

Know your rights!

Aarhus Convention and the rights of the public in respect to environmental issues

After the signing of the Aarhus Convention on 25 June 1998 in the Danish city of Aarhus citizens are guaranteed certain rights in the environmental field. There are 46 signatory countries so far including the EU and Cyprus. The EU has implemented the terms of the Convention into a series of environment-related Directives, some of which you can find here. <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/aarhus/legislation.htm>.

Cyprus has ratified the Convention and implemented provisions into the national legislation under which legal rights are granted to the public in respect to environmental matters. More specifically, these legal rights give the citizens the opportunity to apply for and receive from state authorities information in relation to the environment and participate in the decision making process on specific environmental issues. In case the two previous rights are being violated or disregarded, the citizen will in the near future have the right of access to justice.

The significance of this convention is to adopt mechanisms to improve the transparency of procedures and support citizens to engage in decisions that directly or indirectly affect the quality of their lives. However, in order to get closer to transparency and fairness these rights should be implemented and displayed. The people need to know and be able to take advantage of the increased opportunities granted to them by law for access to environmental information and participation in decision making. And even more interesting is the necessary and conscious search of these rights and freedoms.

Moreover, the Convention includes conditions that make the public and state authorities obliged to contribute to the effective implementation of the environmental rights of citizens. Attached you will find the contact details of the governmental officers, responsible for public information.

Below you can find laws of the Republic of Cyprus which are consistent with the terms of the Aarhus Convention:

- Law on Public Access to Environmental Information [N.119\(I\)/2004](#)
- Law on Packaging and Packaging Waste [N.159\(I\)/2005](#), with its latest amendment [N.125\(I\)/2012](#)
- Law on Control of Water Pollution [N.106\(I\)/2002](#), with its latest amendment [N.181\(I\)/2013](#)
- Law on Assessment on the Environmental Impact of Certain Projects [N.140\(I\)/2005](#), with its latest amendment [N.137\(I\)/2012](#)
- Law on Integrated Prevention and Pollution Control [N.56\(I\)/2003](#), with its latest amendment [N.179\(I\)/2013](#)

- Law on Environmental Liability with regard to the Prevention and Remedying of Environmental Damage [N.189\(I\)/2007](#)
- Law on the Assessment of the Impacts on the Environment form Certain Plans and Programmes [N.102\(I\)/2005](#)
- Law on the Control Water and Soil Pollution [N.106\(I\)/2002](#), with its latest amendment [N.181\(I\)/2013](#)
- Law on the Control of Air Quality [N.187\(I\)/2002](#) with its latest amendment [N.180\(I\)2013](#)
- Law on Solid and Hazardous Waste [N.162\(I\)/2005](#) of the repealing law [N.185\(I\)/2011](#)

For more information:

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