

EU Commission welcomes increased public scrutiny of EU acts related to the environment

The aim of the Aarhus Convention is to guarantee three important aspects of environmental management: access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters. The Compliance Committee under the Convention has previously raised certain issues related to the EU's obligations regarding access to justice in environmental matters.

The Commission welcomes the provisional political agreement reached on 12 July between the European Parliament and the EU member states in the Council on amending the Aarhus Regulation that will allow for increased public scrutiny of EU acts affecting the environment. The Commission had proposed the amendment in October 2020, following its commitment under the European Green Deal to improve access to administrative and judicial review at EU level for citizens and environmental non-governmental organizations. Environment, Oceans and Fisheries Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius said: "I welcome the amendment to the Aarhus Regulation provisionally agreed between co-legislators. It will strengthen the capacity of European civil society and a wider public to exercise scrutiny over decisions affecting the environment. This is an important element of the checks and balances in the environmental rule of law to ensure that the European Green Deal brings a lasting change."

The agreed amendment will improve the possibilities for the civil society to request that EU institutions review their acts with the aim to ensure better environmental protection and a more effective climate action. More information is in the press release.

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