



**DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE ON PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FOURTH
SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE AARHUS
CONVENTION**

Prepared by the Bureau with the assistance of the Secretariat

EU COMMENTS

The European Union (EU) would like to thank the Bureau and the Aarhus Convention Secretariat for its proposal on a draft concept note on provisional agenda for the fourth session of the meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention.

You will find below the EU comments.

A. Proposed items for the provisional agenda

-Item 6

We suggest adding a new point (e) related to: “Update on UNEP initiatives on access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters”.

-Item 7

- We would like to propose a rewording of point (a) in order to make it clearer and more appropriate with regard to the specificity of the strategic plan which is a guidance document: “Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2009-2011 and on activities in relation to the Strategic Plan 2009-2014”.
- We suggest adding a new point (b) related to the assessment of the implementation of the work programme 2009-2011. This should be done on the basis of the evaluation on the work of the Convention (with a focus on the Task Forces (TFs)) as referred to in our EU comments for the 2012-2014 workplan under the Aarhus Convention.

Current point (b) would then become (c) and current (c) would become a new point (d).

-Item 15

We prefer that item 15 on “Review and adoption of decisions” be higher up in the agenda, where current item 11 is placed, just after the thematic session.

B. High-level thematic segment

As already stated during WGP12, the EU thinks it would be appropriate to further consider at WGP13 if MOP4 should take place at ministerial level or not.

We think it would be better to have one topic than two during the high-level segment as it would allow going into deeper discussion.

At this stage, the EU prefers “The role of the Aarhus Convention in promoting sustainable development” as possible theme for the high-level segment. We think this topic deserves attention, especially taking into account the ongoing important discussions on that subject at different international fora (cf. OCDE, CSD – Rio+20, ...) and the possible links to be made with the Aarhus Convention.

C. Annotations

- As a general remark, we would like to point out that the indicative time for the substantives issues seems shorter than under the previous MOP-agenda. We think this could be problematic, especially when it is proposed to have keynote speakers (like for GMO's issues).
- Concerning footnote 8, the EU takes note of the new UN policy on promoting environmentally friendly management practices – which is an objective that the EU fully supports – but would like also to share its concerns on how the new rule will exactly apply given the limitation of words of the report (8000 words) that need to be respected.
- Concerning item 6 (a), we think it might be useful to give non-UNECE States that have shown serious interest in acceding to the Convention the possibility to make statements.

FOOTNOTE 1: Dates of the MOP

It would be more suitable for the EU if MOP4 could take place from either on 13 -17 June or 14 -18 June, i.e. just after the meeting of the EU Environment Council that is scheduled on Friday 10 June 2011. We would like to invite the Secretariat to take into account this, which we hope will be suitable for our Moldovan colleagues. If those dates are not suitable for any reason, our second preferred option would be the week of 30 May-4June 2011.