www.unece.org/env/pp/gmos.html

The Aarhus Convention's GMO amendment

Through decision II/1 adopted at its second session (Almaty, 25-27 May 2005), the Meeting of the Parties adopted an amendment to the Convention on genetically modified organisms. For the text of the amendment see here.

The amendment will enter into force when it has been ratified by at least three fourth of the Parties that were party to the Convention at the time the amendment was adopted. That is, it must be ratified by 27 of the 35 Parties that were party to the Convention at the time the amendment was adopted. As of today, the amendment has been ratified by 27 Parties, 22 of which were party to the Convention at the time the amendment was adopted and thus count towards its entry into force. This means a further 5 ratifications are required from those Parties who were party to the Convention at the time the amendment was adopted in order for the amendment to enter into force. The following Parties were party to the Convention at the time the amendment was adopted but are yet to ratify the amendment: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, France, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine.

Upon its entry into force, the GMO amendment will apply to all those Parties which have by that time become party to it. To see whether a particular country has ratified or acceded to the amendment, see here.

Lucca Guidelines on GMOs

At its first session (Lucca, 21-23 October 2002), the Meeting of the Parties adopted guidelines on access to information, public participation and access to justice with respect to genetically modified organisms. The guidelines are often referred to as the "Lucca Guidelines" (see ENG FRE RUS).

Collaboration with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

In decision II/1 adopting the GMO amendment, the Parties to the Aarhus Convention recognised the need to cooperate with other international organizations and forums, in particular the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, with a view to maximizing synergy and avoiding duplication of effort, including through encouraging the exchange of information and collaboration between the respective secretariats.

The Riga Declaration adopted at the third session of the Meeting of the Parties (Riga, 13-15 June 2008) also recognized the value of further collaboration with bodies of the Cartagena Protocol in activities aimed at supporting the application of the Lucca Guidelines on GMOs and the implementation of the Almaty amendment on GMOs (para 16).

The secretariats of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and of the Aarhus Convention invite you to provide comments on the draft checklist of key measures required for ratifying and implementing the Cartagena Protocol (Article 23) and the Aarhus Convention Almaty Amendment on genetically modified organisms (GMOs).
All interested Governments and stakeholders are invited to submit their comments on the first draft of the checklist before 31 September 2014 to aarhus.survey@unece.org and to ulrika.nilsson@cbd.int.

The draft checklist is available at the CBD Portal on Public awareness, Education and Participation at http://bch.cbd.int/about/news-post/?postid=105863 and is also attached.

The first draft checklist will be revised in light of the comments received and the second draft will be then circulated again for comments in due course. Thereafter, the finalised checklist will be made available to Parties to both instruments and stakeholders.

The checklist has been prepared pursuant to the conclusions of the joint Aarhus Convention/CBD round table held in October 2013. The checklist is intended to assist each Party to identify possible steps it might take to most efficiently ratify and implement the two instruments in the context of LMOs/GMOs.

Recent and upcoming events on GMOs

In keeping with the above, the Aarhus Convention has undertaken a number of joint activities with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety addressing access to information and public participation with respect to GMOs.

This includes the organization of two joint workshops, the International workshop on public awareness, access to information and public participation regarding living/genetically modified organisms (Nagoya, 8-9 October 2010) and International workshop on access to information, public participation and access to justice regarding GMOs, (Cologne, 19-20 May 2008).

On 16 and 17 October 2013 the two secretariats organised the first global roundtable on access to information, public participation and access to justice regarding LMOs/GMOs in Geneva. The results of the joint roundtable will be submitted to the upcoming fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (Maastricht, 30 June-2 July 2014) and to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP 7) (Pyeongchang, 29 September-3 October 2014).

Former bodies

Prior to its adoption at the second session of the Meeting of the Parties, the draft GMO amendment was prepared by a Working Group on GMOs, led by Austria. For more about the former Working Group on GMOs, see here.