



Bratislava, 24th April 2026

Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers
Secretariat
Palais des Nations, Av. de la Paix 10
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Dear Special Rapporteur and members of the Secretariat of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs,

On behalf of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights (SNCHR) and civil society organizations representing environmental human rights defenders Zelená väčšina (Green Majority) and Platforma pre demokraciu (Platform for Democracy), I would like to reach out to the Secretariat with an update on the situation of environmental human rights defenders in Slovakia.

Since your visit in 2024, the conditions for human rights defenders have stayed hostile while political leaders spread disinformation and verbally attack civic society engaging in nature conservation. Consequently, we would like to bring to your attention that we have observed a discernible escalation in hostile conduct on the part of representatives of the Ministry of Environment and representatives of public authorities, notably in the context of legislative processes, the adoption of regulatory measures, and the approval of projects. In these instances, evidence-based arguments are frequently supplanted by the discrediting of civil society organisations¹ and members of the public², as well as by the dissemination of assertions that are readily refutable. For example, by continuously spreading disinformation about the financial

¹ Minister Tomáš Taraba claims that environmental activist Rastislav Mičaník and CSO Aevis is “sucking European projects” and requests prolongation of the deadlines in the AEVIS project. Accessible online: [Teraz Taraba: Podcast 10/2026](#)

Minister Tomáš Taraba claims that environmental activists “greenish” bought in the 90’s houses in the flood zone and after that pressured to stop the water dam project Slatinka, referring to it as the biggest reality scam in the Slovak history. Parliamentary discussion on 11. September 2025, 17:44. Accessible online: [Media Portál NRSR - Videokanáľ](#)

² Minister Tomáš Taraba suggests that motivation of scientists from Slovak Academy of Science to propose higher protection of certain forest areas is motivated by ownership of the land in that area to receive financial compensation. Accessible online: [Teraz Taraba: Podcast 13/2026](#)



interests of the organizations in protected areas, or labeling human rights defenders as extremists³ and used dehumanizing language.

As the results of **monitoring** published by SNCHR in 2025⁴ display, the above-mentioned cases are not isolated incidents. They are rather symptomatic cases stemming from the general antipathy towards human right defenders and shrinking civic space in Slovakia.

The analysis shows that most of the respondents have experienced some form of harassment, with the most common being disinformation, defamation, and verbal harassment, for example through e-mails or phone calls. Monitoring also captured several cases of intimidation, stalking and physical attacks. Harassment is mostly conducted as a response to activities online, monitoring in the field and reporting violations of legal regulations. The respondents reported that the harassment had a negative impact on various aspects of their lives, including family, mental health and general distrust in their surroundings, and work life.

The report also focused on the access to public participation as conveyed in the Aarhus Convention. Representatives of CSOs pointed out that there are various barriers for civil society to participate in law-making processes. Participatory processes are perceived as very formalistic procedures while the expertise of CSOs is doubted and their arguments ignored. Furthermore, changes to critical environmental legislation were introduced through amendments proposed in parliament, even in cases when the parliamentarians cooperated on the legislation with the representatives of the ministry. To influence proposed legislation in parliament, organizations require much more internal capacities to advocate for their positions with parliamentarians in a very unpredictable environment and, consequently they are often unsure of the outcomes. Such conditions may lead to lower engagement in parliamentary advocacy. An exemplary case of a failure to fulfil an obligation to create transparent conditions for participation of public in

³ Representatives of the National Park Veľká Fatra refer to critical opinions on the logging in the protected area as “pseudoscientific political narratives put forward by extremist civic associations with a political agenda” Accessible online: [Národný park Veľká Fatra odmieta kritiku ťažby dreva v Ľubochnianskej doline](#)

⁴ Ujházyová, M. Keď je ochrana životného prostredia rizikom. Slovenské národné stredisko pre ľudské práva. Bratislava, 2025. Accessible online: [Keď-je-ochrana-zivotneho-prostredia-rizikom.pdf](#)



environmental matter is an approval of the project PVE Málinec-Čechánky as the major investment of national importance⁵.

Furthermore, the SNCHR analysed the depiction of human rights defenders on the social media accounts of the Ministry of Environment and its most prominent political leaders. The research showed that 93% of social media posts that mentioned civil society working in this area depicted human rights defenders in a negative way. The most common narratives in these posts were that non-governmental organizations working in this area have a financial interest and are unprofessional. A significant proportion of posts depicts environmental human rights defenders as a threat which is especially concerning, as these types of disinformation create a hostile environment and may fuel the harassment experienced by environmental human rights defenders.

Lastly, the analysis pointed out the lack of financial resources for environmental non-governmental organizations. Slovakia does not create transparent conditions for financial support for these organizations. In contrast, political leaders at the Ministry of Environment frame activities in nature conservation as a leisure time activity, and therefore any financial support may be portrayed as “fraudulent” financial motivations.

Given these circumstances, the SNCHR is concerned that harassment of the environmental human rights defenders by political leaders, as well as by the representatives of public authorities, will continue to be unaddressed, and that such language will become normalised. A continuous hostile atmosphere combined with several environmental laws and projects that human rights defenders oppose, may lead to further dehumanization and escalation of harassment. After all, shrinking civic space will harm nature conservation and the people living in affected areas.

If feasible, the SNCHR with the CSOs represented by this letter would welcome an opportunity to discuss potential ways for the Secretariat to step in and support

⁵ Since the first information about the project appeared, local citizens are being ignored even when they use standard legal procedures to participate. The project has been approved as the major investment in March this year and at the moment it is being contested at the court (lawsuit filed by VIA IURIS and SLATINKA) and investigated by the Public Defender of Rights.



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human rights defenders in Slovakia in putting an end to hostile and disrespectful conditions in which CSOs have to work.

With kind regards,

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executive director

