Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and to the Protocol on PRTRs, Budva, Montenegro

Agenda item 9 (b) – Future Work Programme 2018-2021: statement by the European ECO Forum

On behalf of the European ECO Forum I would like to express our concern about the prolongation of the inter-sessional period from 3 to 4 years as proposed in draft decision VI/5.

We fear that this will lead to a severe delay of important decisions, in particular of:

- Endorsement of decisions of the Compliance Committee and
- Approval of potential accessions of non-UNECE states to the Aarhus Convention.

We are also not pleased with the reduction of meetings of the Task Forces. For the TF on PPDM and on A2I it is foreseen to meet only twice during the 4 years period plus one thematic session during a Working Group Meeting of the Parties during the 4 years period. The TF on A2J will meet 3 times plus the issue will be focus of one thematic session during a WGP.

We also want to highlight the consequences that the prolongation of the period might have on the length of the terms of compliance committee and bureau members.

In case that the member states decide to adopt the draft decision as proposed we would call for a review of this prolongation of the inter-sessional term at the next MOP in order to assess its implications and if needed to return to the 3 years term.

We are also concerned about the overall budget for the years 2018-2021 which is lower (1,2 Mio) than the one for the last period which covered only 3 years (1,4 Mio). We urge member states to allocate more resources to the overall budget of the valuable work on the Aarhus Convention, in particular to the work of the Compliance Committee given the fact that its workload is constantly on the rise.