



# UNECE Weekly

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 13 – 28 April-2 May 2003

## **Powering the future with GAS!**

This special edition of UNECE Weekly focuses on one of the key extrabudgetary successes of the UNECE; the ECE **Gas Centre**.

### **About the Gas Centre**

The ECE Gas Centre, launched in 1994, was originally established as part of the UNECE Working Party on Gas, to support governments and gas companies in central and eastern Europe in their efforts to create more decentralized and market-based gas industries. Funded entirely through an extrabudgetary programme



financed by some 25 major gas companies (state-owned and private) from Europe, the United States and the Mediterranean Basin, the Centre has now built an impressive network of key representatives from both governments and the gas industry.

### **The Centre's Mandate**

In the light of the fundamental and profound changes that have recently taken place in the natural gas markets of Europe, the Gas Centre's mandate was re-focussed. In 2001, a forward looking assessment of the objectives, work methods, fee schedule and programme of work was carried out by the member companies and staff. Consequently, in addition to contributing to institutional capacity development and training for the benefit of economies in transition (e.g. on industry restructuring and privatization), the Centre

has also become a pivotal forum for the exchange of know-how and information; promoting dialogue between the gas industries, UNECE, and governments on policy matters (e.g. on policy, legal and regulatory issues and energy security); and facilitating the integration of the natural gas industries in Europe by encouraging new investment and trade through the greater convergence and harmonization of norms and practices (e.g. on transportation tariffs, rate making, and financing and investment criteria).

### **Management of the Gas Centre**

The strategic directions, programme of work and budget of the Gas Centre are established and overseen by an Executive Board, consisting of the companies that participate in the Centre and the Director of the UNECE Industrial Restructuring, Energy and Enterprise Development Division (IREEDD). The work of the Centre, in



collaboration with member companies, is carried out through various activities such as task forces, workshops, seminars, conferences, publications, the development of sources of information and databases, training, and technical and advisory missions.

### **High-Level Gas Forum: Norway, 13-14 May 2003**

The Gas Centre annually organises a High-Level Conference at which each Gas Centre member company is represented at either Director or Board level. The theme of this year's 8th Conference is

the **'Future Production of Natural Gas'**. Hosted by Statoil, the event will take place in Stavanger, Norway, 13 and 14 May 2003.

**Not an official record - For information only**

## Gas Centre Task Forces

The Centre currently has the following three Task Forces:

- **Implementation of the EU Gas Directive,**

The Task Force reports and informs on the status and transposition of the European Commission Gas Directive(s) into national law in EU Member States. It also discusses the business implications of interpreting and implementing the Gas Directive within Member States, accession candidates and other countries concerned by the Directive within the UNECE region.

- **Transportation and Tariffs (GATE 2010)**

The main purpose of the GATE-2010 Task Force is to review the most important consequences of the gas market opening on the gas transportation business. The last Task Force meeting was held in Amsterdam on 7-8 April 2003 and was dedicated to detailed developments on Third Party Access and tariffs systems as presented by member companies.

- **Security of Natural Gas Supply,**

Established in early-2002 and Chaired by Gazprom, the goal of this Task Force is to find ways and solutions to preserve the gas market and ensure reliable and secure gas supplies in Europe. As a consequence of recent changes in the market and corporate structures, the security of natural gas supply has become an issue requiring reevaluation. The Task Force will publish in mid-2003 a document regarding this theme - the final draft will be discussed during a dedicated meeting on 29 April 2003. The Gas Centre and its member companies are available to discuss this report with those that are interested in their positions and views.

### Gas Centre Online Database

The Gas Centre has developed an on-line database focussing on the major gas markets in the UNECE region. This unique, comprehensive and internationally comparable database includes key aspects of market-based gas. Each year Training Sessions are organized with Focal Points designated by the member companies in order to

ensure that the information on the database is kept current and also to inform the participants on the latest development of the applications used to run the Gas Centre website. The next training session will be organized in Geneva during the week 23-27 June 2003.

For further information on the UNECE's Gas Centre visit: <http://www.gascentre.unece.org> and/or contact the Gas Centre Secretariat: Tans Van Kleef ([tans.van-kleef@unece.org](mailto:tans.van-kleef@unece.org)) and Yannick Guerrini ([yannick.guerrini@unece.org](mailto:yannick.guerrini@unece.org)).

## Coming up soon ...

5-9 May	Working Party on General Safety Provisions
6-7 May	Ad Hoc Meeting on Implementation of the European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR)
6-9 May	Meeting of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat

## Facts and figures:

**Unemployment in UNECE**  
*selected subregions*

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
European Union	9.4	8.7	7.8	7.4	7.6
Euro area	10.2	9.4	8.5	8.0	8.3
North America-2	4.9	4.5	4.3	5.0	6.0
Eastern Europe-15	12.3	14.3	14.8	15.3	...
CIS-12	9.0	8.3	7.1	6.2	5.6

Source: UNECE Statistical Division, secretariat estimates based on data from national sources, Eurostat, OECD, and the Statistical Committee of the CIS.

Notes:

- Unemployment rates for the European Union, the Euro Area, and North America, are comparable since they all draw on labour force surveys. For Eastern Europe and CIS, data refer to registered unemployment rates (end of period) and therefore are not comparable with the above series.

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