

## **The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova**

**Paula Tatamirov**

### **Topic: 4 (b) Access to information**

#### **Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates, and esteemed colleagues,**

I am honored to stand before you today at the Twenty-eighth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention. My name is Paula Tatamirov and I have the privilege of representing the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova.

Twenty-five years ago, the Aarhus Convention was adopted, marking a pivotal moment in the history of environmental governance. Today, as we gather to reaffirm our commitment, let us reflect on a simple yet profound question: How can we ensure that the principles of transparency, public participation, and access to justice remain at the heart of our environmental efforts?

We are here today not just as representatives of our respective countries, but as stewards of a shared vision—a vision where every individual has the right to be informed, to participate, and to seek justice in environmental matters. This meeting is a testament to our collective dedication to uphold and advance the core values of the Aarhus Convention.

The Republic of Moldova has been a proud party to the Aarhus Convention since 1999. Over the years, we have worked diligently to implement its principles, striving to enhance public access to environmental information, improve public participation in decision-making processes, and ensure access to justice in environmental matters.

Over the years, the Government of the Republic of Moldova has made considerable efforts to create a robust legal framework dedicated to the three pillars of the Aarhus Convention. This regulatory framework is constantly evolving and being supplemented, taking into account both the decisions of the Aarhus Supervisory Committee and the acquis of the European Union.

In this context, the Republic of Moldova has implemented **the Action Plan for the implementation of Decision VII/8n on the compliance of the Republic of Moldova with the requirements of the Aarhus Convention for the years 2022-2023**, approved by the Order of the Ministry of Environment No. 61/2022, which provides including:

- The revision of Government Decision No. 330/2006 for the approval of the nomenclatures of services provided free of charge and against payment by the State Hydrometeorological Service (SHS), and the mode of utilization of special means of SHS.
- The elaboration of a methodology for the provision of hydrometeorological services and information by the SHS.

We are currently actively engaged in the process of drafting and promoting a new regulatory act for public participation. This is an important step towards strengthening democracy and transparency in environmental decision-making.

#### **Policy and Legal Framework:**

To ensure comprehensive state intervention and the elaboration of the draft Government Decision for the approval of the Regulation on public access to information, justice, and participation in environmental decision-making, we are guided by several key documents:

- The Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union, ratified by Law No. 112/2014, which commits us to aligning with EU norms and standards, including Directive 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information.

- The Aarhus Convention itself, ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova in 1999.
- The Action Plan of the Ministry of Environment for 2024, which includes specific measures to enhance environmental governance.
- Law No. 148/2023 on access to information of public interest, which establishes procedures for accessing environmental information, reflecting our commitment to transparency and public participation.

At the same time, people can request environmental information for a number of reasons, and not only to participate in the decision-making process, this principle is enshrined not only at international level and at the level of European Union legislation, but also by regulations at national level, the provisions of Law no. 148/2023 on access to information of public interest being a conclusive example in this regard.

**The provisions of the Regulation are aimed at achieving the following objectives:**

- Ensuring public access to information, access to justice and participation in environmental decision-making by bringing national legislation in line with EU legislation.
- Ensuring transparency in decision-making by increasing public involvement in environmental decision-making. The purpose of the draft Regulation is to establish a legal framework that guarantees public access to information, justice and participation in environmental decision-making and to ensure that the legislation in question is brought into line with the new general regulations on access to information of public interest and with the provisions of the Convention on Access to Information, Justice and Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making.
- The expected impact following the approval of the above-mentioned project will be a major one, which will facilitate public access to environmental information, encourage public participation in the decision-making process, reduce regulatory obstacles to the involvement of the interested public, and will require public authorities to be proactive in disseminating information, including by ensuring a high degree of transparency in the environmental decision-making process.

The Republic of Moldova reaffirms its interest in leading the Task Force on Access to Information. We also extend an invitation to other parties to participate in this Task Force, as well as in all other working groups established for the monitoring and support of the implementation of the Aarhus Convention pillars. We believe that such participation will be highly beneficial and supportive.

As we embark on these discussions, let us keep in mind the fundamental goal of our efforts: to create a more just, inclusive, and sustainable future for all. Together, we can build on the achievements of the past and drive forward the vision of the Aarhus Convention.

In conclusion, the Republic of Moldova reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the Aarhus Convention. We look forward to fruitful discussions and collaborative efforts that will lead to meaningful progress in environmental governance and public participation.

Thank you!