

***ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE***

**MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON  
ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN  
DECISION-MAKING AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN  
ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS**

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**IMPLEMENTATION REPORT SUBMITTED BY SPAIN**

*According to article 10, paragraph 2, of the Convention, at their meetings the Parties shall keep under continuous review the implementation of the Convention on the basis of the regular reporting by the Parties. Decision I/8 of the Meeting of the Parties (Lucca, Italy, October 2002) established a reporting mechanism by which each Party is requested to submit a report at each Meeting on the legislative, regulatory and other measures that it has taken to implement the Convention and their practical implementation, in accordance with the format set out in the Annex to the decision. For each Meeting, the secretariat is asked to prepare a synthesis report summarising the progress made and identifying significant trends, challenges and solutions. The reporting mechanism was also developed through Decision II/10, which tackled the matter of how to draw up the second and subsequent reports among the Parties*

## **I. PROCESS BY WHICH THE REPORT HAS BEEN PREPARED**

1. This report was prepared by the Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs (MARM) in collaboration with other state agencies, autonomous community authorities and local authorities (through the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, FEMP). The Environmental Advisory Council (CAMA), which integrates five of the most relevant environmental NGOs, has also collaborated on the elaboration of the report.

Following the recommendations of the Convention's Secretariat, the Ministry, as well as the rest of agencies and territorial authorities, used the previous National Implementation Report (NIR) and made the appropriate updates, comments and remarks directly on the previous text.

2. The MARM and some Autonomous Communities have displayed all the information related to the NIR on their websites. A process was designed to encourage the participation of the general public.

## **II. PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES THAT ARE RELEVANT FOR UNDERSTANDING THE REPORT**

3. The Aarhus Convention is directly applicable to Spain, following its ratification in December 2004 and entry into force on 31 March 2005. In addition, the Spanish Parliament passed Law 27/2006 (18 July) regulating rights of access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters, which also incorporates Directives 2003/4/EC and 2003/35/EC. The purpose of this Law is to guarantee effective application of the Aarhus Convention across Spain. It is a law of minimums and, given the almost federal nature of Spain, the Autonomous Communities (regional governments) are able to adopt stricter legislative decisions, though some of them have not already developed complementary regulations in this regard. As a result, it is the state law that, to all intents and purposes, guarantees the direct application of the Convention across the country.

## **III. LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY AND OTHER MEASURES THAT IMPLEMENT THE GENERAL PROVISIONS IN PARAGRAPHS 2, 3, 4, 7 AND 8 OF ARTICLE 3**

4. Law 27/2006 (18 July) implements all the Convention.

5. Moreover, the Autonomous Communities have passed a series of regulations to implement this article. These include: Law 7/2007 of Andalusia on Integrated Environmental Quality Management; Law 7/2006 of Aragon on Environmental Protection; Law 4/2006 of Cantabria on Nature Conservation;

Law 17/2006 of Cantabria on Integrated Environmental Control; Law 5/2002 (8 October) of La Rioja on Protection of the Environment, Law 11/2003 of Castilla y León on Environmental Prevention, General Law 3/1998 of the Basque Country on Environmental Protection, Law 9/1999 of Castilla-La Mancha on Nature Conservation, Law 7/2008 of Galicia on Landscape Protection and Law 5/2010 of Extremadura on Prevention and Environmental Quality. Some other Autonomous Communities are currently working on similar legislation in their respective areas of competence.

### **Article 3, paragraph 2**

6. Article 3.1 b) of Law 27/2006 recognises the universal right to be informed of the

rights set down in this Law and of being assisted in their exercise. Article 5 sets forth the general obligations of public authorities in this matter. Likewise, Law 30/1992 (26 November) on the Legal System of Public Authorities and the Common Administrative Procedure also sets forth the general obligation of officials and public authorities in assisting the public and supplying the required information and, in addition, it allows for public participation.

7. Likewise, Royal Decrees 208/1996 (9 February) regulating the administrative information and citizens advice services and, 951/2005 (29 July) establishing the general framework for the quality enhance of National Administration determine the operation and quality controls of the Information Offices of the State Government.

8. Both the State and Autonomous authorities have introduced citizen advice services to assist the public by telephone, in person or by post and/or e-mail, dealing with all queries submitted and advising citizens on how to access the environmental information and on the instruments of participation and access to justice if they consider that their rights have been impaired.

9. In order for the State, Autonomous and local authorities to provide the necessary public assistance with maximum efficacy, training courses and conferences on environmental information and the application of Law 27/2006 are regularly organised for their officials. Following the recommendations of the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee, during 2010 an annual training programme has been set off for officials, specifically on items related to the Aarhus Convention and the law 27/2006. Moreover, during 2011, these specific training programs will be extended to all personnel of the national administration, including members of the judiciary, through the courses organized by the National Institute for Public Administration (INAP). Official announcement of these programs have been published in the Official Gazette (01/04/2011).

10. In the framework of Law 11/2007 (22 June) on the electronic access of citizens to public services, the MARM has successfully implemented an electronic access system to information and administrative procedures. It is currently available for the following procedures, among others: environmental impact assessments; electronic registry; maritime public domain; appeals and claims, complaints and suggestions, etc. The Autonomous Communities have also developed similar processes of implementing these services in their respective areas of competence.

11. Articles 20, 21, 22 and 23 of Law 27/2006 establish a number of measures to guarantee access to justice and administrative protection in environmental matters.

12. The Biodiversity Databank, attached to the Directorate-General for the Natural Environment and Forestry Policy, manages information on the situation of environmental aspects related to the natural environment. This information is freely available to the public without the need for prior application.

### **Article 3, paragraph 3**

13. Article 19.2 e) of Law 27/2006 commissions the Environmental Advisory Council (CAMA), the State Government's highest consultative body on environmental matters, with the proposal of environmental education measures to inform, guide and raise awareness among society of ecological and environmental values, as well as measures to foster public participation in the solution of environmental problems.

14. The MARM, Autonomous Communities and local authorities of larger towns carry out the following activities: regular calls for aid, subsidy and grant proposals to promote the education and awareness of environmental problems; campaigns, conferences and environmental education seminars; the organisation of educational workshops and exhibitions, and the publishing of best practices and other informative documents. They also carry out environmental education programmes and projects, while there are bodies with specific powers in environmental education and public education to raise awareness of environmental problems and participation in decision-making.

15. The chief aim of the MARM's National Centre for Environmental Education (CENEAM) is to increase the responsibility of citizens in environmental matters. Diverse lines of work specialising in environmental education have been developed for this purpose: e-newsletter, environmental documentation centre, education and environmental interpretation programmes, training programmes, etc.

16. The MARM regularly publishes its "Ambienta" magazine, which can be accessed from the Department's website. The majority of Autonomous Communities also publish environmental information magazines for the public.

#### **Article 3, paragraph 4**

17. The fundamental right of association is enshrined in Article 22 of the Spanish Constitution. Public associations represent the interests of citizens before public authorities and develop a critical and indispensable role in many different issues, inter alia, sustainable development policies and environmental protection, for which the Law sets the provision of grants and subventions from different public administrations in accordance with the legal and regulatory framework. In this context, the State and local authorities and a number of non-profit institutions regularly hold calls for aid proposals specifically for non-profit organisations and NGOs set up to protect the environment.

18. Articles 2.2, 16.2 and 23 of Law 27/2006 recognise the legal capacity of environmental protection groups and organisations to enjoy the rights of public participation and access to justice in environmental matters and the right to access the benefits of free justice in the terms set down in legislation. Article 19 expressly allows for the participation of environmental NGOs in the CAMA. For their part, the Autonomous Communities carry out this function through their various advisory bodies and publish lists on their websites of associations, organisations and groups promoting environmental protection.

19. The national legal system is fully consistent with these obligations.

#### **Article 3, paragraph 7**

20. Article 19.2 f) of Law 27/2006 charges the CAMA with proposing the measures it deems appropriate to improve compliance of international agreements on the environment and sustainable development, evaluating the effectiveness of the regulations and programmes in force and proposing, where applicable, the necessary amendments.

#### **Article 3, paragraph 8**

21. The Spanish Constitution of 1978 and the system of constitutional, legal and administrative protection implemented through it are directly applicable to the guarantee of the effective exercise of the rights recognised in the Constitution and by Spanish legislation.

#### **IV. OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY OF THE PARAGRAPHS OF ARTICLE 3**

22. Spain is still making big efforts to make environmental information available to the public. This forms part of a continuous and exhaustive task requiring technical means and human resources with sufficient environmental training. As a result, in some isolated cases, the information cannot be supplied as quickly as desired due to the complexity of the environmental information. In large projects with large volumes of documentation, problems concerning the ease with which environmental documentation can be consulted and copies of the required documentation can be provided have been detected. An attempt is being made to remedy this situation. Sometimes, a consultation relates to thematic areas that are the competence of diverse administrative departments, which means that it is impossible to answer in a short space of time.

Democratic channels for political participation have been set up through regular procedures, and citizens can intervene directly (organically, functionally and cooperatively) in government activities to protect the environment. However, certain shortcomings have been detected, specially in the field of organisation.

#### **V. FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE GENERAL PROVISIONS OF THE CONVENTION**

23. As part of the environmental assessment procedure for state projects, plans and programmes, plans have been made to make environmental documentation and telematic processing available to the public through the MARM website and through the website of some Autonomous Communities.

24. In the context of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), this Ministry, through the Directorate General for Rural Development, and in collaboration with other State, Autonomous authorities and a number of associations, has drawn up a National Strategic Plan for Rural Development 2007-2013, presented to the European Commission on 2 April 2007, as well as the National Framework for Rural Development, which includes measures and common actions for every Autonomous Rural Development Programme. During 2010, a wide information and participation process has taken place in the context of the aforementioned Plan.

25. Through the website of the Department, public consultation processes for different projects have been developed, among others, by way of example, in 2009 there was a public consultation process on the "Draft Law on Protection of Marine Environment". This draft was presented to the Environment Sector Conference and the Advisory Council on the Environment (CAMA). Furthermore, the Draft was discussed within the Working Group for Comprehensive Coastal Management of the CAMA. The proposal was also sent to universities, NGOs, associations, companies and other stakeholders.

#### **VI. WEBSITES RELEVANT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 3**

26. The following websites are available:

**Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs:**

<http://www.marm.es>

<http://www.mma.es>

<http://servicios.marm.es>  
<http://www.mapa.es/rmarinas>  
[http://www.mma.es/secciones/calidad\\_contaminación](http://www.mma.es/secciones/calidad_contaminación)  
[http://www.mma.es/secciones/el\\_ministerio/organismos/cama](http://www.mma.es/secciones/el_ministerio/organismos/cama)  
<http://www.mma.es/es/estadistica/pags/publicaciones/BME/introduccion.htm>  
[http://www.mapa.es/es/ministerio/pags/plataforma\\_conocimiento/Introduccion.htm](http://www.mapa.es/es/ministerio/pags/plataforma_conocimiento/Introduccion.htm)  
<http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/es/eu>  
<http://dataservice.eea.europa.eu/databaservice/metadetails.asp?id=1029>  
<http://www.nilu.no/projects/ccc/emepdata.html>  
[http://www.oecd.org/searchResult/0,3400,en\\_2649\\_201185\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/searchResult/0,3400,en_2649_201185_1_1_1_1_1,00.html)  
<http://www.prtr-es.es>  
<http://www.fundacion-biodiversidad.es/>  
<http://www.sostenibilidad-es.org/>

**Other State Departments:**

*Ministry of Economy and Finance:*

<http://www.ine.es>

*Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism:*

<http://www.mityc.es>

*Institute for Energy Diversification and Saving:*

<http://www.idae.es>

*Nuclear Safety Council*

<http://www.csn.es>

**Autonomous Communities:**

*Andalusia:*

<http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/medioambiente>

*Aragon:*

[http://portal.aragon.es/portal/page/portal/MEDIOAMBIENTE/INFORMACION\\_P  
ARTICIPACION](http://portal.aragon.es/portal/page/portal/MEDIOAMBIENTE/INFORMACION_P<br/>ARTICIPACION)

<http://portal.aragon.es/portal/page/portal/MEDIOAMBIENTE/EDUAMB>

<http://portal.aragon.es/portal/page/portal/IAA/COMISION/COMISION>

<http://portal.aragon.es/portal/page/portal/MEDIOAMBIENTE/CPN>

[http://portal.aragon.es/portal/page/portal/MEDIOAMBIENTE/CALIDAD\\_AMBI  
ENTAL/RESIDUOS2/PLANIN/OBSER](http://portal.aragon.es/portal/page/portal/MEDIOAMBIENTE/CALIDAD_AMBI<br/>ENTAL/RESIDUOS2/PLANIN/OBSER)

[http://portal.aragon.es/portal/page/portal/MEDIOAMBIENTE/cclimatico/EACCE  
L](http://portal.aragon.es/portal/page/portal/MEDIOAMBIENTE/cclimatico/EACCE<br/>L)

<http://portal.aragon.es/portal/page/portal/PDRS>

*Asturias:*

<http://www.asturias.es>

<http://www.redambientalasturias.es>

<http://www.osasturias.es>

*Balearic Islands:*

<http://www.caib.es>

<http://pia.caib.es>

<http://dgbio.caib.es>

<http://ecotur.caib.es>

<http://al21.caib.es>

<http://www.oficinadelcanviclimatic.caib.es>

*Canary Islands:*

<http://www.gobiernodecanarias.org>

*Cantabria:*

<http://www.gobcantabria.es>

<http://www.medioambientecantabria.com>

<http://www.cambioclimaticocantabria.es>

<http://www.hogareseficientes.es>

<http://www.meteocantabria.es>

<http://www.territoriodecantabria.es>

<http://www.plandeahorrodelaagua.com>

<http://www.programaceroco2.com>

<http://www.proyectorioscantabria.com>

*Castile-La Mancha:*

<http://www.jccm.es/>

<http://pagina.jccm.es/medioambiente/indexIA.htm>

[http://pagina.jccm.es/medioambiente/calidad\\_ambiental/rrr.htm](http://pagina.jccm.es/medioambiente/calidad_ambiental/rrr.htm)

*Castile and León:*

<http://www.jcyl.es/medioambiente>

<http://www.jcyl.es/cida>

<http://www.jcyl.es/informacionambiental>

*Catalonia:*

<http://www.gencat.cat/aca>

<http://www.arc.cat>

<http://www.gencat.cat/dmah>

*Extremadura:*

<http://www.juntaex.es>

<http://www.extremambiente.es>

<http://www.aym.juntaex.es>

*Galicia:*

<http://medioambiente.xunta.es>

<http://www.cmati.xunta.es>

<http://www.siam.medioambiente.xunta.es>

<http://www.a21.medioambiente.xunta.es>

*Madrid:*

<http://www.madrid.org>

<http://www.asambleamadrid.es>

*Murcia:*

<http://www.carm.es>

<http://www.orcc.es>

*Navarra:*

<http://www.navarra.es>

<http://www.crana.org>

<http://www.nasursa.es>

*Basque Country:*

<http://www.igurumena.net>

<http://www.udalsarea21.net>

<http://www.irekia.euskadi.net/>

<http://opendata.euskadi.net>

<http://www.geo.euskadi.net>

[http://www.alava.net/cs/Satellite?c=Page&cid=1193045167964&language=es\\_ES  
&pagename=DiputacionAlava%2FPage%2FDPA\\_tema](http://www.alava.net/cs/Satellite?c=Page&cid=1193045167964&language=es_ES&pagename=DiputacionAlava%2FPage%2FDPA_tema)

[http://www.bizkaia.net/home2/Temas/DetalleDepartamento.asp?Tem\\_Codigo=9](http://www.bizkaia.net/home2/Temas/DetalleDepartamento.asp?Tem_Codigo=9)

<http://www4.gipuzkoa.net/MedioAmbiente/gipuzkoaingurumena/es/home.asp>

*La Rioja:*

<http://www.larioja.org>

*Valencia:*

<http://www.cma.gva.es>

**Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces:**

<http://www.femp.es>

## **VII. LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY AND OTHER MEASURES THAT IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS ON ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION IN ARTICLE 4**

### **Article 4, paragraph 1**

27. In the majority of cases, the State, the Autonomous Communities and some town/city councils are equipped with systems to speed up the supply of environmental information to all users, who can access a form to request information on the corresponding websites or even make a telematic application of such request

28. The transposition of Directive 2006/123/EC on services in the internal market was a major boost in terms of guarantees of environmental information. This Directive was transposed through a complex process, which resulted in two state standards-Laws 17/2009 and 25/2009, called "Umbrella" and "Omnibus", respectively, pursuing administrative simplification, via "single window" policy . This reform process is related to improvements in procedures and in obtaining information, among many other areas in the environment field. Autonomous Communities are also working to align their legislation with the directive.

### **Article 4, paragraph 2**

29. Both the State and the Autonomous authorities have implemented or are in the process of implementing systems to ensure that the information is supplied within fixed terms, with the aim of correcting failures to comply with these. Local authorities also have means for accessing information.

### **Article 4, paragraphs 3 and 4**

30. Article 13 of Law 27/2006 includes a complete list of the only circumstances that may lead to refusal of the request for environmental information, indicating that these reasons for refusal must be interpreted restrictively and that each specific case should weigh up the conflict of interests between the disclosure and refusal of information.

### **Article 4, paragraph 5**

31. This right is recognised in article 10, paragraph 2. b) of Law 27/2006. It is common practice in both the State and Autonomous authorities to inform the public of the authority they must address or to transfer their request to that authority.

#### **Article 4, paragraph 6**

32. This right is recognised in article 14 of Law 27/2006. If it is not possible to supply all of the information, the applicant is supplied the part of the information that can be accessed and given the reasons for the partial refusal.

#### **Article 4, paragraph 7**

33. This right is recognised in article 10, paragraph 2 of Law 27/2006.

#### **Article 4, paragraph 8**

34. Article 15 of Law 27/2006 establishes the obligation of public authorities to draw up, publish and make available to applicants of environment information the list of public and private fees and charges applicable to such requests and the events in which payment is not required. Moreover, First Additional Provision of Law 27/2006 creates a rate for environmental information supplying, at a national level. For this purpose, the Autonomous Communities have their own legislation. However, in many cases no financial charge is made for the supply of information.

### **VIII. OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED IN THE APPLICATION OF ANY OF THE PARAGRAPHS OF ARTICLE 4**

35. Besides those indicated in paragraph 22, the difficult should be emphasized to made compatible the intellectual property rights and the right of access to environmental information.

36. In this context, it can be mentioned, by way of example, the obligation to inform the public of the exact location of the fields where GMO's are deliberately released.

### **IX. FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE PROVISIONS ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

37. The annual publication "El Medio Ambiente y el Medio Rural y Marino en España" ("The Environment and Marine and Rural Affairs in Spain"), which can be accessed through the Department's website, contains statistics on the number of requests received, the number of refusals and their reasons, and generally all that concerns the processing of environmental information requests by the State and Autonomous authorities.

38. The Autonomous Communities also publish their own statistics.

### **X. WEBSITES RELEVANT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 4**

39. Those indicated in paragraph 26..

### **XI. LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY AND OTHER MEASURES THAT IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS ON THE COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION IN ARTICLE 5**

#### **Article 5, paragraph 1**

40. Article 5.2 of Law 27/2006 requires the public authorities to ensure, as far as their powers allow, that the information they collect or which is collected in their name is up to date, accurate and able to be compared to other data. Article 7 of this Law requires that the information disclosed be up to date, where applicable, and that it includes certain minimum contents.

41. In situations where there is an imminent threat to human health or the environment, pursuant to article 9 of the Law, the public authorities are required to immediately and without delay disclose all information held by the public authorities or other subjects in its name, to enable the public that may be affected to take the necessary measures to prevent or mitigate the harm arising from such threats.

42. The Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Emergencies, reporting to the Ministry of the Interior, through the National Commission on Civil Protection, coordinates the departments of the State and Autonomous authorities.

43. Both the State and the Autonomous Communities have specific warning legislation in place and protocols of action and conventions to enable disclosure of the appropriate information.

#### **Article 5, paragraph 2**

44. Article 1.2 of Law 27/2006 guarantees the dissemination and public disclosure of environment information gradually and with the greatest possible extent and use of technology. Article 5 of this Law guarantees the practical measures set down in the Convention, such as: designation of departments responsible for environmental information, creation and maintenance of resources for consulting the latter, creation of registers or lists of the environmental information held by public authorities or points of information, fostering of the use of telecommunications, etc. The obligations to disclose environmental information are incorporated into article 6.2 of Law.

45. Law 37/2007 of 16 November, on reuse of the information of public sector, provides the basic regulation for the reuse of all information held by the authorities, in any form. Pursuant to this Act, the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Commerce is promoting the APORTA Project, which promotes a culture of reuse of information in the field of public administration.

46. Some Autonomous Communities and town/city councils have organised environmental information networks or systems and/or catalogues of environment data sources. They have also begun to draw up lists of environmental information and carried out activities to raise the profile of the new regulation among relevant sectors.

#### **Article 5, paragraphs 3 and 5**

47. Article 6, paragraph 3 and 4 of Law 27/2007 requires public authorities to adopt the necessary measures to guarantee that environmental information is gradually made available in electronic databases easily accessible by the public through public telecommunications networks, either directly or through the corresponding links.

48. For this purpose, both the MARM and the Autonomous Communities have set up environmental information websites, which also allow access to the information in the various networks and to geo-referenced information.

49. The minimum contents that must be covered by the information to be disclosed is developed in article 7.2 of Law 27/2006. The contents included are broader than those established in the Convention itself.

50. The MARM has made available the document "Government actions in matters of the environment" on the Internet, which provides general information, by topic, on administrative powers, sources of information and means of access to the latter and on environmental policies, plans and programmes and how they interrelate with sectorial policies.

51. The MARM website discloses information on activities carried out in Spain with GMOs and publishes reports on the results of voluntary release notices and the

authorisations granted by the Interdepartmental GMO Council. The website also gives information of the GMOs legal framework at European, National and Autonomous level

52. The Autonomous Communities have also placed significant emphasis on the implementation of paragraph 3, developing monitoring activities on the control and surveillance networks of air quality, water quality, waste management, etc.

#### **Article 5, paragraph 4**

53. Each year, the MARM publishes and disseminates its “Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs in Spain”, “Environmental Profile of Spain” (based on selected indicators in the framework of the Spanish EIONET network) and “Statistics Yearbook” reports, along with other one-off and regular publications which use environmental information, such as “The Environment Series”, published by the Area of Analysis and Prospective Studies, and the “Monthly Bulletin of Statistics”, which includes the “Monthly Report on Environmental Situation”.

They are all available on the Ministry’s website, in some cases with detailed versions in different languages and free of charge.

54. The Observatory on Sustainability in Spain (OSE) created by this Department also publishes an annual report based on indicators of sustainable development in Spain, coherent with those produced by the EEA, and a pocketbook edition “Sustainability in Spain”.

55. Besides these general reports, there are numerous specific statistical sources provided by the MARM, EUROSTAT and many specialist agencies, such as the Spanish Meteorology Agency (AEMET), the Spanish Oceanography Institute (IEO),etc.

56. The statistical data on the diverse environmental parameters collected by the MARM each year from the various authorities are sent to the European Environment Agency (EEA).

57. The Autonomous Communities regularly publish reports on the situation of the environment and, where applicable, on their own regional systems of environment indicators.

#### **Article 5, paragraph 6**

58. The twelfth additional provision of Law 27/2006 requires public authorities to encourage economic operators, when required to do so, to inform the public regularly of those activities or products that have or could have a significant impact on the environment. In this regard, the national and Autonomous PRTR inventories include data on emissions from companies with greater pollution potential. Moreover, Regulation (EC) No. 761/2001 of the Council of the European Union allows public and private organisations, both non-profit and otherwise, to voluntarily join the Community Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). Eco-labelling and organic farming production allow for similar mechanisms for the dissemination of information on private activities and products that could have a significant impact on the environment.

59. In the Autonomous Communities, initiatives have been adopted for consumers and producers of waste to encourage a reduction of the latter at source and for urban users on best practices in energy consumption, water use, waste separation and, in some cases, financial aid for actions to implement environmental management systems.

#### **Article 5, paragraph 7**

60. In addition to their publications and Internet dissemination and participation, all

public authorities have information departments and other units for the reception and processing of complaints and suggestions on matters relating to the environment, along with the electronic means to access them.

#### **Article 5, paragraph 8**

61. The labelling of agricultural products in general and organic farming products in particular, fish products, dangerous substances, noise from domestic appliances, energy consumption, etc., have their own state regulation covering information.

62. Some Autonomous Communities control the labelling of electrical appliances and the symbols of integrated waste management systems. Both these authorities and some local governments have produced green shopping guides and incorporated sustainability criteria in public competitions for goods and services.

#### **Article 5, paragraph 9**

63. On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008, the Spanish Register of Emissions and Pollutant Sources, (which replaced the State Pollutant Emission Register, EPER-Spain) was introduced following the European Regulation 166/2006 (E-PRTR) and the Royal Decree 508/2007, regulating information on emissions of the E-PRTR and the IPCC permits. These rules fall within the scope of the Aarhus Convention and the PRTR Protocol, both signed and ratified by Spain. Complying with the mentioned Protocol, industrial installations make their notifications using the new PRTR criteria.

64. All public information relating pollutant emissions and transfers on the PRTR-Spain register is available on the Internet and is easily accessible to all stakeholders and the general public from the [www.prtr-es.es](http://www.prtr-es.es) address. Additional information on the operational features of the register is available, as well as access to an interesting legal and technical database. The information, which is available in Spanish, the other official languages of Spain and English, includes links to the inventories of international and Autonomous Community systems.

### **XII. OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED IN THE APPLICATION OF ANY OF THE PARAGRAPHS OF ARTICLE 5**

65. The cross-cutting nature of the subject matter creates problems with administrative organisation and coordination that, to a greater or lesser extent, affect the various public authorities in the application of article 5.

66. The difficulties in preparing specific aggregate information for the whole of Spain using data supplied by the local and Autonomous authorities include problems with uniformity, which suggests the need to reinforce mechanisms of coordination.

67. In some Autonomous Communities, the available human and material resources have been insufficient to adequately meet the obligations of access and dissemination of environmental information within the set terms. Greater difficulties have been encountered with the statistical monitoring of requests and their processing at local level.

### **XIII. FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 5**

68. In 2009, 17,8 million of queries with an environmental content have been made through the MARM website.

69. The number of visits to the EPER/PRTR-Spain site from August 2009 to August 2010 reached 1,000,000 queries from all over the world, particularly the USA, Latin America and countries in Europe. The most common requests were for information on public emissions data by sectors of industrial activity, the inventory of facilities and downloads of PDF documents, as well as tables and charts.

70. The Biodiversity Databank publishes a large volume of cartographic information and obtained almost 30,000 visits per month in 2009.

It is also relevant to mention the National Registry for Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emission Allowances website (<http://www.renade.es>), where information on Spanish emissions trading regime, joint implementation projects, register accounts, etc. is publicly available.

#### **XIV. RELEVANT WEBSITES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 5**

71. Those indicated in Section 26.

#### **XV. LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY AND OTHER MEASURES THAT IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISIONS ON SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES IN ARTICLE 6**

72. Public participation in decisions on specific activities in article 6 of the Convention was already regulated in Spain's legal system, albeit generally. Therefore, in order to effect the provisions of the Convention and Directive 2003/35/EC providing for public participation in the respect of the drawing up of certain plans and programmes relating to the environment, Directive 2003/35/EC was transposed through Law 27/2006 mentioned above, for the extension and adaptation of said system.

Along these lines, it should be remembered that Spain is a Party to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a cross-border context (Espoo Convention) since it ratified the agreement in 1991.

##### **Article 6, paragraph 1**

73. Law 27/2006 refers to sectorial legislation for the regulation of administrative procedures for granting integrated environmental permits (Law 16/2002 on integrated pollution prevention and control, IPPC, BOE of 2/7/2002) and for evaluating the environmental impact of projects or activities (Royal Legislative Decree 1/2008 of 11 January, approving the consolidated text of the Law on Project Environmental Impact Assessment, BOE of 26/1/2008, amended by Law 6 / 2010 of March 24). Both regulations conform to the rules on participation set down in the Aarhus Convention and assumed by the Community legislator through Directive 2003/35/EC.

74. IPPC Law 16/2002 is applicable to public or private installations that carry out any of the industrial activities included in the categories listed in its Annex 1. At the very least, the emission values of these installations must be within the limits set down in the regulations in Annex 2 and, where applicable, those fixed in additional protection regulations introduced by the Autonomous Communities.

75. Royal Legislative Decree 1/2008 concerns: the performance of works, facilities or any other activity included in Annex I of the EIA Law, which must only be subject to an EIA when the environmental department so decides on a case-by-case basis, and the projects or activities in Annex II not included in Annex I but which could directly or indirectly affect the spaces in the Natura 2000 Network.

76. The Autonomous Communities have developed general legislation in both cases (Law 7/2007 of Andalusia on Integrated Environmental Quality Management; Law 11/2006, of 14 September, on environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments, of the Balearic Islands; Law 17/2006, of 11 December, on integrated environmental control, of Cantabria; Law 4/2007, of 8 March, on environmental assessment in Castile-La Mancha; Law 20/2009, of December 4, on prevention and environmental control activities in Catalonia; Law 6 / 2009 of April 28, 2009, on environmental assessment of plans and programs, also in Catalonia; Law 2/2002, of 19 June, on environmental assessment, of the Community of Madrid; Law 5/2002, of 8 October, on environmental protection in La Rioja; Law 11/2003 of Castile and Leon on Environmental Prevention; Law 7 / 2006 of Aragon on Environmental Protection, etc.), and there are also some instances of institutional or organisational legislation regulating public participation (Law 4/2006, of 30 June, on transparency and best practices in the Government of Galicia). Extremadura is currently working on the adoption of a regulation on environmental assessment and other authorizations and Environmental Communication.

### **Article 6, paragraph 2**

77. The regulation of the procedures for Integrated Environmental Authorisation in Law 16/2002, which includes the guarantee of the “real and effective” participation of stakeholders (article 14), deals with the participation and processing of public information (articles 14, 16 and Annex 5) and instances of activities with cross-border effects (article 27).

78. For Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedures, Royal Legislative Decree 1/2008 also guarantees “real and effective” participation (article 1.4) and regulates that concerning the processing of public information and consulting of the stakeholders and public authorities involved (article 9). EIAs with cross-border effects are regulated in article 11 of the aforementioned Royal Legislative Decree.

79. Some Autonomous Communities have passed regulations on participation to regulate the processing of permits or decision-making, among others, for those not subject to a regulated procedure of public participation.

80. In some instances, the Autonomous Communities have set up ad hoc bodies of participation as part of their administrative structure.

81. The Autonomous and local authorities have generally adopted measures on participation, establishing new options or bolstering existing ones, particularly those deriving from the Local Agenda 21 in the case of municipalities.

Both types of authority have encouraged the use of new technologies for this purpose.

### **Article 6, paragraph 3**

82. In the EIA procedure, the decision-making body must inform stakeholders and the public authorities involved of the right to participate in the corresponding procedure and the moment at which they can exercise this right; this notification must include the competent authority to which observations and allegations must be addressed, specifying the participation and the deadline by which they must be sent, which cannot be less than 30 days (article 9.3 of Royal Legislative Decree 1/2008).

83. However, the general regulation of public information as set forth in Law 30/1992 (26 November) on the Legal System of Public Authorities and the Common Administrative Procedure allows for the possibility of emergency processing, which cuts these deadlines by half but must be justified as being in the public interest.

#### **Article 6, paragraph 4**

84. Law 16/2002, through the modification introduced by Law 27/2006, guarantees participation from the initial phases of the respective procedures (article 14). To this effect, the provisions on public participation in decision-making set forth in its Annex 5 are of application.

85. Royal Legislative Decree 1/2008 includes this guarantee in its article 8, by opening up the consulting process to the public authorities involved and to the natural persons or public and private legal entities linked to protection of the environment, at the start of the EIA procedure, when the sponsor has established its alternative options in an initial document of intent but they have not been studied from the perspective of their environmental impact. At this stage, no decision on project requirements will be approved by the competent authority.

86. In fact, the State and Autonomous authorities, in addition to the intervention of consultative collegiate bodies where this is provided for, encourage early participation through the Internet and by sending information to the associations, organisations and agents involved in the procedures. The CAMA has agreed to create Working Groups to perform its various tasks, involving from the start to facilitate an early participation in environmental decisions.

#### **Article 6, paragraph 5**

87. Though not set down in the regulations, the MARM places no restrictions on the project sponsor making consultations prior to the start of procedures for project authorisation.

88. In the Autonomous Communities, the disclosure of information stimulates spontaneous preliminary debate, though not regulated in legislation, and some Autonomous Communities have signed social pacts for the environment to reinforce mechanisms of communication.

#### **Article 6, paragraph 6**

89. Law 27/2006 regulates access to environmental information in articles 5 to 12, and access to environmental information on request in its article 10 in particular.

Likewise, the Environmental Assessment regulation – articles 7 and 9.2e) – guarantees the public disclosure of information.

90. To facilitate application of these rights, databases are published on the Internet of cases of projects subject to EIA, both by the MARM and by the Departments for the Environment of the Autonomous Communities.

#### **Article 6, paragraph 7**

91. The general regulation on the processing of public information allows for the possibility of submitting comments since, pursuant to the aforementioned Law 30/1992, the public has the opportunity of presenting objections to the project in writing to the competent authority, and this right is set down in particular in article 9 of Royal Legislative Decree 1/2008.

92. All channels of information (e-mail, post, fax, telephone, personal presence or website) are generally available to the public at all public authorities for participation and the presentation of allegations. The MARM has also made available to the sectors involved its “Sede Electrónica” application on its website, for diverse procedures within the scope of its powers, including those on EIA (Sabia programme).

### **Article 6, paragraph 8**

93. In the EIA procedure, the results of consultations and public information must be taken into account by the project sponsor and the decision-making body authorising the same (RLD 1/2008, article 9.5).

### **Article 6, paragraph 9**

94. Article 12 of RLD 1/2008 determines that the Environmental Impact Statement must be made public in all events (Official Gazettes). The result of the procedures is also published on the website and made public by other means, as explained in this report.

95. Likewise, the public must be informed by public notice of the approval or rejection of a project application. The decision is subject to public examination, with the reasons adopted for the decision, as regulated by RLD 1/2008, article 15, in the case of the disclosure of authorised projects and in article 3.2 and 17.2, in the case of projects which, following a screening procedure, have been determined not to have a significant impact on the environment.

### **Article 6, paragraph 10**

96. The modifications and changes to the characteristics and circumstances in which a project that falls within the scope of application of an EIA (article 3 of RLD 1/2008), in accordance with the basic regulation of the State, is always subject to a screening procedure (Group 9.k) of Annex II and articles 16 and 17 of the same regulation), in order to determine the possible existence of significant impacts. The channel of public participation has already been mentioned in this procedure.

### **Article 6, paragraph 11**

97. For GMOs, see sections XIX, XX, XXI and XXII.

## **XVI. OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED IN THE APPLICATION OF ANY OF THE PARAGRAPHS OF ARTICLE 6**

98. On occasion, with the EIA procedure, the decision-making body of the Autonomous Community has taken too long to supply the information to the environmental organisation.

99. In other cases, there has been a lack of greater resources, clarity of competences and preparation of technicians and officials for promoting civic participation in government.

100. The main obstacles identified by local authorities in the application of the Aarhus Convention have been the lack of detailed knowledge of its terms and the lack of interest by a considerable proportion of the population. Public participation in environmental decision-making continues to be structured around existing channels or through consolidated instruments such as the Local Agenda 21.

The deadlines established in sector legislation for presenting allegations in the procedures requiring environmental authorisation, particularly EIAs and AAAs, are sometimes too tight in view of the size of the cases and their technical complexity.

## **XVII. FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 6**

101. Projects related to National Defence objectives are excluded from the EIA procedure when such an application could have negative repercussions for these objectives. Projects specifically approved by a State law (first additional provision of RLD 1/2008) are also exempted. The exclusion of projects from this procedure is also permitted for exceptional reasons, by reasoned agreement of the Council of Ministers.

## **XVIII. RELEVANT WEBSITES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 6**

102. Those indicated in Section 26.

## **XIX. LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY AND OTHER MEASURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISIONS ON DELIBERATE RELEASE AND PLACING ON THE MARKET OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMO'S) OF ARTICLE 6 BIS**

103. The provisions in this area are: Law 9 / 2003, (April 25), which establishes the legal regime of the contained use, deliberate release and placing on the market of genetically modified organisms; Royal Decree 178/2004 (30 January), which approves the General Regulation for the development and implementation of the Law; Royal Decree 367/2010 of 26 March, amending various regulations in the area of Environment for its adaptation to the legislation on freedom of access to service activities (Law 17/2009 and Law 25/2009)

104. According to the above-mentioned legislation, the “Competent Authority” at the national level is the Interministerial Council of GMOs and at the regional level, each one of the Autonomous Communities in accordance in their respective areas of competence on GMOs.

On releasing GMOs into the environment, the following information is considered non-confidential: description of genetically modified organisms; identification of the owner; purpose, place of activity, emergency systems and control measures; evaluation of the effects on human health and the environment; information on deliberate releases made, authorizations of placing on the market, the list of GMOs whose marketing has been authorized or rejected as a product or part of a product; the evaluation reports; the results of the controls on placing on the market; the opinions of the Scientific Advisory Committee.

“Public” means any natural or legal person, and “public interested” means any non-governmental organization working on environmental conservation or protection, agricultural unions, labor unions, consumer organizations, human and veterinary pharmaceutical industry, crop and livestock industry.

105. As regards non-discrimination requirement of article 3, paragraph 9, Spanish Constitution of 1978 is directly applicable, particularly Article 14 which says that the Spanish people are equal before the law without any discrimination on grounds of birth, race, sex, religion, politics or any other condition or personal or social circumstance.

Paragraph 1 of Annex I bis

106. Article 25 of Royal Decree 178/2004, paragraph 4, provides that the competent body will submit the proposed deliberate release to public information for a period of

30 days. It also describes what information should be available to the public.

#### Paragraph 2 of Annex I bis

107. Article 28 of Royal Decree 178/2004 provides for the possibility of establishing separate procedures when sufficient experience in specific ecosystems has been gained and the criteria of Annex VI are fulfilled.

Article 29 of Royal Decree provides for the option of simple procedure when several deliberate releases of plants have been generated from the same host plants cultivated but can differ in any of the sequences added or deleted or inserted sequences.

#### Paragraph 3 of Annex Ia

108. In case of deliberate release with no intention of placing on the market, article 25.4 of Royal Decree 178/2004, on the procedure after receiving the request, provides that the competent body will submit the proposed deliberate release project to public information for a period of 30. Public information will include a summary of the dossier, including the environmental assessment report.

In case of placing on the market, the second transitional provision concerns the procedure for the renewal of previous authorizations, which is developed in Article 41 of Royal Decree 178/2004.

#### Paragraph 4 of Annex I bis

109. Article 20.2 of the Law 9 / 2003 specifies which parts of the information provided by the notifiers are not confidential and therefore can be supplied to the public without any restriction.

#### Paragraph 5 of Annex I bis

110. The MARM manages a web page that is accessible to the public. Within this website there is a section on Genetically Modified Organisms: <http://www.mapa.es/es/ministerio/pags/omg/introduccion.htm>

On this website, users can find information about the structure of Public Administration in the context of GMOs, how decisions are made and who is responsible for taking them, what are the different ways for public participation and the Ministry's contacts who provide any information relating to environmental releases of GMOs, as well as links to other sites of interest.

#### Paragraph 6 of Annex I bis

111. Option for access to public participation, both for deliberate release activities and contained use, is available on the Directorate General of Quality and Environmental Assessment website is

[http://www.mma.es/portal/secciones/participacion\\_publica/calidad\\_contaminacion/liberac\\_procedimiento.htm](http://www.mma.es/portal/secciones/participacion_publica/calidad_contaminacion/liberac_procedimiento.htm)

This web page describes the procedure to be followed by a citizen to submit comments, objections or any additional request of information on any of the two procedures.

#### Paragraph 7 of Annex I bis

112. Article 10 of Law 27/2006 of 18 July, regulating the rights of access to

information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters, establishes the procedure once a request is made by a citizen through the usual channels.

Paragraph 8 of Annex I bis

113. The third additional provision of Act 9 / 2003 provides that the competent authorities will create public files to compile the location of genetically modified organisms released for purposes other than placing on the market, as well as the location of which are grown in accordance with the provisions of this law for placing on the market.

Article 27 of Royal Decree 178/2004, deals with the obligation to report on deliberate releases of GMOs into the environment without intention to sell by the owner of releases.

Article 49 of Royal Decree provides that information on authorizations for contained use, deliberate release for purposes other than placing on the market and the placing on the market of genetically modified organisms should be accessible for the public. The GMOs section within the above-mentioned MARM website, contains all the data of the public register and is freely accessible to all citizens.

Paragraph 2 of Article 6 bis

114. All necessary legislative, regulatory and other measures listed above fall within the national biosafety framework and are consistent with the objectives of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, in particular Article 23 on public awareness and participation, and 21 on confidential information of that protocol.

## **XX. OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 6 AND ANNEX I BIS**

115. The main difficulty is to establish a clear distinction between information that is confidential and information protected by intellectual property rights. In this sense, the provision of specific data, in particular, exact location of the experimental plots, could jeopardize their own tests with the resulting of economic losses to the company or public institution.

Two reports of the legal services of the State and a decision by the Ministerial Council of GMOs have been made to clarify the level of detail to be provided within the information, always based on the full compliance with the law.

Finally, there have been two cases of vandalism in experimental plots once the geographical coordinates of the position of tests with genetically modified crops have been provided.

## **XXI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISIONS ON SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES OF ARTICLE 6.**

116. Annual statistics on the number of requests for information on GMOs in the different possible routes (phone, email, mail) are recorded, in compliance with the Aarhus Convention.

## **XXII. WEB ADDRESSES RELEVANT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 6.**

117. OMGs in the MARM website:

<http://www.mapa.es/es/ministerio/pags/omg/introduccion.htm>

OMG website of the Directorate General of Quality and Environmental Assessment:

[http://www.mma.es/portal/secciones/calidad\\_contaminacion/omg/](http://www.mma.es/portal/secciones/calidad_contaminacion/omg/)

Deliberate public information releases:

[http://www.mma.es/portal/secciones/participacion\\_publica/calidad\\_contaminacion/liberac\\_procedimiento.htm](http://www.mma.es/portal/secciones/participacion_publica/calidad_contaminacion/liberac_procedimiento.htm)

Public information contained use:

[http://www.mma.es/portal/secciones/participacion\\_publica/calidad\\_contaminacion/convfinada\\_proc.htm](http://www.mma.es/portal/secciones/participacion_publica/calidad_contaminacion/convfinada_proc.htm)

Cartagena Protocol:

[http://www.mapa.es/es/ministerio/pags/omg/protocolo\\_cartagena.htm](http://www.mapa.es/es/ministerio/pags/omg/protocolo_cartagena.htm)

## **XXIII. PRACTICAL AND / OR OTHER PROVISIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO THE PUBLIC INVOLVED IN THE PREPARATION OF PLANS AND PROGRAMMES RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 7**

118. Article 16 of Law 27/2006, establishes the obligations of public authorities in order to ensure that they make this right effective. Law 9 / 2006 implementing Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programs on the environment, introduces environmental assessment of plans and programs (SEA) and promotes transparency and citizen participation in developing them.

119. On GMOs, the Royal Decree 367/2010 creates a Participation Committee attached to the Interministerial Council on Genetically Modified Organisms (CIOMG) that should count with representatives of stakeholders, professional agricultural organizations nationwide, the Agrifood Cooperatives, consumer organizations and users, conservation organizations, and a number of experts with recognized competence. The main objective of the Participation Committee is to ensure transparency of the administration on issues related to Genetically Modified Organisms, and strengthen a permanent communication channel between the central government and civil society. The composition and functioning of the Participation Committee is governed by the Ministerial Order *ARM/2616/2010*.

119 bis. The practical enforcement of Law 45/2007 (13 December) for the sustainable development of rural areas will be undertaken through the Sustainable Rural Development Programme (PDRS), which has been favorably reported by the three organs of coordination and participation created by the law: the Interministerial Commission for Rural Areas, the Bureau of Rural Development Associations and the Council for Rural Affairs.

Previously, the program and its Environmental Sustainability Report were submitted in 2009 to public information and consultations to public authorities concerned and the public interest, in the context of its public participation process and environmental assessment.

#### **XXIV. OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE PREPARATION OF POLICIES RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 7**

120. Besides that set down in article 16 of Law 27/2006, article 19 of the latter also establishes the functions of the Environmental Advisory Council, as a collegiate body for the participation and monitoring of environmental policies, among others, to advise on plans and statewide programs proposed by the presidency due to the importance of their impact on the environment.

There are also other sectorial participation agencies, such as the National Water Council, the national Climate Council, the National Council for Natural Heritage and Biodiversity, the Council for Rural Affairs and the Bureau of Rural Development Associations.

In the context of rural development programs financed by the EAFDR fund in the period 2007-2013, the organs of participation are the National Steering Committee of the National Framework for Rural Development, the National Steering Committee of the National Rural Network and Monitoring Committees of rural development programs of the Autonomous Communities.

As for climate change policies, the MARM and the trade unions and business associations are involved in social dialogue tables on development and monitoring of National Allocation Plan for Emission Rights.

121. The Autonomous Communities, without prejudice to the application of Laws 27/2006 and 9/2006, have incorporated tools to suit the new approach to participation in the drafting and approval of plans and programmes. This entails consulting the authorities involved, including local authorities, and the stakeholders. Participation is also structured through consultative collegiate bodies.

#### **XXV. OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 7**

122. As information on rights and guarantees for the drafting of plans and programmes is increasing, the levels of public participation in general are improving. In all events, the obstacles encountered at this early stage are gradually overcome and a significant level of public participation is expected.

#### **XXVI. FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 7**

123. In both the State and Autonomous levels, public participation in the drafting and approval of plans and programmes is facilitated through the implementation of new technologies allowing the interactive participation of citizens, whose aim is the transparency and promotion of these plans and programmes. At the local level, new channels of participation are being set up or existing ones are being strengthened, particularly those deriving from the Local Agenda 21.

Some Autonomous Communities have created profiles on Facebook and other social networks for the mass dissemination of information and as additional means of participatory processes. This social tool has become a major means of communication in today's society.

## **XXVII. WEBSITE ADDRESSES RELEVANT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 7**

124. Those indicated in Section 26.

## **XXVII. EFFORTS MADE TO PROMOTE EFFECTIVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DURING THE PREPARATION BY PUBLIC AUTHORITIES OF EXECUTIVE REGULATIONS AND OTHER GENERALLY APPLICABLE LEGALLY BINDING RULES THAT MAY HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 8**

125. At State level, the general legal framework is set down in article 24 of State Law 50/97 regulating the procedure for public information and comments in the drafting of regulations. This State provision is complemented by the obligation of public authorities, set down in article 18 of Law 27/2006 to ensure that the necessary guarantees are observed to ensure participation in environmental matters.

126. Article 19.2 of Law 27/2006 establishes that the CAMA must make public all draft legislation on the matters mentioned prior to their approval.

127. The implementing regulations of the Autonomous authorities establish the fostering of social participation and the guarantee of effective public information procedures.

## **XXIX. OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 8**

128. The same as those indicated in paragraph 122.

## **XXX. FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 8**

129. The MARM publishes an internal guide for processing draft legislation that describes all of the steps to take for correct application of article 8 of the Aarhus Convention and articles 16 and 18 of Law 27/2006. The Ministry also keeps records on all actors in each activity sector and holds coordination meetings with environmental organisations.

As mentioned in point 14, a number of environmental awareness campaigns have been carried out by various authorities and NGOs. However, specific action is considered necessary to improve rights of access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters, particularly in relation to the local authorities, given their proximity to citizens.

129 bis. Concerning all articles 6, 7 and 8 of the Aarhus Convention, and with an aim of facilitating public participation in decisions on specific activities, plans and programs and the preparation of generally applicable normative instruments, national administration is considering the possibility of unifying in one single webpage the access to all opened participation processes, both at a national and regional levels.

## **XXXI. WEBSITES RELEVANT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 8**

130. Those indicated in Section 26.

## **XXXII. LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY AND OTHER MEASURES THAT IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN ARTICLE 9**

### **Article 9, paragraphs 1 and 2**

131. The current legal system establishes a system of administrative appeals and, when this possibility has been exhausted, the possibility of court action, allowing citizens to fully exercise their right to access to justice with the characteristics and requirements described in article 9 of the Convention. Article 20 of Law 27/2006 establishes that a member of the public who considers that an act or, where applicable, an omission attributable to a public authority has impaired his/her rights to information and public participation as recognised by this Law may seek the administrative remedy regulated in Law 30/1992 on the Legal System of Public Authorities and the Common Administrative Procedure. Following resolution of the administrative appeal, if the private party is not satisfied, a judicial review may be sought, as established in Law 29/1998 (13 July) regulating the jurisdiction of judicial reviews. Likewise, article 21 of Law 27/2006 regulates a special system of complaints against public authorities for cases in which the request for environmental information is submitted to a public authority that does not have the legal status of a public authority. In the event of failure to comply with the ruling, penalties may be imposed. The decision on the appeal or complaint, made in accordance with the general rules of the Common Administrative Procedure, is binding for the authorities and its reasons must be set down.

### **Article 9, paragraph 3**

132. Article 22 of Law 27/2006 sets forth the popular action by which appeals may be lodged against acts and, where applicable, omissions attributable to public authorities that contravene the environmental regulations listed in article 18.1 of Law 27/2006 through the administrative appeals system regulated in Law 30/1992 and the system of judicial reviews established in Law 29/1998. All non-profit legal entities accrediting compliance with the requirements set down in article 23 of Law 27/2006 are legitimated for the exercise of popular action.

### **Article 9, paragraph 4**

133. The general regulations on the procedure for the resolution of administrative appeals and judicial reviews apply. These establish all of the guarantees for ensuring the efficacy and public disclosure of the decisions adopted to resolve administrative appeals and judicial reviews, including the possibility of adopting injunctive measures.

### **Article 9, paragraph 5**

134. Article 58 of Law 30/1992 sets forth the obligation of publishing notices within ten days. These notices must indicate whether the act is final in the administrative system, the applicable expression of appeals, the body to which these should be submitted and the term in which to present them, without prejudice to the fact that stakeholders may carry out, where applicable, any other procedure that they consider appropriate. In terms of the reduction of financial barriers, article 23.2 of Law 27/2006, in accordance with article 119 of the Constitution, establishes that the non-profit legal entities referred to in paragraph 1 of this article will be entitled to legal aid under the terms set down in Law 1/1996 on Free Legal Aid and in its regulation (Royal Decree 996/2003).

### **XXXIII. OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY OF THE PARAGRAPHS OF ARTICLE 9**

135. Following the recommendations of the Compliance Committee concerning the need to examine the legal system that implements the provisions of Articles 9.4 and 9.5 of the Convention in relation to access to legal aid of small NGOs, the MARM has consulted the Ministry of Justice as the body of the State Administration responsible for the development of legal and legislative advocacy. The Ministry considered that the system of legal aid and legal representation provided for in Spanish law is effective to ensure such access, provided that these NGOs have been established as a non-profit association promoting the general interest and they do not exceed the financial limit which means that they have financial resources to litigate

### **XXXIV. FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE PROVISIONS IN ARTICLE 9**

136. Although the authorities are active in the dissemination of the rights granted by the Aarhus Convention, in most cases, those who have brought appeals to the appropriate judicial body are associations, organizations or groups aimed at environmental protection, and not individuals,

### **XXXV. WEBSITES RELEVANT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 9**

137. The 2010 Public Prosecutor Report can be consulted at the following address:  
[http://www.fiscal.es/cs/Satellite?cid=1247140094968&language=es&pagename=P\\_Fiscal%2FPages%2FFGE\\_contenidoFinal](http://www.fiscal.es/cs/Satellite?cid=1247140094968&language=es&pagename=P_Fiscal%2FPages%2FFGE_contenidoFinal)

### **XXXVI. HOW THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION CONTRIBUTES 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**

138. The State, Autonomous and local authorities consider that the transparency and fostering of public participation are key instruments for a modern and democratic environmental policy. Better service to citizens is the reasoning behind the reforms that Spain has been introducing following approval of the Constitution to shape a modern Government. The shaping of a society in which people are perfectly knowledgeable of their rights, empowering them to demand compliance with environmental regulations and play an active role in the conservation and improvement of the environment, is becoming a key element for the effective monitoring and control of government activities.

The role of NGOs and environmental organisations has been decisive in raising widespread awareness about environmental issues and promoting legal instruments of control and protection.

139. There can be no doubt that implementation of the Aarhus Convention has served to guarantee a series of rights of access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters. However, with the participation of departments with environmental powers from all public authorities and the social partners involved and their activities to raise the profile of the Convention and Law 27/2006, it has also served to take stock of the importance of the exercise of these rights on the one hand and of the need to respect and foster them on the other.

