

Ius Commune Conference 2020

Workshop: Environmental Law

Thursday, 26 November (14.00 – 18.00)

Participants

**Theme: Towards more environmental democracy?
Access to Environmental Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision-Making**

Introduction to the program

In 1998, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe adopted the *Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters* (the Aarhus Convention) with a view to strengthen the accountability and transparency of decision-making and aiming at increasing public support for decisions relating to the environment. The EU and all its member states are a party to this Convention. By now, a lot of case law has emerged – both from the CJEU and from national courts. Also the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee has been called upon many times by ENGOs, individuals, and other actors.

Meanwhile, 24 nations situated in Latin America and the Caribbean adopted a sister convention in 2018: the *Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean* (the Escazú Agreement). The Escazú Agreement will enter into force after ratification by 11 countries: see <https://www.cepal.org/en/escazuagreement>.

This workshop will discuss this rise of rights enabling ‘environmental democracy’. It focuses particularly on 1) access to environmental information and 2) public participation in environmental decision-making, being the first and second pillar of the Aarhus Convention.

Chair: Prof. Dr. Marjan Peeters (Maastricht University)

14.00 – 14.05 *Introduction by the Chair*

Part I: EU & Aarhus Convention

14.05 – 14.30 *Sustainable Energy Democracy and the Law*

Dr. Ruven Fleming (University of Groningen)

Dr. Kaisa Huhta (University of Eastern Finland)

Dr. Leonie Reins (University of Tilburg)

14.30 – 14.55 *Animal welfare and access to environmental information: hold your horses!*

Prof. Dr. Bernard Vanheusden and drs. Jonas Voorter (Hasselt University)

- 14.55 – 15.20 *Citizen and NGO involvement in the decision-making concerning nuclear power plants within the EU*
Dr. Kevine Kindji (Maastricht University)
- 15.20 – 15.45 **Coffee break**
- 15.45 – 16.10 *Permanent storage of radioactive waste: legal framework and public participation in the Netherlands*
Dr. Sanne Akerboom (Utrecht University)
- 16.10 – 16.35 *Experiences with requesting environmental information in academic research*
Mathias Müller (Maastricht University)
- 16.35 – 17.00 *CJEU case C-826/18 (Stichting Varkens in Nood and others): Request for a preliminary ruling from the Rechtbank Limburg (District Court, Limburg, Netherlands)*
Informational roundtable session with Dr René Seerden (Maastricht University – and judge of the District Court Limburg)
- Part II: International level & Escazú Agreement**
- 17.15 – 17.30 *Will Latin America become the new frontrunner in environmental public participation? Considerations on how the Escazú Agreement advances international law in environmental procedural rights.*
Juliana Zuluaga Madrid (Catholic University Leuven)
- 17.30 – 18.00 *Roundtable discussion on the Escazú Agreement in light of the experiences of the Aarhus Convention*