

**THIRTY-THIRD MEETING OF THE BUREAU 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 (AARHUS CONVENTION)**

Held after the 17th meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention

28 February 2014, Geneva

REPORT OF THE MEETING¹

ATTENDANCE:

Bureau members: Mr. Jit Peters (Netherlands, Chair), Ms. Loredana Dall’Ora (Italy, Vice-Chair), Mr. Ivan Narkevitch (Belarus, Vice-Chair), Mr. Lukas Pokorny (Czech Republic), Mr. Thomas Legoupil (France), Ms. Gordana Petkovic (Serbia), Mr. Jean-François Brakeland (European Union).

Observers: Mr. Jeremy Wates (NGO observer, European Environmental Bureau representing European ECO Forum), Mr. Edwin Koning (Netherlands, Assistant to the Chair), Mr. Michel Amand (Belgium, Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutants Release and Transfers Registers).

I. OPENING AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

1. Chair opened the meeting and outlined its main objective is to follow up on decisions and outcomes as adopted by the Working Group at its seventeenth meeting held in Geneva on 26-28 February 2014 (AC/WGP-17/Inf.4), in particular to discuss thematic session of the High-level Segment (HLS) and draft declaration to be considered by the Convention’s and Protocol’s Meetings of the Parties (MOPs).
2. The Bureau took note of the information provided by the Chair and adopted the provisional agenda for the meeting.

**II. DISCUSSION ON THE THEMATIC SESSION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT
UNDER THE TWO MOPs**

3. The Bureau considered a note on the thematic session of the HLS, which was prepared and presented orally by the host country at the 17th meeting of the Working Group of the Parties. The Bureau agreed with the general concept outlined in the note, including the session’s format and main themes for the two panel discussions. The Bureau noted that the thematic cluster for the first panel should be *Right to information and environmental democracy* and thematic cluster for the second panel should be *Right to information and social media*.
4. The Bureau agreed that the note on HLS should be sent to the Bureau of the Protocol on PRTRs for its general comments. The secretariat will then finalize the formal agenda for the HLS in consultation with the two Chairs (the formal agenda should be made available to delegations in March 2014), while the Bureau of the Aarhus Convention and the Bureau of the Protocol on PRTRs will continue their deliberations on a more detailed programme for the HLS, including suggestions on speakers; the programme will be made available at a later stage in April-May 2014.

¹ This document was not formally edited.

III. DISCUSSION ON THE DECLARATION

5. The Bureau discussed procedure for finalizing the draft Maastricht declaration, in cooperation with the Bureau of the Protocol on PRTRs, and for submission it for consideration by Parties to both instruments at the joint High-level Segment.

IV. UPDATE ON THE TIMELINE FOR PREPARING DECISIONS ON COMPLIANCE MATTER

6. The Bureau took note of information provided by the secretariat in relation to the timeline for preparing decisions on compliance matter. The Bureau will start working on envisaged decisions as of March 2014 through April-May 2014.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

7. The Bureau took note of information provided by Mr. Brakeland and Mr. Koning on the upcoming visit of the President of Mongolia to the European Commission. The Bureau considered it would be a good opportunity to promote once again the Aarhus Convention to the Mongolian Government.

8. The Bureau took note of the information provided by the secretariat on receiving a letter from the Deputy Minister of Environment of Belarus regarding the deficiencies of the translation of the Aarhus Convention to Russian language. Belarus considered that the issue should be brought to the attention of the next session of the Convention's MOP.

9. The Bureau agreed that the issue should be discussed at the next MOP and requested the secretariat to send a letter to Belarus offering to make a statement on the subject matter at next MOP. The Bureau also requested the secretariat to contact the Treaty Section of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs to seek advice on possible procedure on amending the Russian version of the Convention's text.

10. The Bureau agreed to hold its next meeting in Maastricht on Sunday, 29 June 2014, tentatively scheduled for 9–11 a.m.

VI. CLOSING

11. The Chair thanked the Bureau for constructive work and the secretariat for its support and closed the meeting.
