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OSCE Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe
Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Project co-financed by:



Aarhus Centres Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Environmental Public Participation and Information Centres

Center for Environment, Banja Luka

Project implemented by:



cee
centar za ekologiju i energiju



Background

- In 2009/2010, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina implemented a joint project with REC (funding from ENVSEC and Hungarian Embassy to BiH) to put the Aarhus Convention back on the government's agenda (ratification in September 2008).



Background

- In 2010: first visit of a joint government/NGO delegation to Aarhus Centres in Albania



- Successful preparation of the First National Implementation Report with NGO participation

2011

- Working with MDPI, OSCE executed a project to support implementation of the Convention in 8 municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



- Two regional meetings of Aarhus Centres in SEE hosted in Sarajevo (2010 and 2011) provide additional impetus for Aarhus Centres launch in BiH.

2012

- May 2012: City of Sarajevo and Misison to BiH sign a Memorandum of Understanding on establishing **first Aarhus Centre in Sarajevo.**
- Results follow: first Practical Manual on AC Implementation, national web platform (www.aarhus.ba), trainings for municipal staff and media, environmental law clinic.
- December 2012: EU Delegation approves a project (co-funded by OSCE) on establishment of Environmental Public Participation and Information Centres - **Aarhus Centres in Banja Luka and Tuzla.**
- Feb 2013: Aarhus Centre Sarajevo transforms into NGO.

2013

- April 2013: OSCE facilitates signing of Protocol on Cooperation between **3 Aarhus Centres (Aarhus centres network of Bosnia and Herzegovina)**.



The five main roles that civil society has in environmental management:

- 1) collect, analyze and disseminate environmental information,
- 2) contribute to policy-making and development processes in terms of the environment,
- 3) Perform operational and logistical functions on behalf of citizens through participation in decision making,
- 4) assess the state of the environment and ensure compliance with legal provisions in the field of environmental protection, and
- 5) advocate democratic principles and human rights in the field of environment.

Focus of Aarhus Centers in forthcoming period and goals to be reached:

- Environmental information sharing with interested parties and improving the legislation. (FOIA)
- Bringing together different stakeholders in public hearings and practicing the democracy and dialog
- Monitoring and tracking of environmental cases where the right of access to information or the right to participation in decision-making is denied
- Supporting public on access to justice through legal counseling and support (two lawyers engaged).

Focus of Aarhus Centers in forthcoming period and results to be achieved:

- Assist local, regional and national governments, and NGOs in fulfilment of obligations under the AC.
- Increase access to environmental information to public and NGOs.
- Raise public awareness on rights under the AC.
- Improve the impact of public participation in environmental matters.
- Render more visibility to environmental (court) cases.

How Aarhus Centers will work on it?

- Opening dialogue with different stakeholders.
- Establishing and publishing the database on relevant institutions and documents related to Aarhus Convention and Environment.
- Campaigning and building coalitions.
- Emphasizing the importance of public hearings through community-based training events.
- Educating and engaging young law graduates in environmental issues.



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Thank you for your attention!

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