



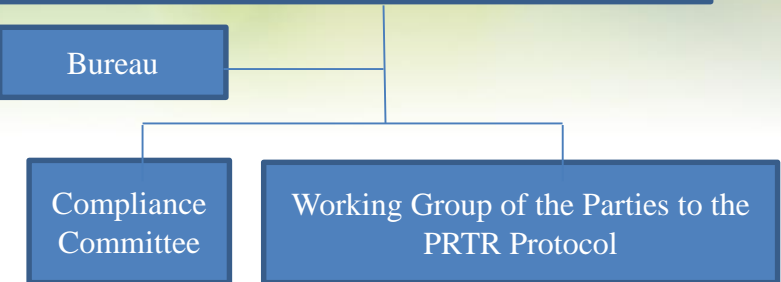
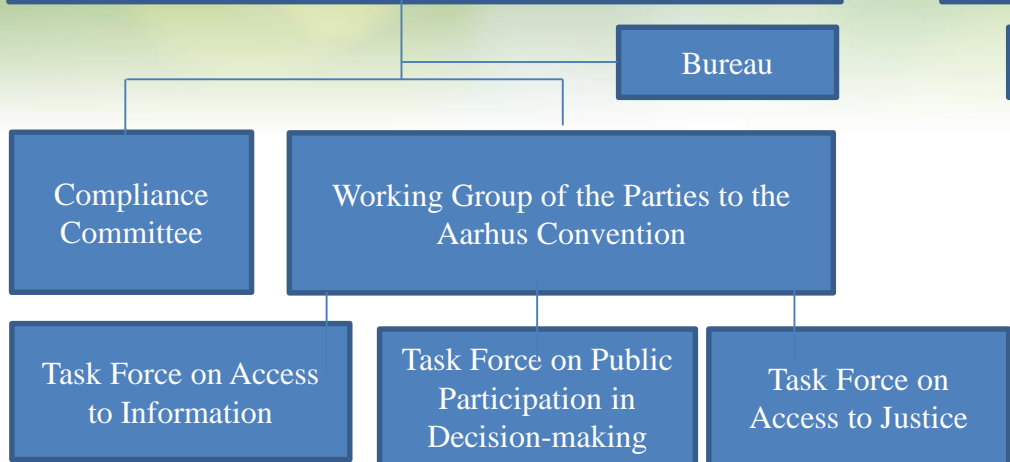
THE POWER IS IN YOUR HANDS

- AARHUS CONVENTION AND PRTR PROTOCOL -

Get Access – Participate – Seek Justice

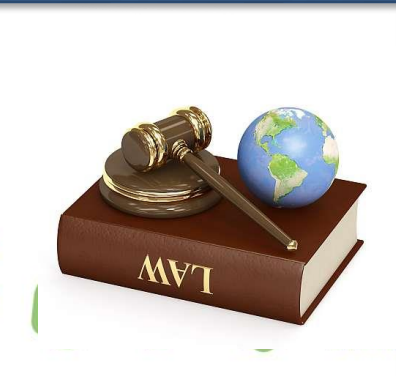
Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice

Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers



- ❖ Aarhus Convention - 47 Parties
Adopted in 1998 in Aarhus
Entry into force - 30 Oct 2001
- ❖ PRTR Protocol - 36 Parties
Adopted in 2003 in Kyiv
Entry into force - 8 Oct 2009

Access to Information Public Participation Access to Justice



- ❖ 9 subsidiary bodies to MOPs
- apprx 14 meetings p/year
- 450 participants p/year
- 600 participants per 3/4 years - 2 MOPs
- ❖ 250 days p/year on AC - media clippings



Aarhus Convention

Major trends

- ❖ Living instrument – relevant across sectors – its beauty and challenge
- ❖ SDG 16, especially, but key to implementation of all SDGs
- ❖ Impartial Compliance Committee advise - recognition in the region
- ❖ Global significance: sharing, acceding and replicating
- ❖ Impacting proceedings and decision-making of other fora
- ❖ Special 2017: MOPs/HLS, Budva Declaration, decisions

What We Do

- ❖ True multilateral spirit – facilitate joint commitments, share experiences and respond to challenges; provide legal and policy advice; produce recommendations and guidance materials
- ❖ Strong sense of solidarity among Parties - no “a la carte activities”, but common challenges and mutual support
- ❖ It is about human rights - sensitive matter - political backing is important
- ❖ Our partners: UN system (e.g. other ECE programmes, UNEP, UNITAR, OHCHR, UNDESA, ECLAC, and other org-s (OECD, OSCE – Aarhus Centers), other MEAs (CBD, UNFCCC), IFIs (e.g. World Bank, EBRD, EIB), NGOs, academia



Aarhus Convention

Who are the Parties?

- ❖ From countries with some of the world's lowest GDPs per capita to countries with some of the highest
- ❖ A wide range of political and legal traditions
- ❖ Countries with federal systems and national governments
- ❖ Countries concerned with a diverse range of environmental activities and issues, such as e.g. mining, oil and gas exploration, water pollution and shortages, nuclear energy, renewable energies, desertification



Aarhus Convention

Ratification - What are benefits for Parties

- ❖ Increasing visibility of the country and its better outreach and fundraising
- ❖ Strong, clear and consistent legal tool to promote good governance in countries
- ❖ Attractive and clear legal tool to encourage investments, capacity building support and bilateral cooperation for countries
- ❖ Setting common standards in the region for public participation and access to information and to justice – relevant for governance and economic development
- ❖ Leads to greater political stability within each country, which leads to greater political stability in the region
- ❖ Institutionalised international cooperation
- ❖ Consistent standards lead to closer integration of countries in the region thereby leading to higher economic growth
- ❖ Regular review of the implementation of the Convention at regional and national level – identifying common trends
- ❖ Increased efficiency due to the sharing of resources and know-how between the various Parties/partners
- ❖ Increasing visibility of the region and solid and transparent framework for regional cooperation



Aarhus Convention - Capacity building

Lessons Learnt

- ❖ **Ratification opens door for a structured assistance**
- ❖ **Assistance required for implementation**
 - Revision of countries' legal frameworks
 - Clarification of interpretation of the Convention
 - Awareness raising and targeted trainings for:
 - governmental authorities' and agencies
 - judges, judiciary
 - civil society and members of the public
 - business, industry, operators
- ❖ **Mapping needs for assistance per country**
- ❖ **Preparing regional/subregional capacity building programmes**
- ❖ **Reaching out to partners and fundraising**

How it is organised

- ❖ **At regional level**
 - **Task forces, sessions at WGP, compliance mechanism, webportals** - share experiences and respond to challenges; provide legal and policy advice; produce recommendations and guidance materials
 - **Regional capacity building mechanism** serviced by secretariat - to guide and coordinate capacity building activities
 - **Activities are based on needs** identified through decisions of MOPs, results of surveys, outcomes of work of task forces and of Compliance Committee. These needs also provide basis for assistance at subregional and national levels
- ❖ **At subregional and national levels** – activities are led by Parties and partner organisations such as RECs, OSCE, UNDP, Aarhus Centers, with the advisory support of the secretariat