



**Aarhus Convention and PRTR Protocol
Sixth Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention
and Third Meeting of the Parties to the PRTR Protocol
Joint High-Level Segment
(Budva, 14 September 2017)**

- Contribution by the EU and its Member States -

Item 4: Budva Declaration on Environmental Democracy for Our Sustainable Future

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

First of all I would like to thank the Government of Montenegro and the city of Budva for doing an excellent job in hosting the 6th Meeting of the Parties of the Aarhus Convention and the 3rd Meeting of the Parties of the PRTR Protocol. I would also like to thank the Aarhus Secretariat for its contribution to the organization of this important meeting.

The European Union and its Member States support the Budva Declaration, which is the result of inclusive and constructive discussions among Parties, Signatories and stakeholders.

We welcome the fact that the Budva declaration addresses the role of the Aarhus Convention and the PRTR Protocol in leading and inspiring actions to promote democracy and the rule of law in environmental matters, helping to strengthen the involvement of civil society, local communities, academic institutions and marginalized groups, in decision-making. We stress the importance of finding ways to ensure effective safety for environmental activists and whistleblowers.

We feel that the Aarhus Convention principles can provide valuable guidance in the ongoing and future discussions on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sustainable Development lies at the core of European values and constitutes an overarching objective of the European Union. Access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters are essential components of sustainable development. We firmly believe that the achievement of the SDGs is only possible through effective and efficient stakeholder involvement.



In order to facilitate an effective stakeholders participation in the implementation process of the 2030 Agenda, we have recently set up at EU level an inclusive multi-stakeholder platform underpinned by a balanced composition of actors, including the EU Member States. This platform should enable all stakeholders to contribute with their best practices, policy recommendations, ideas an innovative potential to the EU's SDG implementation approach.

Finally, we would like to reaffirm the strong commitment of the EU and its Member States to promote and implement the principles of the Convention and the Protocol.

I thank you for your attention.
