



Pan-European Coalition of Environmental Citizens Organisations

**Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information,
Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice
in Environmental Matters**

Fourth session

Chisinau, 29 June - 1 July 2011

General Segment

STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN ECO-FORUM

on agenda item 4 (a) Genetically modified organisms

Chisinau, 29 June 2011

We would like to welcome the efforts of those 26 Parties to the Convention which have ratified the Almaty Amendment on GMOs. We would particularly like to highlight the fact that Moldova – the host country of this Meeting of the Parties – is the only EECCA state which has ratified the Amendment. We would also like to express support for the activities of the Convention's Secretariat in further developing the dialogue and building synergies with the global process of Cartagena Protocol. We confirm our preparedness to take an active part in future activities under the auspices of both treaties, including in expert meetings and workshops.

However, with much regret we note that due to the so-called 'second best interpretation' of article 14 of the Aarhus Convention taken by the MoP in Riga, the Amendment still requires ratification support from 5 Parties for it to enter into force. If the MoP had supported ECOs proposal the Amendment would now only need 2 further ratifications to take effect. In practice this would have meant that with a little extra effort the Parties could now be celebrating the Almaty Amendment's entry into force.

With many Parties to the Aarhus Convention being in the process of developing or at early implementation stage of national biosafety frameworks the fact that the Almaty Amendment is still not in force considerably undermines the credibility, comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the national biosafety frameworks and in the long run will bring about the need to revise them to accommodate relevant provisions of the Almaty Amendment.

Therefore, we call upon those Parties to the Aarhus Convention which have not yet ratified the Amendment to do so and make its entry into force an immediate future reality. We especially urge EECCA countries to give the ratification of the Almaty Amendment high priority on their law-making agenda since its entry into force depends very much on them. Meanwhile, we would like to bring to the attention of those Parties which have ratified the Amendment the need to transpose its provisions into their national legislation and take practical steps to implement and apply the provisions of the Almaty Amendment on GMOs pending its entry into force.

