

## **6th Meeting of the Parties (MoP 6) to the Aarhus Convention**

**(Budva, 11-13. September 2017)**

### **Agenda item 6 (a): Access to information**

#### **Norway**

We thank the Bureau for preparing the draft decision on promoting access to information with eminent support from the Secretariat as always. We support the draft decision as prepared by the Bureau.

We thank the Chair for the efforts in leading the Task Force and the offer of the Republic of Moldova to continue leading it. We appreciate the work undertaken by the Task Force on Access to Information. We believe that the Task Force has an important role, since the exchange of information and best practices helps pinpoint main obstacles that need to be tackled and solutions that can be implemented, and thus contributes to effective public access to information in accordance with the Convention.

As stated in the preamble of the draft decision, effective public access to environmental information is critical for the successful implementation of a number of Sustainable Development Goals and is specifically targeted by Sustainable Development Goal 16.

If you have information about the status of the environment, the impact on the environment of human activities and the consequences of the impact for the environment and the people living in it, you can engage directly to protect and improve the environment through your own actions, or indirectly to influence decisions on whether or not to allow activities and on what conditions. In this way, you can protect the environment and thereby also the health and wellbeing of the people living from and within the environment and thus being affected by the status of the environment.

We therefore welcome the focus on active distribution of environmental information through electronic information tools, e-government, open government data, and the Shared Environmental Information System in the pan-European region.

We also welcome the emphasis on a broad interpretation of the scope of environmental information and a narrow interpretation of exceptions in accordance with the Aarhus Convention, since this contributes to the effectiveness of public access to information.