Economic Commission for Europe  
Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on  
Access to Information, Public Participation  
in Decision-making and Access to Justice  
in Environmental Matters  

Working Group of the Parties  
Nineteenth meeting  
Geneva, 17-19 June 2015  
Item 5 of the provisional agenda:  
Promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY FOR PARTIES IN PREPARATION FOR THE  
THEMATIC SESSION ON PROMOTING THE APPLICATION OF THE  
PRINCIPLES OF THE CONVENTION IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS

Chair’s Summary

BACKGROUND

A survey was carried out prior to the nineteenth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties. The survey intended to assist Parties to report to the Working Group on their progress in promoting the principles of the Aarhus Convention in relation to: (a) processes of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and (b) international trade negotiations. Each Party was invited to complete a questionnaire and email the completed form to aarhus.survey@unece.org by 5 June 2015. Due to the very late receipt of answers to the survey by several Parties, it was only possible to issue this document one day prior to the meeting.

SURVEY OVERVIEW

The following 12 out of 47 Parties to the Convention (25% of total number of Parties) responded to the survey: Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Norway, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland and the European Union.

Although the sample size of the survey is relatively small, the responses received provide examples of good practices that could be useful for countries wishing to develop practical and innovative tools to

---

1 This document was not formally edited.
promote access to information and public participation in the UNFCCC process, in trade negotiations or in other international forums.

All Parties that completed the survey responded that their governments were promoting the Convention’s principles in the preparatory processes for the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (Paris, 30 November–11 December 2015).

Eight Parties responded to the second part of the survey on the promotion of the Convention’s principles in international trade negotiations. Five Parties (Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Norway and the European Union) reported that they are already promoting the Convention’s principles in international trade negotiations and three Parties (Belarus, Slovakia and Switzerland) reported that they currently are not promoting the principles in international trade negotiations. Four Parties did not report on this section (Austria, Georgia, Italy, Spain). It should be noted that trade negotiations fall under the competence of the European Union and they are therefore led by the European Commission. As a result, several member states of the European Union refrained to respond to this section of the survey. The following sections summarise the responses received by Parties. The general approach was to maintain the original answers. However in some cases, it was decided to move answers to a section that was considered to better correspond to their information provided.

PART A. Promoting the Convention’s principles in the preparatory processes for the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (Paris, 30 November–11 December 2015)

1. General information regarding the promotion of the Convention’s principles

Although all Parties reported that they have been promoting the Convention’s principles in the process leading to the UNFCCC COP21, seven Parties provided additional relevant information:

BELARUS As part of the plan of measures for controlling emissions of greenhouse gases by 2015-2017 years, approved by the Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus, December 30, 2014 number 06 / 214-278, Belarus is developing its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs).

GEORGIA Relevant documents include the INDC of Georgia, the Third National Communication, Biennial Update Report. There is no coordination mechanism established for the Third National Communication and Biennial Update Report, but after official adoption of these two documents they are uploaded on the official web-site of the Ministry for public access. (http://moe.gov.ge)

GERMANY The promotion of the Convention’s principles by Germany is taking place in all major decisions taken under the UNFCCC, as well as general and strategic positioning in the negotiations under the UNFCCC (including the German contribution to the EU internal debate).
ITALY  Italy promotes the application of the general principles of public participation set by the Aarhus Convention and its Almaty guidelines within substantive topics discussed under international negotiation on Climate Change and in particular while defining the EU common position related to the preparation of Paris COP21, for example the EU Position Papers for the Ad hoc Durban Platform (ADP) and the other two principal Subsidiary Bodies (SBI and SBSTA) of the UNFCCC.

NORWAY  Norway has a standing, general position to promote public access to information and public participation in international processes relating to climate, environment and resources, and public access to justice in relation to decisions concerning these issues.


SPAIN  The following documents are of particular relevance:
- International process to combat climate change: http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/cambio-climatico/temas/el-proceso-internacional-de-lucha-contra-el-cambio-climatico/
- “A million commitments project – The road to COP 21 in Paris”: http://www.unmillonporeclima.es
- Specific information on UNFCCC Article 6 (education training and public awareness thematic areas: http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/ceneam/recursos/mini-portales-tematicos/Climatico/convenio_cc.aspx


a. National coordination mechanisms
Eleven Parties responded that national coordination mechanisms are already in use. Belgium, Norway, Spain and Switzerland elaborated on the level of stakeholder engagement in the UNFCCC preparations. Belgium, Norway and Switzerland reported that during climate negotiations their delegations also include NGO representatives. Finally, the following additional information was provided:

BELGIUM  Belgian stakeholders are regularly informed on the State of Play of climate policy. The Coordination Committee on International Environmental Policy (in which all competent federal and regional entities are represented) organizes several stakeholder meetings throughout the year, of which at least one is focused on the international climate negotiations (prior to the yearly COP). During these, stakeholders get more information on the state of play of the negotiations and can give their input to the
Belgian position.
Furthermore, each year during the COP, a maximum of twenty stakeholders are included in the Belgian delegation to the UNFCCC. Stakeholders are also included in the Belgian delegation during other UNFCCC sessions throughout the year. During these sessions, the Belgian stakeholders are invited to attend the coordination meetings of the Belgian delegation. Moreover, Belgian experts are easily accessible for stakeholders, either by e-mail, phone or in direct contact. The experts are also regularly requested to make a presentation during meetings organized by stakeholders.
Finally, representatives of various social groups (environmental organisations, organisation for development cooperation, consumers’, employees’ and employers’ bodies, youth organisations and the scientific world) are united in the Federal Council for Sustainable Development. This Council advises the Belgian federal government on issues related to sustainable development, including climate change policy.

NORWAY
In addition to intra- and inter-ministerial coordination on positions in the negotiations through electronic exchanges and meetings, the public is regularly invited to provide input to Norway's positions and representatives of non-governmental organisations are included in the Norwegian delegation.
Website for information on Norway's climate policy and international climate negotiations;
https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/tema/klima-og-miljo/klima/id1307/
See also Norway's Sixth National Communication to the UNFCCC, in particular Chapter 9.7:
https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/efed292ce1d5456cb1eae2ffe8ebd72d/t-1543.pdf

SPAIN
Access to information is facilitated by several available tools in Spain. Regular meetings take place with Spanish civil society (NGOs, trade unions, press) in order to share information on the international negotiation process on climate change in the road to COP 21.

SWITZERLAND
Stakeholders in the climate change negotiations (essentially NGOs, Universities and Private sector) are regularly invited to briefings about the negotiation process and the challenges ahead. They are also informed about the positions of the Swiss delegation in the negotiations (political mandate given by the Federal Council (government) to the Swiss delegation). For the annual COPs, the Swiss delegation will be have 3 members from outside of the Swiss administration (one NGOs, one Universities and one Private sector), providing them for a direct access to the negotiations and the preparation of the Swiss delegation.
i. Intra-ministerial level

All Parties except Belgium and Georgia reported that coordination mechanisms exist in intra-ministerial level.

The following countries provided additional information and details regarding intra-ministerial coordination:

**AUSTRIA**

In Austria, regular meetings are been held with all relevant divisions in the Environment Ministry.

**BELARUS**

Ministry of Environment coordinates work of republican authorities of state administration, other state organizations subordinated to the Government of the Republic of Belarus, local executive and administrative authorities and other organizations to organize and carry out activities to protect the environment and use of natural resources, including reducing emissions and enhancing greenhouse gases stocks, implementation of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, adaptation and mitigation of climate change, to reduce consumption of ozone-depleting substances.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has a number of subordinate organizations maintaining inventories of greenhouse gases and the registry of carbon units, monitoring of air and water resources.

The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus also approved the following Resolutions:

- Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of 20.06.2013 N 503, "On Some Issues of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus";
- Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of 21.06.2013 N 510, "On approval of the State program of measures to mitigate the effects of climate change on the 2013 - 2020 years ").

**BULGARIA**

The draft Act on Ratification of the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol and the Agreement between EU and Iceland for Joint Fulfilment of the Second Commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol was internally discussed and agreed at intra-ministerial level between all directorates in the Ministry of Environment and Water of Bulgaria, Enterprise for Management of Environmental Protection Activities (national environmental fund), Executive Environmental Agency and the Regional Inspectorates of Environment and Water.

**GERMANY**

In Germany there is regular coordination with all units concerned with climate issues via e-mail and regular in person meetings.

**ITALY**

The Ministry for the Environment Land and Sea, DGSVI, is the focal point for the
UNFCCC negotiation and usually organizes coordination meetings with other involved Departments according to the issues in the agenda.

**SPAIN**
Spain has set up working groups related to climate change issues.

**SWITZERLAND**
The multilateral climate negotiations are led by experts from the international affairs division within the ministry of the environment. Experts from other specialized divisions (national climate division, forest division) or other federal offices (energy) within the ministry are supporting the international experts.

---

**ii. Inter-ministerial level**

All Parties except Belgium and Slovakia reported that the principles of the Convention are promoted at inter-ministerial level in the preparatory processes for the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC. In addition, the following information was provided by Parties:

**AUSTRIA**
Regular meetings with all relevant Ministries, sharing of information about the state of negotiations

**BELARUS**
The Ministry of Natural Resources established the intra-ministerial Working Group on Climate Change and the Regulation on the group (Order of the Ministry of Natural Resources № 180-OD of 20.05.2015).

**BULGARIA**
After the internal procedure the Ministry of Environment and Water presented the draft Act on Ratification to the other Ministries through official procedure, therefore they had the opportunity to receive and review all the information included and to give recommendations.

**GEORGIA**
In Georgia, a Coordination Committee was established at the ministerial level for the “Enhancing Capacity for Low Emission Development Strategies EC-LEDS Clean Energy Program” (http://moe.gov.ge/index.php?sec_id=119&lang_id=ENG&project_id=92).

**GERMANY**
In Germany, regular coordination with all ministries concerned is conducted via e-mail and regular in-person meetings take place before each UNFCCC negotiating session.

**ITALY**
In view of UNFCCC negotiating sessions, Ministries involved into climate change topics have a coordination meeting at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Government in order to share opinions on the issues to be negotiated at global level and define the Italian position.
In addition, there is a new process called "Stati Generali" on climate change and the land protection in Italy organized by the Council of Ministers' Presidency, involving
all competent authorities and stakeholders. The "Stati Generali" on climate will meet in Rome on 22 June to discuss, inter alia, with the industries and environmental associations their opinions and concerns on the issue of climate change and present the initiatives already taken by the Italian Government to contribute to the adaptation and mitigation of climate change, also in view of the international commitment under the UNFCCC (Website: http://italiasicura.governo.it/site/home/news/articolo476.html).

SPAIN Coordination at inter-ministerial level is handled by the interministerial Commission on climate change.

SWITZERLAND Climate Change being an horizontal issue, many ministries are involved in the Swiss delegation and in the preparation of the negotiation rounds. All year long, a dedicated interdepartmental body will meet to that end, gathering experts from the environment, economic affairs, foreign affairs, development cooperation, agriculture, meteorology.

iii. Sub-national level
Promotion of the Convention’s principles at subnational-level was observed in Belarus, Bulgaria, Germany and Spain. The following Parties also provided additional details:

AUSTRIA Regular exchange of information with provinces and NGOs, participation of representatives of the federal province and NGOs at UNFCCC COPs as member of the national delegation.

BULGARIA The draft Act on Ratification of the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol and EU Iceland Agreement for Joint Fulfillment of the Second Commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol was made publicly available for public consultations on the official website of the Ministry of Environment and Water (following the procedure described in point B.1.2.a.): http://www.moew.government.bg/?show=konsultacii&kid=139

GERMANY Representatives of the “Länder” (German subnational authorities) are included in interministerial coordination via e-mail and invited to in person coordination meetings before UNFCCC sessions.

SPAIN The Climate Council is the national body to foster the participation of stakeholders in the development and implementation of climate change policies and actions. It brings together Central Government, Regional Governments, Local Governments, Research Bodies, Trade Unions and NGO’s.
b. Alternative measures for promoting the Convention’s principles in UNFCCC processes

Four Parties (Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia and the European Union) reported on alternative measures to promote access to information and public participation in decision-making. The European Union clarified that the European Commission is a collegiate body which does not need specific coordination mechanisms for this purpose.

i. Intra-ministerial level

Belarus reported that it has established alternative measures that serve the same purpose at intra-ministerial level. For instance, the «Green Cities of Belarus» project (Polotsk, Novopolotsk and Novogrudok) could be considered to be such an example. Polotsk and Novopolotsk plan to make the bike route that will connect the two cities, the Novogrudok equip energy-efficient street lighting.

Belarus also approved the strategy to reduce the harmful effects of air transport on the Republic of Belarus for the period until 2020 (05.11.2013 №06 / 137-207, 214-258).

The provisions of the Strategy are the basis for a common understanding of the principles and the prospects of reducing the harmful effects of transport on the air by the executive and legislative authorities at various levels, business users of transport services, all sectors of society.

ii. Inter-ministerial level

Bulgaria reported that in accordance with Art. 3, paragraph (4) and (5) of the Climate Change Mitigation Act was established National Expert Council on Climate Change (NECC) as an advisory body to the Minister of Environment and Water for the purpose of supporting the activities related to the overall implementation of the government policy on climate change mitigation. The Council gives recommendations on draft administrative acts, programmes and plans, strategies and regulations of the Minister of Environment and Water. It consists of representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Water, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the State Agency for National Security, the Executive Environment Agency, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the National Association of Municipalities and non-profit legal entities whose activities are directly related to climate change mitigation.

Bulgaria reported that the Draft framework positions of the State for the matters to be considered at meetings of the working bodies of the Council of the EU (including in relation to the total EU contribution to international initiatives, processes, agreements, etc.) are coordinated/agreed within Working Groups (covering different policy areas) of the
National Council for European Affairs (consists of high-level representatives from the different public authorities). The member compositions of these Working Groups include representatives of associations of NGOs, syndicates, trade unions and others. This ensures the participation of the public concerned to the coordination and preparation of national positions for the negotiations at the EU level, aimed at reaching common view of EU on issues, related to international forums. An example of such forum in which the country does not participate directly, but only through the mechanisms of coordination within the EU institutions is UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – all draft national positions on common proposals of the EU, concerning the functioning of the UNFCCC are subject of consideration by Working Group 20 “Environment” of the National Council for European Affairs, which includes also members of the public. This mechanism is already applied for the preparatory processes on EU level for the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC – position of Bulgaria concerning proposal for Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) of the EU and its Member States in the context of a new agreement under UNFCCC (INDC was subsequently communicated by the EU on 6 March 2015) was considered and adopted by Working Group 20. It should be taken into account that public participation in the EU matters coordination scheme in Bulgaria is provided not only by the representation of NGOs in the Working Groups to the National Council for European Affairs. There is also Consultation centre to the Council – web portal where registered members of the public could submit comments on draft proposals for decisions and legal acts of EU: http://www.euaffairs.government.bg/en/index.php All comments received are redirected to the Working Groups to the Council, responsible for the different “dossiers”, in accordance with the policy specialization of each Group.

iii. Sub-national level

BULGARIA Bulgaria reported that general information, strategic documents relevant to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol and information regarding the participation of Bulgaria in the mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol are publically available on the official website of the Ministry of Environment and Water of Bulgaria, section “Climate”: http://www.moew.government.bg/?show=top&cid=356.

GEORGIA Georgia reported on the Covenant of Mayors process in Georgia. Currently, 12 signatory cities have developed Sustainable Energy Action Plans. Additional information is available from: http://www.covenantofmayors.eu/about/signatories_en.html?q=Search+for+a+Signatory...&country_search=ge&population=&date_of_adhesion=&status=

3. Innovative practices to promote access to information and public participation in UNFCCC processes.
Ten Parties (Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Norway, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland and the European Union) reported that they are already using or are currently developing innovative tools to promote access to information and public participation in UNFCCC processes. One Party (Georgia) reported that such initiatives are not yet officially planned and no alternative measures are in place that would serve the same purpose.

a. **Electronic Tools**

Five Parties (Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain and Switzerland) reported that they are already using or in the process of developing electronic tools to promote access to information and public participation in UNFCCC processes. In addition, the following detailed information was provided by Parties:

**AUSTRIA**
Websites, Newsletters, Press releases

**GERMANY**
Regular information about the state of affairs in the UNFCCC negotiations are available on our Ministry’s website [http://www.bmub.bund.de/en/topics/climate-energy/](http://www.bmub.bund.de/en/topics/climate-energy/)
There is also information available on a domestic campaign “together it is protection of the climate”.
Germany is also planning a sub-site on COP21 for autumn 2015 on the Ministry’s website [http://www.bmub.bund.de/en/topics/](http://www.bmub.bund.de/en/topics/)

**ITALY**
The Italian Ministry for the Environment Land and Sea, in cooperation with Ca’ Foscari University of Venice, developed a Carbon Footprint Calculator, an interactive tool with which students and professors can assess their own environmental impact measured in CO2 equivalent with the aim of favouring the building of a sustainability consciousness and the spread of sustainable behaviours in the Ca’ Foscari community. The calculator is available on the university website and include a questionnaire to evaluate users habits and formulate appropriate emissions reduction programmes. Users will then be able to fill again the questionnaire keeping traces of their improvements. (Website: [http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=135062](http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=135062))
- The Euro-Mediterranean Center on Climate Change (CMCC) developed "Lancelot", a tool designed for the exploration and visualization of climate change effects and their impact in a number of socio-economic sectors, as simulated by the CMCC numerical models. (Website: [http://lancelot.cmcc.it/js/webtool.php](http://lancelot.cmcc.it/js/webtool.php)).

**SPAIN**
Specific section on UNFCCC Article 6 inside climate change thematic area of MAGRAMA website (OECC): http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/cambio-climatico/temas/educacion-formacion-sensibilizacion-del-publico/

**EUROPEAN UNION**  
Extensive information is available on the page of the website of the European Commission dealing with international climate negotiations: http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/international/index_en.htm. It also links to EU documents as well as to the UNFCCC website where all official documents are posted.

**b. Web-based applications (online forums, social networks)**

The following seven Parties reported on existing web-based applications used to disseminate information on UNFCCC process:

**AUSTRIA**  
UNFCCC webinars, Online meetings – streaming, Facebook, Twitter, EU Climate Action – Facebook, Twitter

**BELARUS**  
Belarus reported that it is planning to develop a web-based application

**BELGIUM**  
Regular updates on climate relevant news, as well as background information on the different levels of climate policy, including on the state of the UNFCCC negotiations are posted on the website www.klimaat.be (Dutch) or www.climat.be (French).

Furthermore, after workshops or stakeholder meetings, all presentations and, if appropriate, relevant documents, can also be consulted on the same web page.

**ITALY**  
The Italian Ministry for the Environment Land and Sea and the National Institute for Environmental Protection (ISPRA) disseminate information on climate change on their website listed below:

- http://www.minambiente.it/pagina/i-cambiamenti-climatici;


**NORWAY**  
https://www.facebook.com/klimadep

https://twitter.com/kldep
SLOVAKIA  http://www.minzp.sk/en/

SPAIN  Iberoamerican network of climate change offices (RIOCC): http://www.lariocc.es/

Spanish network of cities for climate: http://www.redciudadesclima.es

Responses from education and communication in the face of climate change network: http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/ceneam/recursos/documentos/s-cambio-climatico.aspx

Platform for Exchange and Information Consultation on Adaptation to Climate Change in Spain (adapteCCa): http://www.adaptecca.es/

Open database on carbon footprint for entities, products and events (Carbonpedia): http://www.ecodes.org/carbonpedia/

EUROPEAN UNION  The European Commission has a Twitter account and a Facebook page dedicated to climate action, which regularly engage with citizens on international climate negotiations.
https://twitter.com/EUClimateAction
https://www.facebook.com/EUClimateAction

c. Mobile phone apps (including twitter or other apps)
The following Parties have developed mobile phone applications to promote access to information and public participation in relation to UNFCCC processes.

AUSTRIA  Austria is using UNFCCC Negotiator App

GERMANY  The Environment Ministry uses twitter to inform about the state of affairs on all ministry-related topics, including the UNFCCC on https://twitter.com/bmub

ITALY  The Italian Ministry for the Environment Land and Sea spread out information and news on the environment and especially on the Minister's initiatives on the environmental hot topics, including climate change, through the Ministry Facebook profile (21 thousand "likes" for this web page) and the Ministry Twitter profile. Minister Gianluca Galletti often twittes and directly informs on the important happenings on the environment and climate change, for example the recent meeting with his French colleagues and the meeting with the US EPA Administrator Gina McCarty at EXPO Milano 2015 in view of the Paris
Conference

- GetClimate is an application for iPhone of the Euro-Mediterranean Center on Climate Change’s that visualizes global data on monthly average temperatures and precipitations. Click on the icon and get climate data on any location in the world.

Data are visualized in a line chart that provides average temperatures (°C) and precipitations (mm/day) for the 1976 – 2005 period, thus providing the climate information of the last decades.

GetClimate also delivers news, events, articles and scientific publications, information and updates about the international debate on climate sciences and policy.

(Website:http://www.cmcc.it/getclimate-the-cmcc-app-for-iphone-now-available-for-free-on-the-apple-store)

SPAIN

Green Homes Programme: Green Homes Programme is an initiative aimed at people concerned about the environmental and social impact of their decisions and daily habits that promotes self-control in the domestic consumption of water and energy, proposes measures and saving behaviors and promotes a more ethical and green purchasing.

Twitter: @hogaresverdes_o


d. Other innovative tools

ITALY

Italy reported that during the Expo Milano 2015, the Italian Ministry of the Environment Land and Sea presented an annex on climate change and environmental issues to The Expo 2015 Milan Charter, which is now available for consultation and public debate on the Expo website. According to what has been declared by Minister Gian Luca Galletti “These new contents can help generate an epochal change because they will go beyond the productive model at the base of 20th century industry – i.e. the linear economy – in favour of a circular model.” These questions will be further developed during the next conference on climate change, the COP 21.

Websites:

The Italian Ministry of the Environment, Land and Sea is supporting the ground-breaking Connect4Climate Global Partnership Initiative through its Communication for Climate Change Multi-Donor Trust Fund, set up by the World Bank Group in 2009. Communication has a key role to play in raising awareness about climate change, and building alliances. The programme looks for innovative ways to share knowledge and change perceptions. It is building up a global network of individuals and organizations that care about the problem, through social media and the internet, film-making, arts competitions, recruiting celebrity ‘champions’, and other ways. Its Facebook page has more than 646 000 followers. Since 2011, Connect4Climate has attracted over 200 knowledge partners, ranging from multilateral organizations, to academic institutions and key media outlets.

On the occasion of Expo Milano 2015, the Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea with the Polytechnic of Milan and in collaboration with the Sacred Heart Catholic University, organizes a workshop on 17 and 18 June 2015 on the relationship between climate change, agriculture and food security in developing countries. The workshop, with the participation of academics, experts from international institutions and cooperation, will focus, inter alia, on the impacts of climate change and adaptation actions and resilience to climate change, best practices for mitigation in the agricultural and agri-food in developing countries. The most significant experiences of Italian NGOs will be presented assessing strengths and weaknesses.

(Website:http://www.minambiente.it/notizie/selezione-progetti-ong-su-cambiamenti-climatici#sthash.ZjviuJ4a.dpuf )
PART B. Promoting the Convention’s principles in international trade negotiations

1. General information on the promotion of the Convention’s principles in international trade negotiations.

From the Parties that reported that they are already promoting the Convention’s principles in international trade negotiations the following information was provided:

**BULGARIA**    Bulgaria underlined that trade policy of the EU’s Member States is an exclusive power of the EU and only the EU can legislate on trade matters. In accordance with Article 207 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, only the EU can conclude international trade agreements. The European Commission negotiates on behalf of the EU and follows the instructions the EU’s Member States in the Council of the EU. Throughout the negotiating process the Member States and the key stakeholders are actively consulted and involved in the EU decision-making process. Bulgaria is fully supportive to the efforts and activities of the EU to promote the Aarhus Convention principles in the following international trade negotiations:
- Plurilateral negotiations on the Environmental Goods Agreement – EGA (on 8 May 2014 the Council of EU gave the Commission instructions to negotiate the 'green goods initiative').
- Regional and bilateral trade agreements, which include environmental provisions, like TTIP, EU-Japan FTA, EU-Vietnam FTA etc.
- Multilateral negotiations in WTO Committee on Trade and Environment under the Doha Round (in 2001 the Council of EU adopted negotiating directives to negotiate the WTO talks on the Doha Development Agenda).

**GERMANY**    Germany clarified that all trade negotiations led by the European Commission at multilateral level (f.ex. at the WTO), at plurilateral level (f.ex. on environmental goods, EGA or trade in services, TiSA) and at bilateral level (f.ex. free trade negotiations with the USA [TTIP], Canada [CETA] etc.)

The German Government applies and promotes the Convention’s principles in international negotiations to the extent and with the limitation in mind that the German government is not a “negotiator” of trade agreements. This task is being exercised by the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.
Based on constitutional and mandatory law the Federal Government is under the obligation to inform the Parliament about all relevant EU matters including trade negotiations. This includes a regular information of Parliament about the outcomes of the meetings of the Trade Policy Committee and the Foreign Affairs Council meetings (Trade).

**NORWAY**

Norway listed the following trade negotiations where the principles of the Convention are being promoted: WTO, plurilateral (Trade in Services Agreement – TISA and Environmental Goods Agreement (EGA)), bilateral and regional (European Free Trade Association – EFTA).

**EUROPEAN UNION**

The EU provides access to documents as wide as possible. The legal basis for disclosure of EU documents is in particular Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents.

As regards the current TTIP negotiations the Commission has taken steps in January 2015 to publish the first EU 'textual proposals' on the updated TTIP website. These included explanatory texts and a Reader's Guide. Since then DG Trade had continued to publish EU position papers on various areas of the negotiation. Currently the TTIP website contains a wealth of information (meeting minutes, explanatory documents etc.

2. **Mechanisms for the promotion of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international trade negotiations**

a. **National coordination mechanisms**

Four Parties (Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany and Norway) reported that national coordination mechanisms are already in use.

**BELGIUM**

At regional level, there are co-ordinations at administration level and – if needed – at inter-ministerial level. Then, before all meetings there is an internal coordination between the regions and the federal level.

**BULGARIA**

Bulgaria has developed national coordination mechanisms in order to improve the access of the civil society to information, as well as to promote the active dialogue and involvement of all interested parties in the trade negotiating process. Interested parties are consulted through different tools, such as communications, consultation documents, and ad-hoc consultations. Consultation via the Internet is the usual practice.

**NORWAY**

In addition to intra- and interministerial coordination on positions in the negotiations through electronic exchanges and meetings, the public is involved through regular meetings in the Advisory committee on WTO chaired by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs,
regular meetings in a dialogue forum on regional and bilateral trade and investment negotiations chaired by the Ministry of Trade and Fisheries and ad hoc process specific meetings. Representatives of non-governmental organizations in different fields, including the environment, have been included in the Norwegian delegation to WTO Ministerial meetings since 2005. Dedicated websites for information on negotiation processes, including in some cases links to Norway's positions and offers (mostly in Norwegian only):

Trade Policy/WTO:  
https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/tema/utenrikssaker/handelspolitikk/id1161/  
Trade in Services Agreement (TISA):  
https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/tema/utenrikssaker/handelspolitikk/tisa/id2403335/  
Environmental Goods Agreement (EGA):  
https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/tema/utenrikssaker/handelspolitikk/ega_adgang/id2000144/  
Newsletter on Trade Policy, WTO and OECD:  
https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/tema/utenrikssaker/handelspolitikk/nyhetsbrev1/id2343671/  
Regional/bilateral Trade and Investment Agreements:  
https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/tema/naringsliv/frihandelsavtaler/id2344484/

i. **Intra-ministerial level**

Coordination mechanisms to promote the principles of the Convention in trade negotiations are already in use at intra-ministerial level in the following countries

**BELGIUM**  
See general section above

**GERMANY**  
Regular coordination and consultation with all units affected by trade policy, including those in charge of customs matters, investment protection, industrial policy, country desks etc.

**NORWAY**  
See general section above

ii. **Inter-ministerial level**

**BULGARIA**  
Provisions of Article 26 of the Law on Legislative Acts ensure the involvement of the interested parties in the decision-making process: “Before tabling a draft of a normative act to be issued or adopted by the competent body, the author of the draft shall publish it on the Internet site of the respective institution together with the motives, respectively the
report, and shall provide at least 14 days to the interested persons for proposals and opinions on the draft.” According to the Regulation on the Structure and Functions of Council of Ministers and its Administration each Minister-importer of draft normative act, shall prepare a report summarizing the results of carried out public consultation and this report is an integral part of the package of documents for the Council of Ministers and the National Assembly. In addition, the Portal of the Council of Ministers for Public Consultations also provides at the earliest possible stage the opportunity to the public and NGOs to express their views on draft regulations, strategies, plans and programmes, created by the different public authorities.

The mentioned above (in point A.2.a.) Council for European Affairs maintains the overall coordination of preparation and approval of positions on EU matters, including trade negotiations.

The Ministry of Economy provides full and detailed information to all competent authorities about the state of play of the on-going trade negotiations in a timely manner. Written consultations are performed on regular basis with the competent Ministries and Agencies with regard to all issues at stake, drafting proposals or draft agreements.

Traders and interested parties are consulted by the European Commission regarding the proposed introduction or amendment of laws and regulations of general application: [http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/civil_society/general_overview_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/civil_society/general_overview_en.htm)

Portal of the Council of Ministers for Public Consultations: [http://www.strategy.bg](http://www.strategy.bg)


Additional public consultations initiated by the Ministry of Economy are subject to needs assessment: [http://www.mi.government.bg](http://www.mi.government.bg)

**GERMANY**

Regular coordination meetings with various ministries in order to prepare in particular the EU Trade Policy Committee meetings and EU Foreign Affairs Council Meetings (Trade)

**iii. Subnational level**

**GERMANY**

Action to promote the principles of the Convention at subnational level has been taken in Germany, through the organisation of meetings – also on an “ad-hoc”-basis - with representatives of federal states and municipalities as well as with the business community and NGO´s.
b. Alternative measures in place

BELGIUM Consultations at ministerial and administrations level with stakeholders (economic sectors, unions, public society, NGOs, etc).

EUROPEAN UNION The European Commission is a collegiate body which does not need specific coordination mechanisms for this purpose.

3. Innovative practices to promote access to information and public participation in international trade negotiations.

Five Parties (Belarus, Belgium, Germany, Norway and the European Union) reported that they have already developed or are currently planning electronic, web-based applications or other tools to promote access to information and public participation in international trade negotiations.

a. Electronic tools

NORWAY Norway reported that it is currently using innovative electronic tools to promote access to information and public participation in international trade negotiations (see section on national coordination mechanisms further above).

EUROPEAN UNION For the TTIP negotiations:


b. Web-based applications (online forums, social networks)

BELARUS Belarus reported that it is planning to develop web-based applications to promote access to information and public participation in international trade negotiations.

GERMANY The website of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Energy offers detailed information on ongoing trade negotiations including on TiSA, TTIP and CETA (see http://www.bmwi.de/EN/Topics/foreign-trade.html)
c. Other practices

BELGIUM During negotiations: regular debriefing and exchange of views with stakeholders.

GERMANY Discussion and information events with the civil society on important trade negotiations such as TTIP.

4. Reasons for not promoting the Convention’s principles in international trade negotiations

The main reason for not incorporating the Convention’s principles in international trade negotiations was the lack of sufficient institutional framework (Slovakia, Switzerland) and the absence of any official plan or alternative measures that could serve the same purpose.

Belarus further added the lack of experience and knowledge and stressed the need to raise awareness of the competent authorities through training seminars, training courses and other.

***