

**THIRTY-EIGHTH 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 back to back (after) the 20th meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention

Friday, 17 June 2016
Palais des Nations, Geneva

REPORT OF THE MEETING¹

ATTENDANCE:

Bureau members: Ms. Maia Bitadze (Georgia, Chair), Mr. Lukas Pokorny (Czech Republic, Vice-Chair), Mr. Edwin Koning (Netherlands), Ms. Beate Berglund Ekeberg (Norway, Vice-Chair), Mr. Philippe Ramet (France).

Observers: Mr. Jeremy Wates (NGO observer, European Environmental Bureau representing European ECO Forum).

Apologies: Mr. Adrian Panciuc (Republic of Moldova), Ms. Gordana Petkovic (Serbia).

I. OPENING AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

1. Chair opened the meeting and outlined its main objective, namely to follow up on decisions and outcomes as adopted by the Working Group of the Parties at its twentieth meeting (Geneva, 15-17 June 2016), in particular to discuss preparation of the draft decisions and draft Declaration for the twenty first meeting of the Working Group.
2. The Bureau took note of the information provided by the Chair and adopted provisional agenda of the meeting.

II. THEMES OF THE DECLARATION

3. The Bureau re-stated that the Declaration should be short (up to 2,5 pages), oriented to policy makers and reflect the key agreed theme for a high-level segment, namely the role of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs in implementing sustainable development goals (SDGs). Due to their cross-cutting nature, both treaties are fundamental for implementation of all SDGs. At the same, to avoid very general statements, it will be important to demonstrate specific added value of the treaties in relation to most relevant SDGs. Furthermore the Bureau agreed that the issue of protection of

¹ This document was not formally edited.

environmental whistleblowers and activists remains important across the region and therefore should also be reflected in the Declaration.

III. PREPARATION OF THE DRAFT DECISIONS AND DRAFT DECLARATION FOR THE 21ST MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP

4. The Bureau agreed on the following tentative timeline for preparation of decisions and declaration:

(a) Decisions

- *Secretariat revises draft decisions in light of the comments of the Working Group made at its 20th meeting and sends them to the Bureau for email consultation to be completed by the end of September 2016.*
- *Draft decisions are distributed to Parties and stakeholders for comments with the deadline to respond by the end of October 2016.*
- *Secretariat revises draft decisions in light of the comments received and sends them to the Bureau for email consultation to be completed by the end of November 2016.*
- *Convention Bureau meets in Geneva (date tbc) to e.g. finalise the draft decisions and revise draft Declaration for their submission to the 21st meeting of the Working Group of the Parties (date tbc).*
- *Similarly to the preparations for the previous session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP), decisions regarding compliance matter will be finalized by the Bureau, as soon as they are ready, through e-mail consultation and/or at its virtual/in person meeting, as required.*

(b) Declaration

- *Chairs of the Convention and Protocol MOPs prepare the first draft Declaration and, with the assistance of the secretariat, send it to the two Bureaux for email consultation to be completed by mid-October 2016.*
- *The draft Declaration, revised by the Chairs, is distributed to the Convention and Protocol Parties and stakeholders for comments with the deadline to respond by mid-November, and submitted to the Working Group of the Parties to the PRTR Protocol for its consideration (23-24 November 2016).*
- *PRTR Protocol Bureau meets back to back with the Protocol's Working Group of the Parties in November 2016 to revise the draft Declaration and to send it to the Convention's Bureau for its consideration.*
- *Convention Bureau meets in Geneva (date tbc) to finalise the draft decisions and revise Declaration for their submission to the 21st meeting of the Working Group of the Parties.*
- *Chairs of the Convention and Protocol MOPs will liaise, with the assistance of the secretariat, on the finalization of the draft Declaration for its submission to the high-level segment of the two MOPs.*

IV. CLOSING.

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