

Access to information & the Paris Agreement

Article 12 of the Paris Agreement on Climate change states that ‘Parties shall cooperate in taking measures, as appropriate, to enhance climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and *public access to information, recognizing the importance of these steps with respect to enhancing actions under this Agreement*’.

The contribution shall try to describe what such a commitment could entail, both for Parties and for the public at large, taking into account the fact that the Paris Agreement is a worldwide (still-to-be) Agreement, with the potential of being binding on States that are not Parties to the Aarhus Convention. Are we on our way towards a globalization of the democratic requirements that are inherent to Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration ?

The presentation shall be built around three sets of questions :

- does this consideration for public access to information confirm a new trend or reveal a breakthrough in the conclusion of global/multilateral treaties related to the environment (by comparison to the content of other recent Treaties, such as Minamata, or Investment Treaties of the new generation, like CETA or TTIP) ;
- does this interest in access to information already crystallize in the available ‘INDC’s’ (intended nationally determined contributions) that have been submitted by States from all over the world ?
- what could be its follow-up in the implementation of the Agreement, once entered into force, both within the Member States and for existing institutions (such as the IPCC) ? How could the crucial and specific focus on transparency, which is at the very hearth of the Paris Agreement, be inspired or even moulded by true procedural rights to access to information ?

This presentation could fit in the thematic cluster ‘Procedural environmental rights in international law’, within the subtheme ‘Procedural environmental rights at global level’.

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Among my recent publications : D. Misonne, ‘The Importance of Setting a Target : The EU Ambition of a High Level of Protection’, *Transnational Environmental Law*, vol.4, April 2015, pp. 11-36.