



**МІНІСТЭРСТВА  
ПРЫРОДНЫХ РЭСУРСАЎ І АХОВЫ  
НАВАКОЛЬНАГА АСЯРОДДЗЯ  
РЭСПУБЛІКІ БЕЛАРУСЬ**

вул. Калектарная, 10, 220004, г. Мінск  
тэл. (37517) 200 66 91; факс (37517) 200 55 83  
E-mail: minproos@mail.belpak.by  
р/р № 3604900000111 ААБ "Беларусбанк"  
г. Мінск, код 795, УНП 100519825; АКПА 00012782

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**МИНИСТЕРСТВО  
ПРИРОДНЫХ РЕСУРСОВ И ОХРАНЫ  
ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЫ  
РЕСПУБЛИКИ БЕЛАРУСЬ**

ул. Коллекторная, 10, 220004, г. Минск  
тел. (37517) 200 66 91; факс (37517) 200 55 83  
E-mail: minproos@mail.belpak.by  
р/с № 3604900000111 АСБ "Беларусбанк"  
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United Nations  
Economic Commission for Europe  
Chair Person of the Compliance  
Committee of the Convention on Access  
to Information, Public Participation in  
Decision-making and Access to Justice in  
Environmental Matters  
Mr. Jonas Ebbesson

Dear Mr. Ebbesson and Members of the Committee!

We hereby express our gratitude to the Compliance Committee of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (hereinafter referred to as "the Aarhus Convention") for the opportunity to provide information on recent measures undertaken by Belarus with the aim to implement Decision VI/8c of the Meeting of the Parties (hereinafter referred to as "the Decision") and would like to inform on the following.

Pursuant to recommendations of the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee (hereinafter – "the Committee"), the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus submitted its conclusions and recommendations, regarding the communication ACCC/C/2014/102, to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus, the State Security Committee of Belarus, the Supreme Court of Belarus, the Ministry of Justice of Belarus (letters by the Ministry No. 14-7/1461-VN and No. 14-7/1462-VN dated 31 July 2017).

As of September 2017, the Ministry of Natural Resources held a series of consultations with the Ministry of Internal Affairs to discuss proposals on implementation of the recommendations concerning communication ACCC/C/2014/102. The sides agreed to elaborate training programs for the employees of law enforcement agencies, which relate to implementation of article 3, para. 8, of the Aarhus Convention. Currently, the Ministry of

Natural Resources is drafting these training programs and information materials.

The Ministry submitted the text of the Decision to the Ministry of Architecture and Construction of Belarus, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus, the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, as well as to the Minsk City Executive Committee and regional committees of the Republic of Belarus with the aim to its implementation and preparation of the national Action Plan on the Implementation of Decision VI/8c (letter by the Ministry No. 13-8/2750 of 13 October 2017).

The Ministry of Natural Resources of Belarus has drafted and adopted in 2016 and 2017 a number of national legal acts as a step toward implementation of the Aarhus Convention, including:

a. Introduction of Article 15.2 “Public Discussions of Projects on Environmentally Significant Decisions and Environmental Impact Assessment Reports” to the Law of the Republic of Belarus “On Environmental Protection”;

b. Adoption of the new draft Law on State Environmental Expert Review, Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment;

c. Adoption of the Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus No. 458 of 14 June 2016 (amended on 19 January 2017) “On Approval of the Regulation on Procedure for Organizing and Holding of Public Discussions on drafts of Environmentally Significant Decisions, Reports on Environmental Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment Reports and Making Amendments to some Resolutions of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus”.

Currently, one of the main priorities of the Ministry of Natural Resources is to supervise and ensure compliance with the requirements of the national legislation related to organizing and holding of public discussions of environmentally significant decisions, environmental impact assessments reports, reports on environmental assessment, etc.

In order to increase the institutional capacity of governmental bodies on conducting public discussions of environmentally significant decisions and reports on the environmental assessment, the State Educational Institution “Republican Center for State Ecological Expertise and Advanced Training of Executives and Specialists” is planning a number of corresponding training activities to be held in 2018.

On 28 February 2018, the Institute organized the first workshop “Regulation on Procedure for Organizing and Holding of Public Discussions” for the representatives of the Minsk City Executive Committee and regional executive committees.

During the visit to Rome in December 2016, which was aimed at sharing experience and best practices on the implementation of the Aarhus Convention, the Belarusian side expressed interest in establishing of an Information resource for public which relates to the ongoing activities in Belarus on public discussions of environmentally significant decisions, reports on environmental impact assessment and implementation of the Aarhus Convention. The OSCE supported such initiative of the Ministry of Natural Resources of Belarus and worked on the possibility for technical contribution from the Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea of Italy to the project.

On 27 February 2018, the Ministry of Natural Resources received a letter from the OSCE Secretariat (No. 52-ino), which outlined readiness of the Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea of Italy to assist the Belarusian side in preparing a “Road map” for creating a public web portal on environmental-related issues. The OSCE also proposed to organize a visit of Italian experts to the Republic of Belarus in April 2018 with the aim to discuss technical aspects of the creation of such a web portal in Belarus.

Close cooperation of the representatives of the Ministry of Natural Resources and other governmental bodies of Belarus, the OSCE, as well as Italian experts, allows to elaborate the draft Roadmap for the creation of a publicly accessible web portal for environmental information.

However, a number of recommendations of the Decision VI/8c suggest for making changes and additions to the existing national legislation of Belarus.

In this connection, as it was noted at the Sixth Meeting of the Parties, the Belarusian side would like, once again, to express its interest in building national capacity on the following issues:

Public access to project documentation as provided for in Article 6 of the Aarhus Convention;

Legal definition to the final decision on the proposed activities;

Legislative and practical implementation of the provisions of Article 3, para. 8, of the Aarhus Convention.

The Belarusian side considers consultative assistance of the Compliance Committee and international experts, opportunity to study experience and best practices of other parties to the Convention as a valuable source for Belarus to advance in the implementation of the Aarhus Convention. To our opinion, it may be also useful to organize workshops on exchange of information and practices on implementation of the Convention and recommendations of the Compliance Committee, which could be held during the Working Party or Task Force meetings.

It will contribute to better understanding and implementation by the Republic of Belarus of the recommendations of the Committee.

Best regards,

First Deputy Minister

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'I. Malkina', written in a cursive style.

I.Malkina