THE POWER IS IN YOUR HANDS
- AARHUS CONVENTION AND PRTR PROTOCOL -

Get Access – Participate – Seek Justice

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice

- Bureau
  - Compliance Committee
  - Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention
  - Task Force on Access to Information
  - Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making
  - Task Force on Access to Justice

Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

- Bureau
  - Compliance Committee
  - Working Group of the Parties to the PRTR Protocol

❖ Aarhus Convention - 47 Parties
Adopted in 1998 in Aarhus
Entry into force - 30 Oct 2001
❖ PRTR Protocol - 36 Parties
Adopted in 2003 in Kyiv
Entry into force - 8 Oct 2009

❖ 9 subsidiary bodies to MOPs
➢ apprx 14 meetings p/year
➢ 450 participants p/year
➢ 600 participants per 3/4 years - 2 MOPs
❖ 250 days p/year on AC - media clippings
### Aarhus Convention

#### Major trends

- Living instrument – relevant across sectors – its beauty and challenge
- SDG 16, especially, but key to implementation of all SDGs
- Impartial Compliance Committee advise - recognition in the region
- Global significance: sharing, acceding and replicating
- Impacting proceedings and decision-making of other fora
- Special 2017: MOPs/HLS, Budva Declaration, decisions

#### What We Do

- True multilateral spirit – facilitate joint commitments, share experiences and respond to challenges; provide legal and policy advice; produce recommendations and guidance materials
- Strong sense of solidarity among Parties - no “a la carte activities”, but common challenges and mutual support
- It is about human rights - sensitive matter - political backing is important
- Our partners: UN system (e.g. other ECE programmes, UNEP, UNITAR, OHCHR, UNDESA, ECLAC, and other org-s (OECD, OSCE – Aarhus Centers), other MEAs (CBD, UNFCCC), IFIs (e.g. World Bank, EBRD, EIB), NGOs, academia
Aarhus Convention

Who are the Parties?

- From countries with some of the world’s lowest GDPs per capita to countries with some of the highest
- A wide range of political and legal traditions
- Countries with federal systems and national governments
- Countries concerned with a diverse range of environmental activities and issues, such as e.g. mining, oil and gas exploration, water pollution and shortages, nuclear energy, renewable energies, desertification
Aarhus Convention

Ratification - What are benefits for Parties

- Increasing visibility of the country and its better outreach and fundraising
- Strong, clear and consistent legal tool to promote good governance in countries
- Attractive and clear legal tool to encourage investments, capacity building support and bilateral cooperation for countries
- Setting common standards in the region for public participation and access to information and to justice – relevant for governance and economic development
- Leads to greater political stability within each country, which leads to greater political stability in the region
- Institutionalised international cooperation
- Consistent standards lead to closer integration of countries in the region thereby leading to higher economic growth
- Regular review of the implementation of the Convention at regional and national level – identifying common trends
- Increased efficiency due to the sharing of resources and know-how between the various Parties/partners
- Increasing visibility of the region and solid and transparent framework for regional cooperation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lessons Learnt</th>
<th>How it is organised</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❖ Ratification opens door for a structured assistance</td>
<td>❖ At regional level</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ Assistance required for implementation</td>
<td>➢ Task forces, sessions at WGP, compliance</td>
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<td>➢ Revision of countries’ legal frameworks</td>
<td>mechanism, webportals - share experiences</td>
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<td>➢ Clarification of interpretation of the Convention</td>
<td>and respond to challenges; provide legal</td>
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<td>➢ Awareness raising and targeted trainings for:</td>
<td>and policy advice; produce recommendations</td>
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<tr>
<td>• governmental authorities’ and agencies</td>
<td>and guidance materials</td>
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<td>• judges, judiciary</td>
<td>➢ Regional capacity building mechanism</td>
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<td>• civil society and members of the public</td>
<td>serviced by secretariat - to guide and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• business, industry, operators</td>
<td>coordinate capacity building activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ Mapping needs for assistance per country</td>
<td>➢ Activities are based on needs identified</td>
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<td>❖ Preparing regional/subregional capacity building programmes</td>
<td>through decisions of MOPs, results of surveys,</td>
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<td>❖ Reaching out to partners and fundraising</td>
<td>outcomes of work of task forces and of</td>
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<td>Compliance Committee. These needs also</td>
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<td>provide basis for assistance at subregional</td>
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<td>and national levels</td>
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<td>activities are led by Parties and partner</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>organisations such as RECs, OSCE, UNDP,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Aarhus Centers, with the advisory support</td>
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<td>of the secretariat</td>
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