

## **Strengthening decision-making procedures in environmental matters: enhancing transparency and stakeholder participation**

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### **The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)**

together with the relevant rules of national law is the main tool for the Republic of Belarus for ensuring transparency and involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making on issues related to environment.

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## **Establishment of the Aarhus center**

the Aarhus center of the Republic of Belarus was created at the **30th of December 2005** with the aim to facilitate the implementation of the Aarhus convention provisions in frames of the Joint project of **the Ministry of Natural Recourses and Environmental Protection of Belarus** and **the OSCE office in Minsk**

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### **the Aarhus Center in Minsk is:**

- a platform for co-operation on environmental issues
- a mediator in settlement of disputes related to participation in decision-making in environmental matters
- the organization that can help to find answers to the difficult questions in the field of environmental information

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The participation of the Aarhus Centre in public discussions in the framework of the Environmental Impact Assessment of proposed economic activity – an example of cooperation with all stakeholders: the public, customer of the proposed activity, project organization, local executive and administrative authority, scientists, the media



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## the Aarhus center

- helps the Ministry in the preparation of the legislation (laws, regulations of the Council of Ministers, etc.), which is aimed at consolidating the principles of openness and transparency of environmental decision-making, to improve the implementation of other provisions of the Aarhus Convention
- within its competence provides consultations for both the public and for public authorities and business structures

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- together with the Ministry of the Environment prepares national reports on the implementation of the Aarhus Convention
- promotes adherence to the PRTR Protocol and Amendment on GMOs
- participates in the activities of the governing bodies of the Aarhus Convention, the OSCE and other international organizations
- participates in the implementation of international technical assistance projects

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the project "**Strengthening the implementation of the Aarhus Convention in the Republic of Belarus**"

- funded by the OSCE with support of Sweden
- has the aims to strengthen the Aarhus Centre of the Republic of Belarus
- includes activities on:
  - Organizing a model public hearing,
  - Organizing seminars-round-tables on the Aarhus Convention in all regions of the Republic,
  - updating the Aarhus Centre's website,
  - replenishment of the Aarhus Centre library and the publication of promotional products,
  - preparation and publication of the brochure on public participation in decision-making relating to the environment

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publication of public participation will provide a practical recommendations for all stakeholders and aims to minimize the tensions that may arise between the parties of a public consultation process, and, in some cases, prevent the occurrence of conflict in decision-making relating to the environment

All these measures are aimed at improving the implementation of the provisions of the Aarhus Convention in Belarus

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Thank you for attention!

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