

# Procedural rights of public participation in environmental matters: Compendium, challenges and chances globally

Submitted for Thematic Cluster:

1. Procedural environmental rights and participatory democracy or
2. Procedural environmental rights in international law

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This paper aims to provide a global and comparative overview of procedural rights of Public Participation in Environmental Matters in the sense of the Aarhus convention. The contribution is based on a very recent and current publication titled “Mauerhofer V., 2016. Public Participation in Environmental Matters: Compendium, Challenges and Chances globally, Land Use Policy (Elsevier) 52, 481-491” and in particular presents the results therein related to these procedural rights.

The method applied was an in-depth literature review in particular of research papers, legal documents, policy papers, which was implemented by means of electronic databases (Web of Science, Scopus) as well as by internet research using terms such as public participation, access to information, participation in decision-making and access to justice in combination with continent names.

The results were then analysed according to the five continents Europe, Africa, America, Asia as well as Oceania, and distinguished as well as discussed regarding general aspects, access to information, access to decision-making and access to justice.

The results for the five continents show that

1. there exist regionally and nationally large differences within the three pillars access to information, participation in decision-making and access to justice.
2. that access to information is widely legally established within all regions on all continents, and
3. that access to justice is the one sector of the three mentioned in Principle X of the Rio Declaration which has obtained the least reflection in legislation and implementation so far.

This innovative study provide as far as visible the first time such a transcontinental and comprehensive overview on procedural rights related to Public Participation in Environmental Matters and indicates several further challenges for researchers and politicians.

## **Bibliographies:**

**Volker Mauerhofer** received his Masters and Doctorate degrees in Laws from the University of Graz/Austria (1993/1998 with Honours) and his Masters degree in Natural Sciences from the University of Vienna/Austria (1999). After more than three years practicing law at courts as well as law firms he passed the bar exam in Austria and then he subsequently obtained a post-graduate MA in Ecological Economics from the University of Leeds/UK (2003). Currently he is a Lecturer at the University of Vienna teaching courses in the Master program Nature Conservation & Biodiversity Management. He is holding and has held different visiting positions, such as Visiting Professor at the United Nations University after having taught and researched there for more than two years. Besides publishing and supervising postgraduate students, he has been executing his academic and freelance research on biodiversity related issues for over 15 years in more than 45 countries on all continents.

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