

## **Sixth Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention Budva, Montenegro**

### **Statement by Sabina Jukan, Aarhus Centre Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Sabina Jukan and I am the manager of Aarhus Centre Sarajevo, which was established in 2012 through a Memorandum of Understanding between the OSCE Mission and the City of Sarajevo. We are part of a national network with 2 other Centres in Tuzla and Banja Luka. One of our key functions is to support higher participation by the public in the decision-making processes regarding the environment. To that end, allow me to share with you some of our experiences in 2014 in involving the public in decision-making processes in BiH.

On the initiative of the Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and with the financial support of the USAID SGIP project (Strengthening Governing Institutions and Processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina), the Aarhus Center Sarajevo provided technical support in organizing public consultations for the Draft Law on the environmental protection of the FBiH and the professional opinion on Compliance of the Draft Law with the Aarhus Convention.

Our support consisted of the following:

- Announcing the public consultations through ministry's and Aarhus network web site
- Sending out invitations and documents for comments by email
- Organizing public hearings in 4 largest cities of FBiH with the participation of 212 people
- Compilation of feedback and comments received in the public consultations and by email from different stakeholders– in total 400

This was a good example of cooperation between the institutions and domestic and international organizations. At this point, this Law remains under discussion.

There remain limitations to effective public engagement in the decision making process. At the local level, there is also possibility of involving the public in decision-making processes, but citizens are not sufficiently and timely informed about it.

Let me also add that as Aarhus Centres, we are part of a larger regional network in South-Eastern Europe, comprising 14 Centres. Our goal is to strengthen regional cooperation on common issues and we have formalized our cooperation in a joint declaration, adopted in June 2015.