



**16th Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (WGP 16)
(Geneva, 19-21 June 2013)**

Draft proposal on the assessment of the current interim scheme of contributions

Contribution by the EU and its Member States and Croatia

(1) The EU and its Member States and Croatia would like to thank the Bureau and the Secretariat for their work in preparing the draft report on the current interim scheme of contributions.

(2) The draft report is a useful summary of the current situation regarding contributions to the Convention and how this impacts on the work programme of the Convention. It also provides a useful summary of other funding models, including those used by other multilateral environmental agreements.

(3) We recognise the challenges faced by the secretariat in planning and implementing the work programme activities and the role of stable, predictable and equitable financing in enabling the work programme to be implemented. Prioritisation of work programme activities should be undertaken, considering the Evaluation of the current functioning and implementation of the Convention, and taking into account the need for a balanced implementation of the different work areas under the Convention, as well as experience gained under other UNECE MEAs in relation to such prioritisation.

(4) The EU and its Member States have not yet finalised their joint position regarding the proposal for a mandatory contribution scheme, and further internal discussions will be necessary in this regard. This being said, we would like to note that, so far, a majority of the EU Member States are not in favour of the introduction of a mandatory contribution scheme at this stage.

(5) We would appreciate further information on what is envisaged by the different proposed options explored in the report including widening the funding base through increasing the financing and contributors' diversity; the proposal for a mixed voluntary/compulsory scheme of financial contributions; and the evaluation of the proposals for developing innovative criteria for establishing a scale of assessments based on the three pillars of the Convention. The identification of pros and cons of each option would assist Parties' deliberations and we would welcome the inclusion of this further detail in the report.

(6) We recognise that the later contributions are received, the more difficult it is to reliably plan and implement work programme activities, and we therefore welcome the request that contributions be made either in the preceding year, where national budgets allow, or, where pre-payment is not an option, that it be recommended that payments are made in the first six months of the year.

(7) We also support increasing synergy with activities under other MEAs and organisations as an option to improve the financial stability of the Aarhus Convention and initial work commenced by the secretariat to explore and implement this option is welcomed.

(8) Finally, it is requested that the assessment make reference to the increasing numbers of Parties that are not contributing at all to the budget of the Convention; we encourage these parties to address this by endeavouring to make a contribution. While we recognise that the proposed increase in the minimum voluntary contribution could be a source of concern for some Parties, we are in favour of examining the potential for such an increase in the current minimum voluntary contribution in line with inflation.