

### **Aarhus center**

*«Aarhus convention is the most courage step in the field of “ecological democracy”, whenever made under the aegis of United Nation Organization»*

**Kofi Annan,  
UN General Secretary**

The UNECE convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, is known as «**Aarhus convention**» - under the name of the Danish city in which it has been accepted on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1998 at the Fourth Ministerial Conference «Environment for Europe». Then this Convention has been signed by 39 countries and European Union.

**Aarhus convention** is the Convention of new type directed on strengthening of the role of public and ecological organizations' representatives in the process of protection and improvement of environment for future generations. The convention can be considered not only as the mechanism of environment protection, but also as means of assistance to democracy. It is aimed, particular, to:

- ✓ provide to the public representatives with more open access to ecological information which are available at the disposal of the state bodies, raising the level of openness and the accountability of the government;
- ✓ give an opportunity to express the opinion and concern in ecological issues and to provide the appropriate account by the persons responsible for decision-making;
- ✓ give an access to procedures of disposal of legal proceeding about infringement of their rights for information and participation, and in some cases to give an opportunity to claim against infringements of ecological legislation.

To realize the regulation of Aarhus convention on the basis of RSE «Informational and analytical center of environment protection» of the Ministry of environmental protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan is created **Aarhus center**.

#### **Aims and tasks of Aarhus center:**

- ✓ providing with public rights for prompt reception of reliable and full information on environment condition, planned and carried out activity that can render significant influence on the environment;
- ✓ establishment of interrelation between public and state bodies;
- ✓ rendering of practical assistance to the governmental organizations and officials in fulfilling the obligations on realization of Convention regulations
- ✓ ecological education and keeping public abreast about environmental problems;
- ✓ assistance in public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters;
- ✓ studying of international experience and development of international cooperation in the field of realization of Aarhus convention regulations and its protocols.

#### **The main functions of Aarhus center are:**

- ✓ granting the available ecological information on the requests of natural and juridical persons;
- ✓ consultation of natural and juridical persons on implementation of their rights on access to ecological information, participation in decision-making and access to justice in ecological matters (problems);
- ✓ holding educational measures (seminars, public lectures), including raising the level of officials' skill;
- ✓ publications in mass-media, performances on radio and TV, carrying out of advertising campaigns;
- ✓ distribution of ecological information over an Internet;
- ✓ rendering assistance to governmental bodies in development of draft action plans on realization of Aarhus convention and its protocols;
- ✓ assistance to natural and juridical persons in access to draft legal acts, programs, plans, strategy in the field of environment and organization of their public discussion.

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