Dear colleagues,

Recently, we have seen cases of persecution and pressure on environmental activists which are going on and continuing. Without running mechanisms for proper immediate protection it is impossible to implement environmental rights guaranteed by the Convention effectively and without fear.

The issue of compliance with article 8, paragraph 3 of the Convention, cases of persecution, pressure on environmental activists exercising their rights under the Convention, was raised at the 6th Meeting of the Parties in Budva.

In our opinion, today the existing procedures are insufficient and do not provide immediate protection in cases of activists' persecution. Cases of persecution and pressure on activists require prompt actions. The consideration of communications for several years may have irreversible consequences, and therefore do not provide adequate protection for activists.

We believe that effective and time-sensitive procedures of responding in such cases are crucial. As an examples, such mechanisms can be as authorizing prospective person – from Compliance Commitee members or Bureau as well – as a Contact Person or Special Rapporteur which will be a kind of bridge between public, convention bodies – Compliance Commitee and Secretariat and respective Party's authorities; or, special procedure like Communication from the public to CC but with very brief terms of reviewing.

We appeal to all the participants of our Task Force to work out and discuss this issue for better and safe exercising the rights granted by Aarhus Convention.

Thank you,

Siarhei Mahonau
Ecohome NGO