



# Aarhus Convention and Belarus

ECOHOME, NGO recently liquidated by  
the state

systematic non-compliance

the situation with the persecution is getting significantly worse



# GENERAL FRAMEWORK

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## **BEFORE 2020**

some attempts to improve legislation were made

## **SINCE 2020**

a legal default

mistrust of state institutions

no believe in the possibility of protecting rights

mass repressions

crackdown against media and NGOs

# **ARE THERE ANY CHANGES SINCE MOP-2017?**

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## **MANY PROBLEMS REMAIN UNRESOLVED:**

- no clear plan of how to implement Recommendations of MoPs
- public awareness cannot be considered effective
- no earliest stage
- what is final decision – remains unresolved

# **ACCESS TO THE INFORMATION**

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- legislation is interpreted in a restrictive manner
- cases of refusals to provide eco-information
- the of separation environmental information
- informing is not effective enough
- without being a specialist, it is quite difficult to understand information



**LIMITATION OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

# PARTICIPATION

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**BEFORE 2020 - IT WAS A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN CITIZENS' INTEREST IN PARTICIPATION, BUT... 2020**

no adequate informing

the methods are ineffective, not popular and outdated

no early stage of participation

what is the final decision?

participation is still formal

authorities try to distance themselves from public

distrust among citizens in any decisions of state bodies

# **ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

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**UNTIL 2020, THE NUMBER OF CITIZENS' APPEALS TO THE COURTS INCREASED**

there were no qualitative changes

Courts continued to shy away from dealing with environmental cases

no independent court

no illusion that the court will protect environmental rights



**THERE IS NO ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS IN BELARUS**

# CAN ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS BE EXERCISED IN FEAR OF PERSECUTION?

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## ONLY DURING 2021:

more than 30 ecoNGO were liquidated

about 10 ecoNGO were self-liquidated

7 searches on criminal cases at EcoNGO or their representatives

more than 10 defamation-articles in state mass media



## IF THE PERSECUTION DOES NOT STOP

all steps taken to change the legislation and practice in the past years, will not make any sense