Protocol.

Also, during the war, we launched online procedures for passing SEA on EcoSystem, which will allow to create a unified database with materials of all strategic environmental assessments that will take place in Ukraine. Digitalization will make the SEA process convenient and accessible, and environmental information available to the public.

At the end of last year, changes to the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment entered into force, which affected the functioning of the new register of environmental impact assessment, in which cases started in 2024 and beyond will be open with the features of martial law.

Also, on May 6, the Ministry of Environment began preparing the National Report on the Implementation of the Aarhus Convention for the years 2021-2024, which is an important document for assessing the country's progress in fulfilling its obligations.

Taking into account all of the above, we can say that the Government of Ukraine fulfills all international obligations to the best of its ability in such a difficult time and circumstance, and we will definitely win, overcome all difficulties and crises because we have great global support.

Thank you all again for support and for attention!