



**NATIONS UNIES**  
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**ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫЕ НАЦИИ**  
ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКАЯ КОМИССИЯ  
ДЛЯ ЕВРОПЫ

**UNITED NATIONS**  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION  
FOR EUROPE

## **COMMENTS ON THE CHAIR'S PAPER ON FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS UNDER THE AARHUS CONVENTION**

Received by the Aarhus Convention secretariat after the eleventh meeting of the Working Group of the Parties (8-10 July 2009)

### **Croatia**

Some countries are not ready to financially support the activities under the Convention. Solving and overcoming this obstacle is a prerequisite for any future possible financial arrangements. Possibly the issue of acceptable schemes on financial arrangements could be discussed with these countries. Maybe other UN Conventions to which these countries are also Parties can be consulted to get an idea for it.

### **Greece**

- Greece is in favour of keeping the current system of voluntary contributions.
- A voluntary indicative scale based, inter alia, on the UN scale of assessments could be one option for providing guidance values for each country's proposed contribution, stressing the "voluntary" and "indicative" character of this scale.
- Another option might be to make contributions mandatory, but to leave the amount to the discretion of each country.
- A similar option might be also to set a minimum amount that all countries should contribute and to encourage countries to provide additional voluntary amounts (but this might lead to a decrease in contributions).

### **Moldova**

Moldova supports the idea of having a legally binding basis for voluntary contributions, stating the minimum amount that should be provided by each country.

### **Norway**

Norway's primary suggestion is that the financing system under the Aarhus Convention should be based on the UN scale of assessments. Norway suggests that funding should be compulsory for all Parties and that the contributions should be made annually prior to 1 July.

If this proposal is not met by all parties, Norway suggests a model based on today's model, only with a minor modification. Norway suggests it should be legally binding for each country to contribute annually before 1 May, with the sum each country finds ample. By receiving the contributions this early, we believe and hope that the financial situation will be more predictable under the Convention. The Secretariat will accordingly be able to remind states of their obligation to contribute in due time.

In connection with our second suggestion, Norway also suggests that every country obligates itself under the Convention to contribute a minimum amount each year. With regard to inflation/deflation, a mechanism should be introduced which adjusts this sum every fifth year. Each country will then of course also have the possibility to contribute with a larger sum (which they should be encouraged to do). This measure can also help to increase the financial predictability under the Convention.

### **Slovakia**

The Slovak Republic agrees with the recommendation of the Swedish Kingdom as the presidency country of the European Union. The Slovak Republic fully supports a voluntary scheme of financial arrangements.

### **Spain**

The Ministry's position about financial arrangements is that contributions should be voluntary and of a similar amount each year.

### **Sweden, on behalf of the European Union**

The EU welcomes the Chair's paper and regards it as a useful instrument for further discussions on the matter of financial arrangements. As expressed during the meeting of the Working Group, the EU recognizes the need for a reliable system of stable and predictable sources of funding based on budgetary accountability and sound financial management and a fair sharing of the burden.

Looking closer at the questions put by the Chair, the EU would support a voluntary scheme of financial arrangements and is of the opinion that financial matters in multilateral environmental agreements are usually agreed by decisions of the Parties on a consensus basis (question a). The EU considers that the potential development of appropriate guidance on the level of contributions should be part of the further discussions on financial arrangements (question b). The EU is not, as yet, ready to present any compromise option but will consider the possibility of developing such options. The EU does not support the idea of having an "opt out" mechanism as suggested in question c, as we fear that this would neither meet with the goal of predictability nor result in a fair sharing of the burden and that it might have negative effects on the amount of contributions. If some parties opt out, the others may be less willing to contribute.

The EU considers that further discussions, taking into account the work carried out by the previous Expert Group on financial arrangements, within the Working Group of the Parties would be useful in order to make progress on this issue.