

Environment: access to information and justice, public participation, amendment to the conclusion of the Aarhus Convention

2006/0113(CNS) - 18/12/2006 - Final act

PURPOSE: to approve, on behalf of the Community, an amendment to the Aarhus Convention on public participation in decision-making on genetically modified organisms.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision 2006/957/EC on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Community, of an amendment to the Convention on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters

CONTENT: this Decision approves on behalf of the Community the amendment to the Aarhus Convention concerning public participation in decision-making on genetically modified organisms.

The Aarhus Convention entered into force on 30 October 2001, and the Community approved the Convention on 17 February 2005, in accordance with Council Decision 2005/370/EC.

The second meeting of the Parties, held in May 2005, adopted an amendment to the Aarhus Convention making more specific the obligations placed on Parties with regard to public participation in genetically modified organism (GMO) decision-making processes. Relevant Community law governing GMOs, and in particular Directive 2001/18/EC on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms and Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 on genetically modified food and feed, incorporates provisions for public participation in decision-making on GMOs, consistent with the amendment to the Aarhus Convention.

The amendment to the Aarhus Convention has been open for ratification by Parties since 27 September 2005. The Decision provides that the EC and Member States which are Parties to the Aarhus Convention shall endeavour to deposit as soon as possible, and not later than 1 February 2008, their instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval of the amendment.