Innovative and good-practice approaches in the use of electronic tools to implement the Aarhus Convention

I Selected cases (fully developed)

ARTICLE 3 – GENERAL PROVISIONS
Public assistance, guidance, education and awareness with respect to all three pillars of the Aarhus Convention

1	**National Aarhus portal www.aarhus.be (Belgium)** The Belgian national portal aims to provide the public with first-hand information on the Aarhus Convention and the public's rights within the framework of the convention. It is a joint initiative of the federal and the regional environmental authorities.

ARTICLE 4 – THE BASIC CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR RECEIVING INFORMATION

2	**Metainfo system www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/opengov/index.htm (UK)** Special web pages have been set up to assist anyone wishing to obtain information from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

ARTICLE 5 – COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

3	**PortalU www.portalu.de — Nationwide portal on environmental information (Germany)** PortalU provides access to more than 2,000,000 web pages; online documents; and several databases of nearly 200 public agencies in Germany. It also directly integrates the major environmental metadata model in Germany — the Environmental Data Catalogue (UDK).
4	**Ekoportal www.ekoportal.pl (Poland)** Ekoportal provides detailed information about environmental protection, especially focusing on Polish legislation and projects. It also helps environmental administration units at regional and local level to keep a publicly accessible register of documents containing information on the environment and environmental protection in electronic format.

5	**Information system on environmental assessments** http://aarhus.dsl.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=275&info_id=533 **(Georgia)** Since 2007, every environmental impact assessment (EIA) process is announced by the Aarhus Centre; all EIA (draft) reports are made accessible through the website; and an electronic database of EIA reports (containing EIAs going back to June 2005) is publicly accessible.
6	**Information system on environmental assessments** http://eia.enviroportal.sk **(Slovakia)** The website offers a complex information system on environmental impact assessment/strategic impact assessment, provided by the Ministry of Environment of Slovakia.
7	**Persona-led development of environmental information systems** www.environment-agency.gov.uk/maps **(UK)** "What's in Your Backyard?" (WIYBY) is the Environment Agency's customer-focused geographical information system (GIS) online application that allows members of the public to search environmental data in their locality, including flood risk maps, bathing water quality and other data types. Its purpose is to provide information on the environment in order to help inform, advise and influence the public so as to create a better environment for people and wildlife.
8	**My Living Environment** www.gelderland.nl/mijnleefomgeving **(the Netherlands)** The website enables members of the public to locate information about their immediate environment. By entering a postal code or by using interactive maps and tools, detailed information can be found on local environmental conditions (air quality, existing businesses/industries, soil condition, the quality of drinking water and bathing water, flight routes, light pollution, asbestos etc.).
9	**PISO — Spatial information system for municipalities** www.geoprostor.net/piso **(Slovenia)** PISO is a collection of the spatial contents of the state and of municipalities, allowing users simple access to data via the Internet. PISO is an instrument for the everyday work of municipalities' expert services, and at the same time it is a resource for citizens and other expert groups.
10	**Let's Do It 2008** www.teeme2008.ee **(Estonia)** "Let's Do It 2008" was a one-day mass action, engaging 50,000 volunteers throughout the country to clean up Estonia by removing illegally dumped waste and litter. The special software used for the campaign was developed based on Google Earth. The software allowed organisers and volunteers to show all the illegal dumpsites on a Google map. Each illegal dumpsite had an ID code on the map, relevant descriptive data and a photo.
11	**CHANGE – You Control Climate Change**

	http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/campaign/index.htm **(EU)**
	In the framework of the EU's climate change awareness campaign, CHANGE is designed to inform members of the public, especially the younger generation, about the effects of climate change and what each individual can do to counteract these effects in daily life.
12	**The Planet Infact www.forskning.se/theplanet (Sweden)**
	This website aims to enhance public awareness about the planet. It contains hundreds of illustrative animations, games, educational stories and interactive videos based on the latest environmental research.
13	**CENN – www.cenn.org – e-networking in the South Caucasus region**
	The Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN) aims to develop cooperation and networking; strengthen NGO capacity, joint activities and regional projects; encourage easy access to information; and raise environmental awareness in the region.

ARTICLE 6 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISIONS ON SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

14	**Virtual Environmental Planning System (VEPs) www.veps3d.org/site/242.asp (UK)**
	This project represents an alternative approach to planning consultation, allowing people to view and make comments on planning developments in three dimensions within the context of an existing landscape or cityscape.
	By combining 3D views with discussion forums, VEPs allows people freely to explore and interact with 3D models and to make comments directly via an online system. Anyone accessing the web application will be able to view these comments and share their own views online.
15	**Public participation in environmental permitting (UK)**
	The British Environment Agency set up a trial electronic public consultation of environmental permit applications. Although the pilot is now closed, the agency is seeking to deploy an enterprise consultation solution across all its activities.
16	**Public hearing on nature types and species in Natura 2000 sites www.Borger.dk (Denmark)**
	In order to manage and protect species and nature types included in the EU Habitats Directive, it is important to be aware of their presence in Natura 2000 sites. During a one-month public hearing, the Danish Ministry of Environment presented the results of site inventories and asked for comments and supplements. The hearing was published on the website www.Borger.dk, a common platform for electronic dialogue between authorities and citizens in Denmark.

ARTICLE 7 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION CONCERNING PLANS, PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

17	**Online consultations www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/default.asp (UK)** The aim of these pages is to inform stakeholders and the public of any new policies that Defra proposes, and to make environmental information available.
18	**CitizenScape http://citizenscape.org (UK, Italy, Slovakia)** CitizenScape is a two-year e-participation action trial project that will create social networking spaces by using ICT-based tools and solutions in concrete legislative and decision-making processes, specifically looking at engaging citizens to debate and engage with the implementation of EU environmental legislation at the local level.
19	**eCommittee www.ourclimate.eu (Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and UK)** The eCommittee is a pilot project during which it is intended to organise a series of six interactive sessions with the ENVI and CLIM committees at European Parliament level. In each of these sessions, a pre-registered selection of 200 citizens in 10 European countries will have the possibility to question members of the committee using advanced web-conferencing technology.
20	**The Citizens' Forum www.e-participacija.si (Slovenia)** The Citizens' Forum has been set up to involve Slovene citizens and civil society representatives at the European Parliament (MEPs) in a deliberative online dialogue on the future of Europe. Topics include moderated consultations regarding EU policies (energy, social affairs etc.) and debates on current EU issues (the euro currency, EU constitution etc). Reports are commented by MEPs prior to being presented at the European Parliament and sent to the media and to the Slovenian National Assembly.
21	**Osalusveeb https://www.osale.ee (Estonia)** This participation website gives all Estonian citizens, citizens' associations and civil society stakeholders an opportunity to have a say on government-related issues. The website allows all registered users to express their opinion on drafts published by the government. However, it is recommended that organisations select one person to submit a collective position on behalf of their colleagues.
22	**E-elections platform www.bluelink.net/vote (Bulgaria)** The e-voting platform is an Internet-based instrument for electing civil society representatives to act in various institutional bodies taking decisions in the areas of environmental protection and sustainable development in Bulgaria. The online platform enables the environmental NGO community to nominate and elect representatives and to receive feedback from them.
23	**Planning Disaster www.planningdisaster.co.uk (UK)**

	This is an online campaign against the government's plans to remove community voices from the planning process.

ARTICLE 8 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DURING THE PREPARATION OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS

24	**LEGESE www.legese.org (UK, Czech Republic, France)**
	LEGESE is an e-participation action project. It pilot-tested a new service to encourage easy communication and information exchange for effective public participation in the implementation phase of European-initiated legislation, at the local and regional levels, which is most directly relevant to the majority of citizens. LEGESE provides a single point of access to and easy understanding of the huge body of EU legislation, which is the source and driver of much of the legislation that is implemented at national and regional level throughout Europe.

II References to other related cases (not fully developed)

ARTICLE 5 – COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

CLIMATE CHANGE

25	**Floe www.nationalgridfloe.com** The energy industry has created a website to raise awareness of energy efficiency. Users can calculate some of their yearly CO_2 emissions and then compare everyday actions based on these emissions. The exercise can turn up some surprising facts — for example, the carbon impact of taking 39 10-minute showers can be replaced by taking the bus once a week for a year.
26	**Bloom www.bbc.co.uk/bloom (UK, BBC)** This BBC website focuses on climate change and on what each of us can do to prevent it. It features a list of simple actions that have all been tested by experts for their effectiveness. There is also an opportunity to grade these actions according to their effectiveness and ease of implementation. An interactive search engine allows users to select actions that are individually suited to them depending on their situation and/or preferences.
27	**Finessi www.finessi.info/finessi/index.php (Finland)** Finessi is a web tool that allows users to explore the possible impacts of climate change in Finland on chosen impact areas and at different time periods up to the end of the 21st century. The tool is intended for planners and researchers, but it may also be of interest to students and to members of the public. The tool offers a common platform for integrating observations of the present-day climate and environment with modeled information about future climatic conditions (scenarios) and their impacts. The impacts of climate change are presented for climate-sensitive systems and activities such as agriculture, water resources and natural ecosystems. With this (prototype) version of the Finessi web tool, it is possible to view and compare the results of hydrological, lake physics and palsa mire models for investigating impacts and possible adaptation measures under alternative scenarios of Finland's future environment.
28	**IDEAL-EU http://www.ideal-eu.net (Italy, France, Spain)** The IDEAL-EU project intends to support the efforts of the European Parliament to raise awareness on climate change, and to propose the appropriate policy responses at all institutional levels (including member states and regions). In three specific regional contexts (Toscana, Italy; Poitou Charentes, France; and Catalunya, Spain), an innovative social networking platform was set up to support the distribution of thematic information, provoke and facilitate discussions among citizens and stakeholders and vote on the issues at stake. On 15th November 2008, the first pan-European town meeting on climate change took

	place simultaneously in the three venues of Florence, Barcelona, Poitiers. 470 youngsters from the three regions engaged in a debate on key topics of interest to the European Parliament in order to update the EU policy agenda on climate change.
29	**Act on CO2 http://actonco2.direct.gov.uk/index.html (UK)** An interactive carbon/CO_2 calculator allows individuals and households to calculate the amount of carbon dioxide emitted as a result of their daily activities (e.g. heating their home or driving their car). It is a useful tool for promoting awareness that lifestyle and behaviour have a direct link to, and an impact on, climate change. The CO_2 calculator also gives advice on how to reduce emissions. Many similar calculators are available, although the majority of them seem to focus only on a few key areas of lifestyle while the Defra calculator uses data and factors that have been recognised and verified across government departments. The underlying "calculating engine" is available to other parties as "open source" software, enabling them to use it to power their own calculators and to help make their results more consistent across the range of calculators available.

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL SUBJECTS

30	**EU Eco-label http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel** The goal of Council Regulation (EEC) No. 880/92 of March 23, 1992 on a Community eco-label award scheme was to establish a voluntary Community scheme to promote products with a reduced environmental impact during their entire lifecycle and to provide consumers with accurate, non-deceptive and scientifically based information on the environmental impact of products. The eco-label website was set up to provide a list of products updated by the producers themselves. Members of the public have access to a summary of the criteria that products have to meet before being granted an eco-label.

ARTICLE 7 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION CONCERNING PLANS, PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

31	**Interactive City Council** **www.issy.com/index.php/fr/citoyens/le_conseil_municipal/le_conseil_municipal_interactif** **(Issy-les-Moulineaux, France)** The Interactive City Council allows residents of Issy to watch and actively participate in city council meetings live from the comfort of their own homes or while on the move. The city council meetings are simultaneously broadcast over cable network television and the Internet. To take part in the council meetings, residents simply have to tune in. They can ask questions live to their elected representatives by phone (toll-free number) or by email, and are given immediate answers.

32	**Online campaign www.panda.org/bulgaria (Bulgaria)**
	The campaign is part of a broader effort to focus international attention on the increasing number of illegal activities that are affecting Bulgaria's protected areas. It also highlights the authorities' failure to react, and the involvement and financial support necessary for the management of these areas. A particular goal is to support the complete submission of proposed Natura 2000 areas. The main tool of the campaign is the online petition.
33	**Open Espoo www.espoo.fi (Finland)**
	The Open Espoo service is a highly innovative user-friendly web service aimed at strengthening the participation of residents of the city of Espoo and other interested parties in planning processes concerning various developments in the city (e.g. city plans, city service development plans etc.). The Open Espoo service also provides everyone with open access to city decision-making processes, thus supporting the principle of open government and easy access to official documents.
34	**My Estonia www.minueesti.ee (Estonia)**
	"My Estonia" was a one-day action, engaging about 12 000 people to come together and brainstorm (using Open Space methodology) with a common goal: make Estonia better. On 1st of May 2009 over 400 brainstorming centers were open throughout the country. Everyone was welcomed to share and discuss their ideas. Using specially designed software the discussions were also held in My Estonia web environment. The themes of brainstorming were prepared by Estonia's best social scientists and specialists with different backgrounds. There were 18 social themes, including environment.

ARTICLE 8 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DURING THE PREPARATION OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS

35	**LexiPation www.lexipation.eu (Greece, Germany, UK, Italy)**
	LexiPation is an integrated information and communication technology (ICT) platform designed to enable moderated online discussions on legislative proposals involving policy makers (European Parliament), citizens and other socioeconomic groups at four different levels of Europe's public administration — small (Alston) and medium-sized (Massa) municipalities, prefectures (Thessaloniki) and city states (Hamburg).
	In Thessaloniki, the LexiPation platform was used to find participatory solutions for wetland rehabilitation, in-lake management, and ecosystem connectivity of lakes Koronia and Volvi near Thessaloniki.
	The platform makes use of the Living Labs methodology www.lexipation.eu/LivingLabsMethodology.aspx a user-centric approach for the co-creative design and validation of IT products and services recently developed with great success at EU level.
36	**eJustice http://eoigus.just.ee (Estonia)**
	eJustice is a legislation information system enabling the elaboration of amendment

	motions for its legal regulation. The system is a user-friendly cooperation environment where drafts for coordination, as well as information about the draft's entire lifecycle, are available. The system correlates draft legislation between different institutions into an integral whole. The project is mainly aimed at officials who elaborate and coordinate draft legislation, although members of the public may also benefit from the project. Citizens are able to express their opinions about the content of drafts during the coordination, and they have the right to present ideas for initiating the creation of necessary legislation.
37	**EU Interactive Policy Making** http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations_en.htm The objective of the Interactive Policy Making initiative is to use modern technologies, particularly the Internet, to allow member state administrations and EU institutions better to understand the needs of citizens and enterprises. It is intended to assist policy development by allowing more rapid and targeted responses to emerging issues and problems, improving assessment of the impact of policies (or the absence of them) and providing greater accountability to citizens. This system has been put in place to facilitate the stakeholders' consultation process via easy-to-use and straightforward online questionnaires, making it easier for respondents to participate and for policy makers to analyse the results.