

MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

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United Nations Economic Commission for
Europe

To the Chair of the Aarhus Convention
Compliance Committee,

Mr Jonas Ebbesson

With regard to information being sent

Dear Mr Ebbesson

Pursuant to the recommendations (hereinafter referred to as 'Decision V/9c') received by the Republic of Belarus at the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters ('the Aarhus Convention'), which took place from 30 June to 4 July 2014 in Maastricht (Netherlands), we wish to inform you of the following.

During this reporting period, the Republic of Belarus prepared a draft Law of the Republic of Belarus on the Insertion of Additions and Amendments into Several Laws of the Republic of Belarus with regard to Environmental Protection and to Public Participation in Environmentally Significant Decision-Making. The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus sent this Bill (No. 6173) to the House of Representatives of the National Assembly on 8 December 2014.

In order to improve co-ordination between national government bodies working on compliance by the Republic of Belarus with the provisions of the Aarhus Convention, as well as to implement the recommendations of Decision V/9c, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus ('the Ministry of the Environment'), which is the national government body responsible for Aarhus Convention compliance, has drawn up an Action Plan for Implementation by the Republic of Belarus of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in

Environmental Matters for 2014-2017, which was approved by M.I. Rusyi, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus, on 1 October 2014 under Ref. No. 06214-212.

We would also like to highlight the fact that the Republic of Belarus has already initiated practical implementation of various specific provisions of the Action Plan.

In particular, with regard to paragraph 2 of Decision V/9c, proposals have been drawn up for the inclusion of lectures on “Implementing the provisions of the Aarhus Convention in the Republic of Belarus” in the study plan for continuing professional development of active administrative personnel and of those in the administrative reserve corps. These lectures will be delivered at the Academy of Public Administration under the aegis of the President of the Republic of Belarus during the 2014/2015 academic year.

Lectures on “The role of local executive and administrative agencies in implementing legislative requirements in the field of the environment and environmental management, including the requirements of international agreements to which the Republic of Belarus is party” have been delivered to groups of participants in continuing professional development at the Institute of Civil Service (part of the above-mentioned Academy). Lectures have also been held for the heads of town and village councils on the theme of “Improving the operation of local administrative bodies and local authorities in the contemporary setting”.

Pursuant to paragraph 3, seminars have been organized and conducted for members of Ministry of the Environment bodies, of the Belarusian State University and of the Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Belarus on “Implementing the provisions of the Aarhus Convention in Belarus”.

The plan for 2015-2016 is to continue working with other national government bodies on implementing this point of the Action Plan.

In accordance with paragraph 6, at the request of the Ministry of the Environment, information on implementing the provisions of the Aarhus Convention has been provided by national government bodies.

In accordance with paragraph 4, in the course of the recent sixth round of sectoral consultations, conducted in the standing format used by Belarus and the EU, the Belarusian delegation raised the issue of support from the EU to create a register of environmental information with international technical aid. At present, work on this issue is still ongoing.

On 24 November 2014, an agreement was reached with the Belarusian Telegraph Agency (BelTA – the national news agency, a national unitary enterprise) to work on modernizing the technology of the Ministry of the Environment’s official website and to provide organizational and technical support to its Internet site operation. This agreement included the creation and posting on the Ministry’s official site of the banner “Helping to implement procedures for public participation in environmentally significant decision-making”, under which practical materials and legislation governing procedures for public participation

will be posted.

Contributions to the work of the round table discussions on “Legal provision for sustainable development” included presentation of a report on “Issues of environmental information and public participation in environmentally significant decision-making: a major factor in sustainable development”. This measure was organized by the Centre for Sustainable Development (an international public association) in partnership with the Faculty of Law of Belarus State University and ‘VIT’ – the Grodno Oblast Association of Young Academics [Hrodna Regional Public Association of Young Intellectuals].

Two programmes on the First Channel radio station have covered the issue of implementing the Aarhus Convention in Belarus: one, in November this year, was recorded for ‘Radiofact’ and the other was a ‘Topical Microphone’ broadcast in December.

Annexed: Action Plan for Implementation of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters for 2014-2017, 4 pages in one copy.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

I.V. Malkina

First Deputy Minister

Copies to:

- Secretariat to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters
- Permanent Mission of the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations and the other International Organisations in Geneva

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