



**16<sup>th</sup> Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (WGP 16) (Geneva,  
19 – 21 June 2013)**

**Agenda Item 8(b)(ii) Draft Elements of the work programme for 2015 – 2017**

Contribution by the EU and its Member States and Croatia

- (1) The EU and its Member States and Croatia welcome the development of the draft work programme by the Bureau and wish to thank the secretariat for the opportunity to comment on this draft.
- (2) The level of detail set out in the draft work programme is both useful and practical.
- (3) Noting that the request that funding be provided prior to 1 October of the preceding year is not mandatory, the EU and its Member States and Croatia, while recognising the practicalities behind this request, wish to reiterate that not all Parties may be in a position to provide funding in a preceding calendar year due to internal budgetary procedures.
- (4) Reflecting the comments provided by the EU and its Member States and Croatia on Agenda item 4(a), it is suggested that further two-way discussion between the Chair of the Compliance Committee and Parties be facilitated, providing Parties with the opportunity to contribute to improve the future of the work and to assist in the resolution of current issues, such as suggestions for streamlining the work load of the committee.
- (5) The future work of the three pillar Task Forces should mainly focus on strengthening information sharing and best practice and, fundamentally, work to support the effective implementation of the Convention by Parties. For example, under Activity I, it is requested that the work programme seek to “clarify” rather than to “widen” the range of environmental information made available to the public.
- (6) Finally, the comments that we have made under each of the other agenda items on the future work programme under specific headings, e.g. access to information, access to justice, public participation, the compliance mechanism, etc. should be

taken into consideration in further reviewing this proposed work programme for 2015-2017. These include:

- substantive comments provided in relation to Activity V (compliance mechanism), which refers to the proposal to hold extraordinary MOPs back to back with Working Groups of the Parties in order to enable the MOP to review reports by the Compliance Committee more frequently;
- the proposed carrying out of regular surveys or any other additional monitoring of implementation under Activity II which we believe is inappropriate given the non-binding nature of the recommendations;
- that the work of the Task Forces make recommendations for further developing the provisions of the Convention, noting that the key focus of the work of the Task Forces is the implementation of the current provisions of the Convention; and
- our comments indicating our concern with the reported expected disparity between income and expenditure are also relevant in respect of the staffing requirements outlined.