

## **Implementation of the Decision III/6e of the Meeting of the Parties of the Aarhus Convention**

European ECO Forum wishes to bring to the attention of the Compliance Committee brief information we have available about implementation of the Decision III/6e by Turkmenistan.

Turkmenistan is probably the only country where we have difficulties to find any reliable information about the work carried out by NGOs and the state of implementation of the Aarhus Convention.

Upon contacting some of our members, we learnt that the situation with NGOs operation in Turkmenistan has not changed since the last AC MOP.

No major or active environmental NGOs or experts were able to participate in the round table discussions of the amendments to the Law on Public Associations, reported by the Government of Turkmenistan in its letter to the Compliance Committee. There's no information available as to what specific recommendations were adopted at that meeting.

A well know environmental activist – Andrey Zatoka – was arrested and sentenced to several years in jail just because the Government wanted to shut down any voice of the public. It was only due to the international pressure that he was released and now he moved to Russia.

The Ministry of Environment is pursuing a policy contradicting Aarhus Convention principles. For example, since the beginning of this year no journalist are allowed at any promises or territories (including national reserves, e.g.) subject to the control by the Ministry of Environment. This is a reaction to a critique published by Reuters in relation to leopards project between Turkmenistan and Russia.

We consider that no significant steps were taken by the Government of Turkmenistan to implement Decision III/6e of the Aarhus Convention MOP-3.

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