



AARHUS CENTRES:

A platform for co-operation, participation and partnerships in addressing environment and security issues

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

Environmental challenges do not recognize borders. Environmental degradation and competition over natural resources can lead to tensions and instability within and across borders. Environmental co-operation, on the other hand, can contribute to building

trust and confidence at all levels. It is at community level where the Aarhus Centres start mobilizing co-operation and partnerships among stakeholders, then expanding them to national and transboundary levels.



AARHUS CONVENTION



Adopted in Aarhus, Denmark, on 25 June 1998, the Convention is the first legally binding instrument granting citizens the right of access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters at the local, national and trans-boundary levels.

The Convention:

- Links environmental rights with human rights
- Provides governments with standards of transparency, participation and accountability in environmental affairs
- Promotes greater openness in international environmental decision-making processes

THE THREE PILLARS OF THE AARHUS CONVENTION

Access to environmental information:

- The right of the citizens to receive environmental information that is held by public authorities

Public participation in environmental decision making:

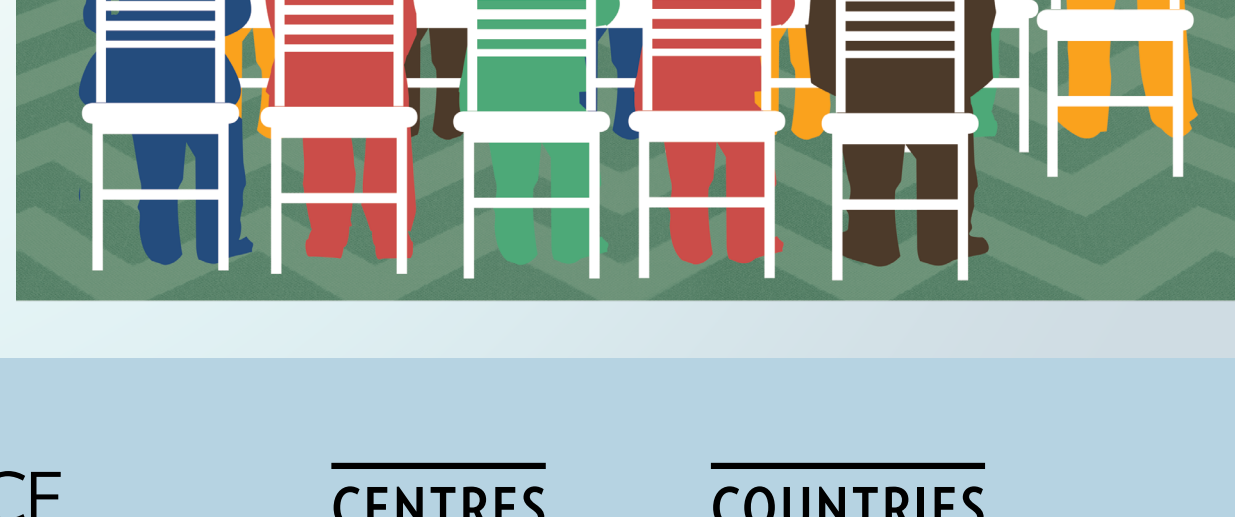
- The right of the citizens to participate in the preparation of plans, programmes, policies and legislation relating to the environment.

Access to justice:

- The right of the citizens to challenge public decisions that have been made without respecting the two aforementioned rights or environmental law in general

AARHUS CENTRES

Since 2002, the OSCE has been supporting the establishment and operation of Aarhus Centres. The Aarhus Centres assist governments in implementing the Aarhus Convention and assist citizens in understanding and exercising their rights as brought by the Convention.



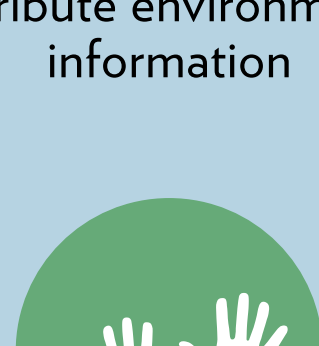
AS OF
2016

The OSCE has been supporting the establishment of:

60 CENTRES IN **14** COUNTRIES



EXAMPLES OF AARHUS CENTRES' ACTIVITIES



Distribute environmental information



Raise public awareness on environmental issues and environmental rights



Link government, civil society and the private sector



Organize public hearings



Organize training courses for media



Promote implementation of the PRTR Protocol

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

"We live in a digital age and should use social **media** in reaching out to people. Getting timely and accurate information on environmental challenges in my community enables me to help raise awareness and mobilize support and action."

"When we **invest** in a new place, we want to avoid negative impacts for the local population, and ensure that people understand what we are doing and how they benefit from it. Therefore we seek dialogue at an early stage."

"We are confronted with various environmental problems – pollution, climate change, and unsustainable business practices. In order to make progress, we, as **NGOs**, need to join forces and communicate our concerns as well as ideas for solutions to government agencies and the private sector."

"Environmental problems can only be solved if citizens are aware of the environmental issues around them, and if they are interested and willing to co-operate with us in implementing environmental measures. Citizens' ownership and support is key for any **government's** success."

"**Citizens** need to be fully informed about the environmental risks around them. I want to learn about the rights that are provided by the environmental laws in my country. And I want to be informed about plans and investments in my city before they are realized so that I can also have a say."

GET INFORMED



and
+

GET INVOLVED



LEARN MORE ABOUT AARHUS CENTRES:

www.osce.org/aarhus

OSCE:

The Aarhus Centres initiative is just one of the many ways the OSCE contributes to building peace and stability in our region. Check out our website and follow us on social media to learn more about our work:

ENVSEC:

The Aarhus Centres have received significant support through the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative which is a partnership of the OSCE with UNDP, UNEP, UNECE, REC and NATO as an associated partner. Check the website to find out more about the ENVSEC Initiative:

www.envsec.org

www.osce.org

- twitter.com/osce
- facebook.com/osce.org
- linkedin.com/company/osce
- soundcloud.com/osce
- instagram.com/osceorg
- plus.google.com/+OSCE