



Aarhus Convention 28th WGP

Francesca Carlsson, EEB, Aarhus ECO Forum

July 2024, Agenda item 9 work programme:

Dear Chair, dear Secretariat and dear Delegates and colleagues,

The ECO Forum would, firstly, like to thank the Bureau and Chair of the Bureau; the Secretariat; thank the chairs of the task forces; the Chair and the Members of the ACCC as well as the Special Rapporteur; thank the Parties, NGOs and other organisations for their involvement and participation in implementing the work programme so far.

On substance, we note that work on people in vulnerable situations has not really advanced as much as NGOs had hoped, and that work on GMOs has also not advanced, due to the need for one Party to ratify the Amendment before it enters into force. We therefore repeat our call for ratification of the GMO Amendment. We welcome North Macedonia's progress and encourage Ukraine to take the final step and take the lead to ratify so that the Amendment enters into force.

We also note that the work on product passports conducted so far has had its success in raising awareness of its potential as there will now be a meeting about this next week within another UN meeting formation under the auspices of trade. We would however, highlight that it is crucial that this topic continues to remain of high priority within the Aarhus community or we may risk a corporate capture of this topic (as we have already seen in other forums).

Now regarding the funding, we note that the work overall, is subject to Parties paying their contributions and that, while some Parties have generously contributed to the work of the Convention, other Parties' contributions leaves a lot to be desired. We therefore urge again the Parties to opt for a mandatory scheme of contributions aligned with the UN scale of assessment, as stressed by my colleague, as the current scheme makes it near impossible to plan the budget needed for implementing the work programme, for carrying out the activities, and especially for adequately supporting the invaluable work of the Secretariat. As mentioned in the Bureau report, the implementation of each activity is contingent on the need for adequate and sufficient financial, human and technical support. I also underscore the call from the Secretariat to contribute to the Convention for the year 2025 at the end of this year, in particular as next year there will be the MOP to prepare for.

We recall the strong words of the Chair of the Compliance Committee Aine Ryall and of the Special Rapporteur Michel Forst, that the work on the Compliance Mechanism desperately needs additional funding. In particular, we tirelessly recall the fundamental work of the ACCC which makes this



Convention so cherished and special, which is having a backlog of cases and increased workload that is unsustainable. Also note that one way to relieve the workload of the ACCC is for Parties to diligently implement the Convention which could avoid a lot of the work involved with the follow-up of MOP Decisions and avoid communications being filed in the first place.