



**Association of
Environmental
Law**

Actions to ensure the compliance of Art. 3.8 of the Aarhus Convention

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Side Event: Defending the Defenders 2021, October 11, 2021, Aarhus MOP7

Protection of Environmental Defenders – Latest developments

- Increasing threat to defenders in Europe and in other regions
- Initiatives and mechanisms to address the problems in recent years:
 - Aarhus Convention Article 3.8, the Aarhus Compliance Committee
 - Rapid Response Mechanism
 - Escazú Agreement, Article 9, Human rights defenders in environmental matters
 - Other existing mechanisms and developments: Human Rights Council, Special rapporteur on the situation of environmental defenders, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, UNEP, political declarations (e.g. EU: European Parliament resolution on the effects of climate change on human rights and the role on environmental defenders, May 19, 2021, EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for 2020-2024, etc.)

Increasing Protection of Environmental Defenders

Additional measures are needed from Parties

- To put in place legislation and policies
 - To protect environmental defenders, and prevent situations of harassment, intimidation, penalization, persecution, other forms of retaliations, including even more aggressive forms of attacks, killings
 - To initiate investigations and prosecution if such cases happen
 - To provide assistance to victims (legal, financial, psychological and other assistance)
 - To enforce Art. 3.8 and related national legislation
- Support the RRM politically and financially, including its speedy implementation
- Capacity building (trainings and guidance) and awareness raising
 - for public authorities, including administrative organs, law enforcement agencies, police, prosecutors, judiciary, private security services, as well as developers, international financial institutions, etc.
 - for environmental defenders
- Exchange of experiences and joint initiatives with the Escazú Agreement

Recent reports



LAST LINE OF DEFENCE

The industries causing the climate crisis and attacks against land and environmental defenders SEPTEMBER 2021 , Global Witness

UNEP sub-regional research: „Addressing Environmental Challenges Through the Law in Europe" in the South East European (Western Balkan) countries on the status of environmental defenders (ongoing, by J&E)