



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

Agenda Item 7: the Promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums

Statement from EU and its Member States and Croatia

- (1) Further to the Decisions and Major Outcomes as adopted by the Working Group at its fifteenth meeting, the EU and its Member States and Croatia wish to request clarification in relation to Agenda item 6, Session II, iii.
- (2) The EU and its Member States and Croatia are of the opinion that the discussion of the fifteenth meeting of the WGP on this item is not accurately reflected in the Decisions and Major Outcomes paper which records that Parties committed to the development of national action plans on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in all international forums dealing with matters relating to the environment. The EU and its Member States and Croatia respectfully request that the report of the sixteenth WGP reflects that the development of such action plans is not mandatory and that Parties are invited, but not obliged, to develop action plans on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in all international forums dealing with matters relating to the environment. Thank you for your clarification that this language was used in your recent survey.
- (3) The EU and its Member States and Croatia welcome the current focus on this issue at WGP, but there is some concern that the indefinite continuation of the convening of thematic sessions on this topic at each WGP may create a distortion in the prioritisation of the work and outcomes of the WGP. The added value from including a thematic session on this topic at each WGP should be assessed on a needs basis. Further consideration should also be given to meeting the proposed objectives of the thematic sessions through other means e.g. through circulation of papers or the development of on-line networks; this could include details of challenges and good practices in the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums. It could also provide a more immediate opportunity to identify international forums or topics which are of particular concern to Parties, Signatories or stakeholders.

- (4) The growing demand for assistance from international forums is to be welcomed and illustrates the success to date in promoting the principles of the Convention and the growing awareness of the Aarhus Convention in the international sphere.

- (5) The provision of advice to Parties on establishing effective processes for their public to participate in international forums is an important function. Resources committed to this aim should endeavour to record actions and undertakings to develop a repository of good practice that can be used by all Parties.