

European Eco-forum Priorities for the Agenda for the 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties (Item 7(c))

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European Eco-Forum Priorities for the agenda for the 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties:

1. Ukraine/Impact of conflict
2. Protection of the Three Pillars of the Convention in the Context of the Triple Planetary Crisis and the Clean and Just Transition including:
3. Protection of Environmental Defenders
4. Funding of the Convention and Compliance Committee

Short Statement on the European Eco-Forum Priorities for the 8th Meeting of the Parties in 2025:

1. Ukraine/Impact of Conflict

Speakers from Ukraine have highlighted the incredible ongoing work of Ukrainian environmental NGOs in the face of unbelievable challenges. We pay tribute to their determination and commitment to the continued promotion of the principles of the Convention in such times. The opening of accession negotiations between Ukraine and the EU should be noted as a significant development in this area.

We note with concern the issues with implementation of the Convention highlighted by NGOs from Ukraine including on the issue of transparency regarding environmental matters, in particular online access to the environmental impact assessment register in Ukraine, and also the principles of green recovery (produced and recommended by CSOs and platforms) which should be taken into account and integrated into environmental policy.

We hope that the Meeting of the Parties will prioritise support for those working to promote the Convention in Ukraine and support public participation in green recovery of Ukraine.

2. Protection of the Three Pillars of the Convention in the Context of the Triple Planetary Crisis and the Clean and Just Transition including:

- **Access to Information**, particularly in the context of climate change on emissions and pollution, and the active dissemination and capacity building obligations of Article 5, and in the context of plans and permitting under Articles 6 and 7, particularly for groups that may need extra support in accessing information such as or children and young persons, socio-economically disadvantaged, those with certain disabilities and other minority groups.
- **Access to public participation** for all groups including indigenous persons, people and groups in vulnerable situations, the elderly, youth, people with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities. This is particularly important in climate planning and renewable infrastructure, but this remains a challenge, as is the continued protection of biodiversity in planning and permitting for climate transition. Environmental Impact Assessment/Strategic Impact Assessment processes cannot be subverted in the name of climate transition.
- **Access to justice in environmental matters** which, as the Working Group of the Parties has heard, is subject to proposed or actual regressions in many State Parties.

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- Continued growth of interlinkages across all three pillars with the work of the Escazú Convention, its mechanisms and secretariat.
- Intergeneration and intersectional equity, in terms access to the rights under the three pillars and in terms of protection of environmental defenders remains an issue, including for the following groups: indigenous communities, racial, ethnic and religious minorities, disabled people, children and young people, the elderly, LGBTQ populations, those with different family statuses and caring obligations, and persons and groups in vulnerable situations. The groups are the most affected by the triple planetary crisis and have the lowest level of influence over decision making related to it.

3. Protection of Environmental Defenders

The work done by environmental defenders is a vital contribution to both the rule of law and environmental integrity, safeguarding our natural heritage for future generations. The increasing criminalisation of and attacks on environmental activists has been highlighted by the Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders in his Position Paper on Environmental Defenders and subsequent reports. It is with great urgency then that we call on the Parties to prioritise the treatment of environmental defenders at the next meeting of the Parties, and to increase support for the work of the Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders.

4. Funding of the Convention and Compliance Committee

It is with a growing sense of concern that the European Eco-Forum has watched the gradual undermining of the Convention and its mechanisms such as the Compliance Committee, by the failure of the Parties to meet their financial commitments to support the Convention and its Mechanisms. This devalues the work of the mechanisms such as the Compliance Committee, who are crucial in creating accountability for adherence to the commitments made at the Meeting of the Parties. The funding of the Convention should be a key priority for the next session of the Meeting of the Parties.