



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

**Agenda Item 8(b)(i): Evaluation of the current functioning and implementation of the Convention**

Statement from EU and its Member States and Croatia

- (1) The EU and its Member States and Croatia note the revisions to the Evaluation of the current functioning and implementation of the Convention.
- (2) While we understand that the consultant's report has been finalised, we ask the Working Group to note the following contribution. The comments we submitted on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2013 remain relevant to the report, in addition, to the specific issues which I will now raise.
- (3) Paragraph 135 refers to the increased reporting requirements created by the development of recommendations. While we support the development of recommendations as useful tools to assist Parties and other stakeholders in meeting their requirements under the Convention, it does not necessarily follow that the development of such tools requires additional reporting requirements and it is requested that paragraph 135 be deleted or amended to reflect this.
- (4) It is also requested that references, e.g. in paragraphs 159 and 176, to intersessional reporting to the task forces be deleted. Increasing regular reporting requirements in addition to the current national implementation reports is not an appropriate role for task forces.
- (5) The role of the task forces in developing tools for strengthening implementation of the Convention is supported; however the reference to the exchange of information role of the task forces being in preparation for future decisions if an appetite for expansion of the Convention arises is misleading. The task forces currently provide a useful forum for exchange of information which can facilitate Parties and stakeholders in strengthening the implementation of the Convention. (Paragraph 173)

- (6) Paragraph 174 contains a significant jump between the development of materials to strengthen national level implementation and that of “looking into” national-level implementation. These are two very different roles. The former is a valid task for task forces; the latter is not.
- (7) While the amendments in paragraph 179 seek to clarify the proposed role of the private sector in the development and delivery of capacity-building activities, further information is still required on the proposed financing of such initiatives.
- (8) It is noted that the report has been somewhat amended to reflect concerns raised in our earlier contribution regarding the attitude of the EU and its Member States and Croatia to the Convention. However, we remain concerned that significant weight is given in the report to the comments of individuals, for example, in paragraphs 123 and 124 and request that these be further amended to reflect the concerns we expressed in the earlier round of consultation on this report. The amendment added to paragraph 125 should be dealt with in a separate paragraph as it refers not only to the comments in that paragraph but to those in the preceding paragraphs also. The addition of the reference to the opportunities afforded to environmental NGOs to consult with the EU and its Member States and Croatia during the co-ordination meetings is welcomed, however, it should also be moved to a separate paragraph to reflect the value of these meetings.