

## AARHUS CENTRE OF TURKMENISTAN

In August 2012, with the support of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat and the Nature Protection Ministry of Turkmenistan the National Aarhus Centre (Centre) was established in Ashgabat. The Centre works within the framework of the project on the basis of the Tebigy Kuwwat SUE in Ashgabat.

The aim of the Centre is to support implementation of the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) in Turkmenistan by facilitating the Access to environmental information; Public participation in environmental decision-making; and Access to justice on environmental matters.

One of the main tasks of the Centre is ensuring a free access of the citizens and the public to environmental information, facilitating public participation in environmental decision making and providing free legal consultations connected to the environmental rights.

## AARHUS CONVENTION

Current environmental rights have been formed on the basis of a number of nature protection norms and rules issued during the recent decades.

In 1970s a connection between environmental problems and human rights causing some concern can be traced in the international declarations and resolutions. In 1992 during the Meeting *Planet Earth* held at a high level the governments adopted global Rio de Janeiro declaration on environment and development.

The tenth principle of the Declaration states that “environmental problems are solved by the most efficient ways with the participation of all those interested people.”

The Aarhus Convention was adopted at the 4th Conference of the Ministers “Environment for Europe held in Aarhus (Denmark) on June 25, 1998.

The Aarhus Convention adopted under the aegis of the UN EEC legally guarantees the citizens of Europe and Central Asia a reliable code of legal norms and rules for ensuring and protecting their environmental rights.

Turkmenistan ratified the Aarhus Convention on April 30, 1999 thus proving its intention to follow its regulations and accepting high international standards for environmental decision-making process.

The Aarhus Convention recognizes the right of each of us to safe environment and determines our duties for its protection. Its aim is to guarantee the rights of current and future generation for the safe environment, health and wellbeing.

To achieve this aim, the Convention determines the issues of accountability, openness and immediacy of decision-making at a state level. It states the norms on the human rights in decision-making in environmental matters.



*Central Kopetdag*

The Constitution of Turkmenistan and national nature protection legislation guarantees human rights to the access to environmental information, public participation in decision-making in environmental matters and efficient environmental management.

The establishment and work of the Aarhus Centre is actual and significant landmark in the course of implementation of the Aarhus Convention in Turkmenistan.



*Mountainous River*

### ACTIVITIES OF THE ARHUS CENTRE

To facilitate the increased environmental knowledge of the citizens and other interested parties with the focus on environmental norms and ensuring human rights, initially, the Centre was concentrated on the formation of the environmental database including national legislation. The Centre also works to create the comprehensive environmental materials to be published in national mass media.

The Centre plans to develop partnership with corresponding state and civil society representatives, as well as develop network with the existed Aarhus Centres in other countries.

In general, the Centre will promote the Aarhus Convention among relevant stakeholders by explaining the main regulations of the Aarhus Convention which serve to the better access to environmental information, increased

public participation in environmental decision-making and provided access to justice on environmental matters.

### FIRST EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE

In November 2012, the Head of the Aarhus Centre of Turkmenistan, Prof. Dr. Nazar Korpeyev visited the Aarhus Centers of Armenia to gain best practices and learn upon the working experience of Armenian Aarhus Centres.



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Centre in Ashgabat

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