



AARHUS CONVENTION: TOOL FOR PAVING THE WAY TO GREEN ECONOMY AND ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

blog.e

BATUMI
INITIATIVE
ON GREEN
ECONOMY

**OSCE Annual Aarhus Centres meeting
Vienna
21 November 2016**

**#AarhusConvention
#PRTRs**



UNECE

Batumi outcomes for Greening the Economy



Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy

&

Batumi Initiative on Green Economy (BIG-E)

2016-2030



Aarhus Convention: power to know

- ❖ Guarantees public access to a broad scope of environmental information (e.g. on policies, legislation, plans and programmes; cost-benefit and other economic analyses and assumptions)
- ❖ Facilitates linkages with statistical, geospatial and Earth observation data on the matters relating to the environment
- ❖ Requires proactive dissemination of environmental information (e.g. on good practice information and guidelines on better environmental management and sustainability) and promotes re-use of public sector environmental information
- ❖ Stimulates cleaner production and mitigation of emissions through the establishment of pollutant release and transfer registers and its public access (see the Protocol on PRTRs)
- ❖ Encourages operators to disclose the environmental impact, including through voluntary eco-labelling or eco-auditing schemes or by other means
- ❖ Requires to ensure access to sufficient product information in a manner which enables consumers to make informed environmental choices.



Aarhus Centres role: Supporting Governments in these actions, communicating to the public in plain language on the Green Economy and opportunities to participate in decision-making on the transition and building capacities of media

Aarhus Convention: power to participate in decision-making

Effective involvement of the public in decision-making

- ❖ *Specific activities (Annex I, other activities with significant effect on the environment)*
- ❖ *Plans, programmes and policies relating to the environment, inter alia*
 - Green Economy action plans
 - Plans and programmes subject to **strategic environmental assessment** (see also Protocol on SEA)
 - Sectoral plans relating/impacting the environment
- ❖ *Laws and executive regulations relating to the environment*
- ❖ *GMOs-related matters*
- ❖ *International forums*

UNECE
**Maastricht Recommendations on
Promoting Effective Public Participation in
Decision-making in Environmental Matters**
prepared under the Aarhus Convention



JUSTICE

AARHUS CONVENTION
for our environment

Aarhus Centres role: Translation of the Recommendations in national/local languages and their wide dissemination, support building capacities in carrying out public participation procedures, especially with regard to plans and programmes and on GMOs-related matters

Aarhus Convention: power to access justice

Parties must ensure the public has access to review procedures to challenge:

- ❖ Refusals to provide requested information
- ❖ Legality of decisions, acts or omissions related to decision-making
- ❖ Acts or omissions by private persons or public authorities which contravene national law relating to the environment

All review procedures must be **fair, timely, equitable, not prohibitively expensive** and provide **adequate and effective remedies**.

Current focus of work: costs, remedies, scope of review, timeliness, protection against persecution and harassment

Aarhus Centres role: Raising awareness and building capacities of judiciary, other review bodies, NGOs and other legal professionals, support multi-stakeholder national dialogues to remove existing barriers to access to justice



Conclusion: Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs are relevant today for greening the economy and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



Thank you!

Aarhus Convention Secretariat
Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Palais des Nations, Av. de la Paix 10
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

E-mail: public.participation@unece.org

Web page: <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/welcome.html>