



## European Ecoforum: Addnl statement Attracta Uí Bhroin

### Agenda 9 Implementation of the work pgm.

Text in *[italics]* not delivered due to time constraints but left in for clarity & completeness

Thank-you Chair,

We wish to make two further points in this further statement

Firstly, adding to my colleague Francesca's remarks - we wish to first particularly acknowledge the work of Ella, Maïke and colleagues for their extraordinary work in trying to hold the show on the road for all of us, in the face of the deeply inadequate situation on funding.

The situation as Ella highlighted is not sustainable – nor is it fair or appropriate to so burden, these most respected and valued staff.

The Parties contributions don't match the demand in the work programme, and are compounded by the unpredictable nature of the contributions, and as Maïke has highlighted there is at least a 40% gap in funding.

We very much welcome and thank the Chair of the Bureau for the further focus he has brought to this issue, both through letters from the Bureau to all Env Ministers last year, and in particular the focus brought in the discussions yesterday on Parties who are not contributing fairly and in an equitable manner.

Secondly, we are conscious that while there are many other Parties to the Convention outside of the EU, it does without doubt act as a significant block within the Parties. It has chosen to exercise that – not always to good effect – as my colleague Summer alluded to yesterday in respect of the findings in c-128 and indeed previous issues surrounding c-32.

So these constructive remarks are addressed in particular to the EU and its Member States, in light of the recent adoption of the [new EU Strategic Agenda](#). I do so here with the authority of an EU citizen, and as someone with the honour and duty that comes with the *locus standi* to speak for the Environment under the Aarhus Convention.

This strategic agenda, while not as strong in terms of the social just transition to a sustainable future, as we would have liked – nonetheless has some very important priorities directly relevant for the Convention: -

**In its first priority of - a Free and democratic Europe, there is welcome focus on i.a. the values of the EU, and in this regard we highlight both Article 2 and Article 3.5 of the Treaty of European Union. There are multiple and explicit and welcome references to the rule of law, democracy and Human Rights, matters in which the effective implementation of the Convention, within the EU and across its Member States, plays a key role.**

**In terms of its second priority of a strong and secure Europe – it refers to a “world” around it which “has become more confrontational, transactional and uncertain”. Key to that uncertainty are the triple planetary crises, and it is important to recognise how the increasing pressures this brings on our societies and economies, will drive not just movements of people; increased competition for resources, including food and water; but they are likely to also drive conflict in the future – and thus are integral to security.**

**The agenda's priorities also acknowledge the three inter-twinning climate, biodiversity loss and pollution crises.**

**It references water resilience, nature protection, and the reversal of ecosystems degradation – all matters critical to the realisation of the objective of the Aarhus Convention – an environment adequate to the health and wellbeing of current and future generations.**

**Its concluding statement is on putting a “special focus on implementation and enforcement of agreed policies.”**

Therefore, we look forward to the EU continuing a very constructive engagement in the work programme, and urge Hungary during its Presidency in this profoundly important transitional moment for the EU institutions, and the subsequent Presidencies of Poland and Denmark in the year 2025 during which we will have the next Working Group and the Meeting of the Parties to: -

- keep in focus these priorities and relevance of the Convention to realising them, and
- the duty of the EU and all its member states who have all ratified the Convention to act consistently with the principles of the Convention, *[including in its international fora]* and to act supportively of the Convention including on funding.

Thank-you

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