

Aarhus Convention:
23rd Working Group of the Parties (WGP23)
(Geneva, 26-28 June 2019)

Contribution by the EU and its Member States

Agenda item 6: Promotion of the Convention and other relevant developments and interlinkages

The EU and its Member States would like to thank and warmly welcome the efforts and progress made by the Secretariat and other invited experts in promoting and raising awareness regarding the Aarhus Convention at international level, as presented in the Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018-2021.

We appreciate the progress achieved through various activities of the Secretariat, supported by relevant stakeholders, including in providing substantive input on the Convention and its Protocol for the environmental performance reviews for Kazakhstan and North Macedonia, in organizing training programmes on public participation in Central Asia and in publishing in all six official languages of the United Nations a promotional brochure addressing the general public interested in the Convention and its provisions.

We welcome the continuous advisory support provided by the Secretariat in assisting Guinea Bissau's efforts to accede to the Aarhus Convention and we reiterate our encouragement to other States from outside the UNECE region to become Parties to this international treaty.

The EU and its Member States appreciate the work undertaken by the Secretariat during the reporting period in promoting the Convention and its principles and interlinkages with various international forums, including in the context of international human rights law.

We warmly welcome the works of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development which were organised by ECLAC on 22-26 April 2019, in Santiago, Chile, as an example of coordination among multiple stakeholders, such as governments, the United Nations system, the private sector, academia and civil society.

In this regard, we appreciate the involvement of the Aarhus Secretariat in the "Regional meeting on progress and challenges in the implementation of the Escazú Agreement in Latin America and the Caribbean: towards an early entry into force", which was held at the margins of this Forum, by promoting experiences in assisting countries in the ratification and implementation of the Aarhus Convention.

We acknowledge the need for promoting the ratification and implementation of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in environmental matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Convention) by providing advisory support to countries and the civil society of the region. In this regard, we welcome the encouragement for ratification of the Escazú Agreement during the Forum, as a catalyst for the 2030 Agenda and climate action.

We reaffirm our willingness to ensuring effective international cooperation between the EU and ECLAC, as well as enhanced global engagement, with the aim of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and of ensuring the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda.

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Aarhus Secretariat and to further encourage its continuous involvement in activities that promote synergies in the area of environmental rights through effective cooperation with other organisations, with the aim of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.