

**No. 37770**

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## **Multilateral**

**Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (with annexes). Aarhus, Denmark, 25 June 1998**

**Entry into force:** *30 October 2001, in accordance with article 20 (1) and definitively on 30 October 2001, in accordance with article 20 (1) (see following page)*

**Authentic texts:** *English, French and Russian*

**Registration with the Secretariat of the United Nations:** *ex officio, 30 October 2001*

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## **Multilatéral**

**Convention sur l'accès à l'information, la participation du public au processus décisionnel et l'accès à la justice en matière d'environnement (avec annexes). Aarhus (Danemark), 25 juin 1998**

**Entrée en vigueur :** *30 octobre 2001, conformément au paragraphe 1 de l'article 20 et définitivement le 30 octobre 2001, conformément au paragraphe 1 de l'article 20 (voir la page suivante)*

**Textes authentiques :** *anglais, français et russe*

**Enregistrement auprès du Secrétariat des Nations Unies :** *d'office, 30 octobre 2001*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Ratification, Accession (a), Acceptance (A) and Approval (AA)</b>
Albania	27 Jun 2001
Armenia	1 Aug 2001
Azerbaijan	23 Mar 2000 a
Belarus	9 Mar 2000 AA
Denmark	29 Sep 2000 AA
Georgia	11 Apr 2000
Hungary	3 Jul 2001
Italy	13 Jun 2001
Kazakhstan	11 Jan 2001
Kyrgyzstan	1 May 2001 a
Republic of Moldova	9 Aug 1999
Romania	11 Jul 2000
Tajikistan	17 Jul 2001 a
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	22 Jul 1999 a
Turkmenistan	25 Jun 1999 a
Ukraine	18 Nov 1999

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Ratification, Adhésion (a), Acceptation (A) et Approbation (AA)</b>
Albanie	27 juin 2001
Arménie	1 août 2001
Azerbaïdjan	23 mars 2000 a
Bélarus	9 mars 2000 AA
Danemark	29 sept 2000 AA
Ex-République yougoslave de Macédoine	22 juil 1999 a
Géorgie	11 avr 2000
Hongrie	3 juil 2001
Italie	13 juin 2001
Kazakhstan	11 janv 2001
Kirghizistan	1 mai 2001 a
Roumanie	11 juil 2000
République de Moldova	9 août 1999
Tadjikistan	17 juil 2001 a
Turkménistan	25 juin 1999 a
Ukraine	18 nov 1999

[ ENGLISH TEXT — TEXTE ANGLAIS ]

## CONVENTION ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

The Parties to this Convention,

Recalling principle I of the Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment,

Recalling also principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,

Recalling further General Assembly resolutions 37/7 of 28 October 1982 on the World Charter for Nature and 45/94 of 14 December 1990 on the need to ensure a healthy environment for the well-being of individuals,

Recalling the European Charter on Environment and Health adopted at the First European Conference on Environment and Health of the World Health Organization in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany, on 8 December 1989,

Affirming the need to protect, preserve and improve the state of the environment and to ensure sustainable and environmentally sound development,

Recognizing that adequate protection of the environment is essential to human well-being and the enjoyment of basic human rights, including the right to life itself,

Recognizing also that every person has the right to live in an environment adequate to his or her health and well-being, and the duty, both individually and in association with others, to protect and improve the environment for the benefit of present and future generations,

Considering that, to be able to assert this right and observe this duty, citizens must have access to information, be entitled to participate in decision-making and have access to justice in environmental matters, and acknowledging in this regard that citizens may need assistance in order to exercise their rights,

Recognizing that, in the field of the environment, improved access to information and public participation in decision-making enhance the quality and the implementation of decisions, contribute to public awareness of environmental issues, give the public the opportunity to express its concerns and enable public authorities to take due account of such concerns,

Aiming thereby to further the accountability of and transparency in decision-making and to strengthen public support for decisions on the environment,

Recognizing the desirability of transparency in all branches of government and inviting legislative bodies to implement the principles of this Convention in their proceedings,

Recognizing also that the public needs to be aware of the procedures for participation in environmental decision-making, have free access to them and know how to use them,

Recognizing further the importance of the respective roles that individual citizens, non-governmental organizations and the private sector can play in environmental protection,

Desiring to promote environmental education to further the understanding of the environment and sustainable development and to encourage widespread public awareness of, and participation in, decisions affecting the environment and sustainable development,

Noting, in this context, the importance of making use of the media and of electronic or other, future forms of communication,

Recognizing the importance of fully integrating environmental considerations in governmental decision-making and the consequent need for public authorities to be in possession of accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date environmental information,

Acknowledging that public authorities hold environmental information in the public interest,

Concerned that effective judicial mechanisms should be accessible to the public, including organizations, so that its legitimate interests are protected and the law is enforced,

Noting the importance of adequate product information being provided to consumers to enable them to make informed environmental choices,

Recognizing the concern of the public about the deliberate release of genetically modified organisms into the environment and the need for increased transparency and greater public participation in decision-making in this field,

Convinced that the implementation of this Convention will contribute to strengthening democracy in the region of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE),

Conscious of the role played in this respect by ECE and recalling, inter alia, the ECE Guidelines on Access to Environmental Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making endorsed in the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the Third Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 25 October 1995,

Bearing in mind the relevant provisions in the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, done at Espoo, Finland, on 25 February 1991, and the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, both done at Helsinki on 17 March 1992, and other regional conventions,

Conscious that the adoption of this Convention will have contributed to the further strengthening of the "Environment for Europe" process and to the results of the Fourth Ministerial Conference in Aarhus, Denmark, in June 1998,

Have agreed as follows:

#### *Article 1. Objective*

In order to contribute to the protection of the right of every person of present and future generations to live in an environment adequate to his or her health and well-being, each Party shall guarantee the rights of access to information, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters in accordance with the provisions of this Convention.