Second meeting of the parties to the Aarhus Convention

European Parliament resolution on the EU strategy for the Almaty Conference on the Aarhus Convention

The European Parliament,
— having regard to the Aarhus Convention on access to information, public participation in decision making and access to justice in environmental matters of 25 June 1998 and the forthcoming second Meeting of the Parties (MOP-2) to be held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 25 to 27 May 2005,
— having regard to Oral Question B6-0237/2005 on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety,
— having regard to Rule 108(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the Aarhus Convention entered into force on 30 October 2001,
B. whereas the Aarhus Convention was ratified by the European Community on 17 February 2005 (1) and has been ratified by a majority of its Member States, including the new Member States,
C. whereas, at present, 19 out of 35 parties to the Aarhus Convention are Member States of the European Union,
D. whereas Parliament and the Council have already partially adopted the legislative instruments to implement the Aarhus Convention (2) and whereas further legislative instruments are currently being negotiated by Parliament and the Council (3),
E. whereas the Aarhus Convention serves to enable public authorities and citizens to assume their individual and collective responsibility to protect and improve the environment for the welfare and well-being of present and future generations,
F. whereas the Kiev Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers contributes to increasing corporate accountability, reducing pollution and promoting sustainable development,

1. Urges the EU to take a leading, transparent and constructive role in the negotiations;
2. Believes that MOP-2 will provide a good opportunity both to review the progress which has so far been achieved and to reflect on future challenges;
3. Urges the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the decisions taken at MOP-2 further implement and develop the Convention, and that synergies are created between the Aarhus Convention and the relevant multilateral environmental agreements;

(3) Proposal for a regulation on the application of the provisions of the Aarhus Convention to EC institutions and bodies (COM(2003)0622); Proposal for a directive on access to justice in environmental matters (COM(2003)0624).
4. Urges the Commission and the Member States in particular to aim to ensure that
   — precise provisions are laid down to guarantee efficient and comprehensive public participation in decision making concerning GMOs, if appropriate by amending the Convention and its annexes;
   — a permanent system of financial arrangements is established to guarantee funding on a predictable basis;
   — the compliance mechanism is further improved, based on the experience gained;

5. Urges the Commission and the Member States to continue legislative work with the aim of adopting a legislative instrument which implements Article 9 of the Convention within the European Union;

6. Expresses support for the work of other relevant international organisations and Conventions, in particular the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety; considers, however, that the Aarhus Convention is the competent forum for deliberating on horizontal principles of public access to information, participation and access to justice in environmental matters;

7. Urges the countries which have not yet done so to ratify the Aarhus Convention and the Kiev Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers and to encourage other countries outside the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe to become parties to the Convention if they so wish;

8. Believes that Members of the European Parliament who are part of the EC delegation have an essential contribution to make and expects, therefore, that they will have access to EU coordination meetings in Almaty, on the basis of at least observer status with or without speaking rights;

9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Secretariat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, with the request that it be circulated to all non-EU contracting parties.

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Climate Change

European Parliament resolution on the Seminar of Governmental Experts on Climate Change

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) of 11 December 1997, and the application procedures for its implementation adopted at the Conferences of parties in Bonn (July 2001), Marrakesh (November 2001), New Delhi (November 2002), Milan (December 2003) and Buenos Aires (December 2004),

— having regard to the Decision of the 10th Conference of parties to convene in May 2005 a Seminar of Governmental Experts in order to promote an informal exchange of information on actions relating to mitigation and adaptation to assist parties to continue to develop effective and appropriate responses to climate change, and on policies and measures adopted by their respective governments that support implementation of their existing commitments under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol,

— having regard to its resolutions relating to climate change, notably that of 13 January 2005 on the outcome of the Buenos Aires Conference on climate change (¹),

— having regard to Rule 108(5) of its Rules of Procedure,