



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
The Secretariat**

Vienna, 02 June 2015

2015 Aarhus Centres Annual Meeting

Vienna, 3-4 June 2015

Venue: Hofburg Congress Centre, Heldenplatz, 1010 Wien

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

3 June 2015, Wednesday
Ratsaal, 5th Floor

09:00-10:30 Opening Session

Welcoming remarks

Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Mr. Jovica Cekic, Minister Counsellor, Serbian 2015 OSCE Chairmanship

Towards environmental democracy - Role of Aarhus Centres

Moderator: *Ambassador Tomislav Leko, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the International Organizations in Vienna, Chair of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Committee*

Rapporteur: *Mr. Riccardo Zennaro, Junior Professional Officer, OCEEA*

The Maastricht Declaration on "*Transparency as a driving force for environmental democracy*" was adopted at the Joint High-level Segment of the fifth session of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers on 2 July 2014. Through the Declaration, Parties to the two treaties called for greater transparency in environmental issues. They also acknowledged the important role of Aarhus Centres in facilitating implementation of the Convention and its Protocol. This session will provide an overview of the role of Aarhus Centres in promoting environmental democracy from the perspectives of the UNECE, Governments, Aarhus Centres, and local authorities.

- UNECE perspective
Mr. Marco Keiner, Director, Environmental Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
- Governments' perspective
Ms. Aykhon Sharipova, Deputy Chairperson, Environment Protection Committee under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, National Focal Point to the Aarhus Convention
Mr. Teimuraz Murgulia, First Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia
- Aarhus Centers' perspective
Mr. Dmitry Prudtskikh, Aarhus Centre Manager, Khujand, Tajikistan
- Local authorities' perspective
Ms. Ljubinka Kaludjerovic, Secretary of the Committee on Environment and Emergencies, Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, Serbia

Discussion

Signing Ceremony of the Joint Declaration for Co-operation among the Aarhus Centres of South-Eastern Europe

10:30-11:00 Coffee Break

11:00-12:30 **Session 1: Partnerships and networking: where we are and where we want to go**

Moderator: *Ms. Desiree Schweitzer, Deputy Co-ordinator/Head, Environmental Activities, OCEEA*

Rapporteur: *Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk, Environmental Programme Officer, OCEEA*

Aarhus Centres are the platforms that bring different stakeholders together – civil society, government, local administrations, and the private sector. They foster partnerships and co-operation among these stakeholders and increasingly also collaborate with each other in addressing a variety of environmental issues. This session will showcase several examples of networking among Aarhus Centres within and across borders and of strengthened partnerships with other main stakeholders in environmental policy-making. It will also provide an overview of the OSCE's support to Aarhus Centres in 2014/15.

- OSCE's support to the implementation of the Aarhus Convention (2014-2015)
Ms. Esra Buttanri, Senior Environmental Affairs Adviser, Head, Environmental Co-operation Unit, OCEEA
- Co-operation of Aarhus Centres across borders - The partnership between the Osh Aarhus Centre and Khujand Aarhus Centre
Mr. Kanybek Isabaev, Director, Aarhus Centre Osh, Kyrgyzstan

- Partnership with environmental authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina: managing consultations on the new draft environmental law
Ms. Sabina Jukan, Executive Director, Aarhus Centre Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Co-operation among Aarhus Centres to strengthen environmental good governance in Armenia
Ms. Mari Chakryan, Press Officer, Armenian Aarhus Centres, Armenia
- Towards strengthening national networking of Aarhus Centres in Kazakhstan
Mr. Abzal Jussupov, Head of the Environmental Information, Public Relations and International Programs Division, Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- Aarhus Centres as a catalyst for promoting effective environmental outcomes
Ms. Galyna Sierova, Aarhus Center Director, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine, State Environmental Academy of Ukraine

Discussion

12:30-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:30 Session 2: The role of civil society in water governance

Moderator: *Mr. Uros Milanovic, Attache, Serbian 2015 OSCE Chairmanship*

Rapporteur: *Ms. Jenniver Sehring, Environmental Affairs Adviser, OCEEA*

Public participation and involvement of civil society in water governance have proven to be crucial to achieve sustainable solutions to water challenges and ensure effective implementation of water policy decisions and strategies. This session will discuss how civil society can contribute to better water governance at all levels – from local to transboundary – and how Aarhus Centres can strengthen such participatory processes.

- Strengthening public participation in transboundary water management – commitment of Aarhus Centres in South Eastern Europe
Mr. Elton Qendro, Project Assistant, OSCE Presence in Albania
- Participatory review of national water legislation - Aarhus Centre Georgia
Ms. Tamar Aladashvili, Deputy Head, Department of Environmental Policy and International Relations, Environmental Information and Education Centre, Georgia
- The role of civil society in water governance: The Belorussian experience
Ms. Olga Zakharova, Manager, Aarhus Centre of Belarus, Belarus
- Participatory flood risk management and the role of Aarhus Centres
Mr Srdjan Matovic, Manager of AC Kragujevac, Serbia
- Supporting stakeholder participation in water governance in Central Asia
Ms. Arailym Shulgauova, Project Management Coordinator, Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC)

Discussion

15:30-16:00 Coffee Break

16:00-17:30 **Session 3: Strengthening community based disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation: the involvement of Aarhus Centres**

Moderator: **Ms. Anna Ifkovits Horner**, *Counsellor Senior Political Adviser, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the OSCE*

Rapporteur: **Ms. Dana Bogdan**, *Programme Assistant, OCEEA*

Local communities are not only vulnerable to disaster and climate change, but also crucial actors in strengthening resilience. Aarhus Centres can support them with increasing local capacities in DRR and climate change adaptation, awareness raising and building dialogue among all concerned stakeholders and actors. This session will, i.a., draw upon the lessons learnt in the ongoing ENVSEC-project “Strengthening the capacities of Aarhus Centres in disaster risk reduction to enhance awareness of local communities”. It will also provide an overview of the envisaged role for Aarhus Centres within the framework of the ENVSEC project on “Climate Change and Security in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus”.

- Community-based DRR in Tajikistan
Ms. Sulkhuya Sodigova, Dushanbe Aarhus Centre, Tajikistan
- Community-based DRR in Moldova: Aarhus Centres’ activities for awareness-raising
Ms. Rodica Iordanov, Director, Aarhus Centre Chisinau, Moldova
- Campaigning for public transparency as a tool for disaster risk reduction
Ms. Jelena Brkic, Aarhus Center Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Raising awareness on climate change and security - the role of Aarhus Centres
Ms. Christine Kitzler, Project Co-ordinator for the ENVSEC project on “Climate Change and Security in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus”, OCEEA

Discussion

18:00-19:30 **Reception hosted by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (Hofburg Congress Centre – 2nd floor)**

4 June 2015, Thursday

09:30-11:00 **Session 4: Access to environmental information and public outreach –role of the Aarhus Centres**

Moderator: **Ms. Pavlina Rehor**, *First Secretary, EU Delegation to the International Organisations in Vienna*

Rapporteur: **Ms. Nino Malashkhia**, *Associate Environmental Affairs Officer, OCEEA*

Access to information is one of the three pillars of the Aarhus Convention. This session will highlight the importance of environmental information for effective policy- and decision-making at all levels, including at regional level, and inform the meeting on available tools and instruments. It will provide examples of how Aarhus

Centres facilitate access to environmental information and public outreach in general as well as in the case of specific projects.

- Environmental information for effective policy-making
Ms. Adriana Gheorghe, Project Manager, Cooperation EU Neighbours and Central Asia, European Environment Agency
- Role of the Aarhus Centre in access to environmental information in Georgia
Ms. Nino Gokheshvili, Aarhus Convention National Focal Point, Head of International Relations Division, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia
- Enhancing access to environmental information: The role of the Aarhus Centre of Turkmenistan
Mr. Nazar Korpeyev, Manager, Aarhus Centre of Turkmenistan, Turkmenistan
- Public outreach for environmental legislation in Montenegro
Mr. Aleksandar Perovic, Manager of Aarhus Centre Niksic, Montenegro
- Fostering stakeholder engagement for uranium legacy remediation in Central Asia: the role of Aarhus Centres
Mr. Armen Grigoryan, Disaster Risk Reduction Team Leader and Advisor, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub

Discussion

11:00-11:30 Coffee Break

11:30-13:00 Session 5: Transparency, accountability and participation in environmental decision-making

Moderator: Representative of the Permanent Mission of Greece to the OSCE

Rapporteur: **Mr. Zhaslan Nurtazin**, Associate Environmental Governance Officer, OCEEA

The Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR) promote transparency, accountability and public participation in environmental decision-making. This session will inform the meeting on how stakeholder engagement is governed in the case of projects supported by international financial institutions and provide examples of how Aarhus Centres can act as a bridge between government authorities, investors and citizens. The session will also take a closer look at the PRTR Protocol in terms of partnerships with industry.

- Public information and stakeholder engagement policies and processes in EBRD
Ms. Elizabeth Smith, Senior Environmental and Stakeholder Engagement Advisor, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
- Partnerships for management of natural resources at local level
Mr. Kanybek Isabaev, Director, Aarhus Centre Osh, Kyrgyzstan
- The role of Aarhus Centres in promoting transparency
Mr. Robert Murataj, Manager, Aarhus Centre Vlora, Albania

- The role of Aarhus Centres in promoting public participation in decision-making in Armenia
Ms. Anush Beybutyan, Co-ordinator, Yeghvard Aarhus Centre, Armenia
- Partnership with industry - Aarhus Convention's PRTR Protocol
Ms. Gordana Kozhuharova, Regional Director for SEE, Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)

Discussion

13:00-14:30 Lunch

14:30–16:00 Session 6: Communication and partnerships - the way forward

Moderator: *Mr. Andreas Stadler, Minister Plenipotentiary, Permanent Mission of Austria to the OSCE*

Rapporteur: *Mr. Riccardo Zennaro, Junior Professional Officer, OCEEA*

“Environmental issues are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens” (Article 10, 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development) for which solid co-operation among all stakeholders involved is needed. This can only be achieved through long-term communication and partnerships across all levels. This session will provide insights on the existing partnerships across various sectors in addressing environmental issues and will showcase particular examples of how good communication and close partnerships contributed and will continue to contribute to achieving best results in implementing the Aarhus Convention.

- OSCE-UNECE partnership in strengthening implementation of the Aarhus Convention
Ms. Ella Behlyarova, Secretary to the Aarhus Convention, Environment Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
- Government – civil society partnership for the environment – the case of Belarus
Mr. Ivan Narkevitch, Coordinator of international projects, Bel. SRC “Ecology”, Belarus
- National Aarhus Centres Development Strategy in Kyrgyzstan
Ms. Dzhymparkul Bekkulova, Head of Department of Environmental Strategy and Policies, the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry of Kyrgyz Republic
- Enhancing communication and partnerships - Future prospects
Mr. Shovkat Bakirov, Senior Adviser, Environmental Publicity Division, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, Azerbaijan
- The role of Aarhus Centres in promoting a green economy
Ms. Lyudmila Lvova, Director of the Burabay Aarhus Centre, Kazakhstan
- European Eco-Forum and the Aarhus Convention
Ms. Mara Silina, Chair of the Coordination Board of the European Eco Forum

Discussion

16:00-16:30 Coffee Break

16:30-18:00 Session 7: Towards joint action of Aarhus Centres

Moderator: Ms. Esra Buttanri, *Senior Environmental Affairs Adviser, Head, Environmental Co-operation Unit, OCEEA*

Rapporteur: Ms. Dana Bogdan, *Programme Assistant, OCEEA*

In light of the discussions held through Sessions 1 to 6, participants are expected to discuss and agree on further steps for Aarhus Centres in strengthening networking and co-operation among them in addressing common environmental challenges. Gender mainstreaming, increasing visibility and enhancing communication will be among the issues that will be discussed in this session as part of the joint action of Aarhus Centres.

- Ways to mainstream gender into the work of the Aarhus Centres
Ms. Jenniver Sehring, *Environmental Affairs Adviser, OCEEA*
- Increasing visibility of Aarhus Centre activities
Ms. Mersiha Causevic-Podzic, *Media and Outreach Officer, Communications and Media Relations Section, OSCE*
- Prospects for a communication platform for Aarhus Centres
Mr. Zhaslan Nurtazin, *Associate Environmental Governance Officer, OCEEA*
- Discussion and exchange among the Aarhus Centres on joint action areas and next steps

Concluding remarks