

## **Aarhus Workshop on Public Participation in Strategic Decision-making (PPSD)**

### **Outline**

#### Purpose:

During its sixth meeting in April 2006, the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (WGP) agreed on the holding of a workshop on public participation in strategic decision-making (PPSD). Austria informed the WGP of the possibility of providing funding for such a workshop which was foreseen to be held in Bulgaria in late autumn 2007.

The workshop will focus on discussing existing practices for public participation in plans, programmes and policies as well as in the preparation of laws with potential environmental impact (Article 7 and 8 of the Convention). The objectives and set-up of the workshop will borrow from document ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2006/6 and from the considerations of the WGP as agreed and set out in the 6<sup>th</sup> WGP report, doc. ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2006/2, pages 8 and 9.

Concrete examples will illustrate how the public can be effectively involved in certain strategic decisions. A strong focus on presenting good practice examples is envisaged as agreed at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The workshop will provide an opportunity for a broad exchange of different views amongst experts of the UNECE Aarhus Convention, the Espoo Convention and the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

As close consultation and involvement with experts in the field of the Espoo Convention and SEA Protocol is fundamental, the workshop will serve also as a forum bringing together recent information from both Aarhus and SEA experts.

#### Target Group:

Aarhus experts and Espoo/SEA Protocol Focal Points, interested NGOs etc.  
Around 50-60 participants including speakers

#### Dates:

Two-day workshop on 3/4 December 2007

#### Venue:

Sofia, Bulgaria

#### Language:

English as the working language; interpretation into and from Russian as well as translation of key documents are foreseen

#### Workshop format:

It is planned to have up to maximum of 10 to 12 presentations, which should give examples from different geographical regions, e.g. from Northern Europe, Central Europe, South-Eastern

Europe, and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) countries dealing with different strategic decisions covered by Article 7 and 8 of the Convention.

Presentations should last about 20 - 25 minutes each, allowing sufficient time for discussion . The workshop will be chaired jointly by the two Environment Ministries of Bulgaria and Austria. The organizers will be responsible for the preparation of input papers and their updating, with the support of an Austrian consultant.

#### Workshop papers:

Pre-session documents: A draft workshop compendium consisting of the agenda, analysis of good practice examples, slide copies of the presentations and a draft list of participants will be prepared in advance.

Post-session documents: A workshop report and the proceedings of the workshop, including background information, a short version of each presentation and a final participant list, will be made available afterwards.

#### Financial contributions and support:

The costs of speakers for travelling and accommodation will be reimbursed where required. In addition, some financial support will be available from the Aarhus Convention trust fund to facilitate the participation of representatives from countries with economies in transition and from NGOs. Meals will be provided for all participants.

Details on how to find suitable hotels as well as other information will be provided by the organizers in conjunction with the Bulgarian colleagues and the Aarhus Secretariat.

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