



Aarhus Convention 28th WGP

Francesca Carlsson, EEB, Aarhus ECO Forum

July 2024, Agenda item 3 – Status of Ratification:

Dear Chair, dear Secretariat and dear Delegates and colleagues,

I will be delivering a statement combining two separate ones from two people who could not be present with us at this meeting.

The first statement is on behalf of Redzib Skomorac, from the CZZS Centre for Environment, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a Convention member since 2008, yet it has still not ratified the PRTR Protocol. This leaves public participation, transparency and environmental democracy across Bosnia and Herzegovina in a vulnerable state. Timely and accurate information on pollution is a general precondition to effectively exercise the rights granted by the Convention which needs to be implemented by the member states. We welcome the collaborations of the national institutions at all levels with a project on the PRTR and invite them to continue to engage with this project, with a view to encourage Bosnia and Herzegovina to ratify the Protocol.

The second statement is on behalf of Sergei Mahonau, which some of you may remember as he used to be part of the Belarussian NGO Eco Home, which was liquidated by the government. He is now affiliated with the Guta Association and continues to be part of the ECO Forum.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this brief announcement of our last study – “Belarus and the Aarhus Convention: from acceding to withdrawing.”

The study reviews the history of Aarhus Convention, starting from the Environment for Europe Ministerial conferences, the adoption of the Convention, and focusses on the Belarus progress on the development of public participation and access to environmental information legislation. During the study, it was discovered that prior to the times of Convention there was no option to get the environmental information in Belarus.

The study also describes the current situation on persecution of environmental activists and the liquidation of NGOs, as well as explaining the situation around the decision by Belarus to withdraw after the last Meeting of Parties.



Further, a kind of re-accession road map is included in the study, which would be possible to enact in case there are any political changes in the country. In the event that this happens, main issues and points to fix as a priority are listed.

Finally, we found that some Compliance Committee's provisions and recommendations are implemented in Belarus legislation even now, when country is no longer a Party of the Convention (hopefully only temporarily). The text of the study will be shared with WGP participants on July 18 – the date of Belarus announced it was taking a decision to withdraw from the Aarhus Convention.

Due to safety reasons, the authors of the study are not named.

Thank you for your attention.