



PROJECT INFORMATION

State as at April 2011

Capacity Building to Put the Aarhus Convention into Action and to Support the Development of PRTR Systems in SEE Countries



PRTR meeting in Skopje. Photo: REC

Background

The Aarhus Convention (AC) adopted in 1998 in Aarhus, Denmark, is ratified by 43 countries and the European Community, including the five project countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Interest has also been shown by Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244) to implement the principles of the AC. Despite the significant progress achieved in harmonizing environmental legislation with the AC and the EU directives, numerous gaps still exist in the implementation of the public participation and the access to justice requirements in these countries. Also the PRTR system in these countries is still not fully functional.

Project

The goals of the project are:

- to strengthen the implementation capacities of officials responsible for public participation in environmental decision-making,
- to build capacities of NGOs to use participatory skills,
- to increase the awareness of the judiciary and NGOs on access to justice in environmental matters,
- to support officials in developing functioning PRTRs and

- to provide knowledge for operators and NGOs to understand and to use the PRTR reporting requirements.

Target groups of this project are environmental and other relevant authorities, the judiciary, operators of PRTRs and NGOs.

The project consists of three components. Planned activities of them are:

- Component 1: Trainings, pilot projects and the elaboration of practical user-friendly toolkits to prepare officials and NGOs for public participation procedures in decision-making on EIA, SEA or urban planning;
- Component 2: Trainings for judges and prosecutors in cooperation with Judicial Training Centers, roundtable meetings on the reduction of barriers to access to justice and NGO strategy meetings on access to justice rights and opportunities;
- Component 3: Technical assistance and capacity building to support the ratification and implementation of the PRTR Protocol and of the EU regulation on E-PRTR, stakeholder meetings, awareness raising workshops, pilot activities, on-site trainings and guidance.

Expected results of this project are improved awareness and increased practical knowledge of representatives of the different target groups regarding public participation, access to justice and PRTR in the project countries as well as country-specific toolkits on how to implement public participation processes on environmental decision-making.

- Funding: Advisory Assistance Programme of the German Federal Environment Ministry
- Project identification: 380 01 261
- Countries: selected Western Balkan countries
- Duration: 04/2011 - 11/2012
- Project Management: Umweltbundesamt
- Project partners: Regional Environmental Center (REC), Szentendre, Hungary, www.rec.org, Aarhus and PRTR Focal Points in the project countries