



New strategic plan for the Aarhus Convention

The Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters was adopted in 1998, and to mark its 10 year anniversary, the Parties to the Convention met in Riga from 11 to 13 June 2008.

A major outcome of the meeting was the adoption of a strategic plan which will establish the future course of the Convention.

Citizens and civil society organisations must be involved

The plan emphasises that: "the serious environmental, social and economic challenges faced by societies worldwide cannot be addressed by public authorities alone without the involvement and support of a wide range of stakeholders, including individual citizens and civil society organizations."

Streamlining effective communication on the Convention

During the Riga meeting, the Parties to the Convention decided that a communication strategy should be drawn up and agreement was reached to set up an expert group to support this task.

UNECE with the participation of the Green Spider Network of Environmental Communicators organised a roundtable in Riga to discuss the future development of the communication strategy for the Convention.

The future communication strategy is expected to:

- Find ways of presenting the Convention's legal rights and opportunities in everyday language which can be understood by national and local government officials responsible for implementing the provisions of the Convention on-the-ground, as well as by the broader public;
- Identify key messages and target audiences in order to raise awareness about the Convention and build support for its implementation;
- Provide a framework for adopting the most effective means of communication, tailored to specific target audiences, through appropriate media channels.

More information about the Riga meeting can be found at:

http://unece.org/env/pp/mop3_key.htm

This newsflash is issued by the EECN which is DG Environment's support structure for European Environmental Communication Networks.

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