

The Aarhus Convention was adopted on 25 June 1998, and the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia issued the Law on Ratification of the Aarhus Convention on 12 May 2009. The aim of the Aarhus Convention is to strengthen the role of citizens and civil society organizations in environmental issues. It is based on the principles of transparency and participatory democracy.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection has initiated the procedure of drafting the Fourth National Report on the Implementation of the Aarhus Convention, in accordance with the international obligations of the Republic of Serbia. The Fourth Report is being prepared after 10 years of application of the Aarhus Convention in Serbia, and all interested parties can submit proposals and information that they consider necessary to be included in the Report by 3 July 2020.

The progress in the implementation of the Aarhus Convention is visible in the area of access to information of public importance, which is the result of the dedicated work of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and the work of individuals within the ministry and local authorities, rather than systematic work of state authorities.

Meanwhile, Serbia has become a captive state with collapsed institutions, a devastated environment and disenfranchised citizens. State authorities are committedly working on the limitation of the public participation in the decision-making process and systematically violating the rights of the citizens and civil society organizations on legal protection. The persistent efforts of the highest executive bodies, such as the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, to prevent the active legitimization of civil society organizations in the protection of public interests is of particular concern.

Unfortunately, the Aarhus Convention is not being applied in Serbia.

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