

From: ELRC
To: Aarhus compliance
Date: 18/01/2017 13:29
Subject: MOP decision V/9a - Legal standing of NGOs

Dear Fiona,

I hope this message finds you well.

I am writing to brief you about the latest legislative developments in Armenia related to the legal standing of NGOs in the meaning of the Aarhus Convention. This has been a long lasting process with lots of efforts both from the side of civil society and decision-makers.

As it is mentioned in the 3rd progress review of implementation of the MOP decision V/9a, on 16 December the National Assembly of Armenia adopted a new law "On Non-Governmental Organizations" which established clear and non-restrictive criteria for environmental NGOs to have standing before the courts. In order to ensure procedural rules for this important right relevant amendment has been made also to the Administrative Procedural Code of RA. I hope the Government will provide the English translation of the relevant provisions by 31 January 2017 as mentioned in the Progress review.

While appreciating this progressive developments, I think it is very important for environmental NGOs to have adequate knowledge and skills to enjoy this key procedural right. We believe that sole establishment of the legal standing cannot bring big progress without effective mechanisms and background for beneficiaries to implement this right effectively. Meaningful mechanisms and capacity building is required to enhance the level of awareness and remit of the Aarhus Convention among the key stakeholders. At the same time, it is planned to include a new chapter to the training curricula of environmental law taught to judges and candidates at the Academy of Justice of the Republic of Armenia. Environmental Law Resource Center - as a research and training hub at the Yerevan State University is also planning to share information on this development and its background during upcoming events. These topics will be introduced also into the list of Graduate papers for students at their last year at the law faculty.

And last but not least, I would like to highlight the important role of the visit of Mr. Jonas Ebbesson - the Chair of Compliance Committee to Armenia, and his meetings at the Ministry of Justice of RA and the Judges of the Administrative Appeals Court.

Best of my wishes,
Prof. Aida Iskoyan

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