

**24th Meeting of the Working Group to the Aarhus Convention
(Virtual, 1-3 July 2020)
Agenda item 3 (c): Public Participation**

Norway

Thank you Chair,

Norway would like to thank the Chair of the Task Force for her note and report, and for the work done to increase and spread knowledge on the rights of participation, their implementation, best practices and the challenges faced and ways to address them. We believe that the Task Force provides a valuable platform for these purposes.

We support the proposal to continue addressing the main obstacles to public participation in decision-making within the scope of Articles 6 to 8 of the Convention, and to focus on participation in a transboundary context, and on that issue we think the proposal from the EU on cooperation with the Espoo convention is a pertinent one. We also support to focus on safe public participation without persecution and harassments, which is linked to the issue of a Rapid Response mechanism to be considered under Agenda item 4. We also support the proposals to focus on decision-making of particular types or in particular sectors not previously addressed and of particular relevance to the sustainable development goals. It could be useful to consider whether and if so which of these issues that would merit particular attention and should thus be prioritized. We also support to continue looking at public participation in climate change related decision-making.

We also support proposals made to look into effects of covid-19 pandemic on Aarhus Convention rights across the pillars and thus not only this Task Force, with a view to ensure that they do not unduly affect the rights provided by the Convention.

As for the work of the Task Force and the number and form of meetings, including the use of digital platforms, we refer to the statement made under the previous Agenda item on Access to justice.

Thank you Chair.