



UNECE Weekly

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It's just happened ...

UNECE Promotes Industrial Restructuring in transition Economies

The daunting task of industrial restructuring has come to the forefront of market reforms in the transition economies, especially in the countries of Southeast Europe and the former USSR. Hundreds of uncompetitive enterprises providing employment and income to thousands of people need to be either dismantled or modernized. To assist Governments in handling the process of industrial restructuring, the UNECE organised on 23 April a Workshop on Policy and Regulatory Options for Promoting Industrial Restructuring in the UNECE Region. Key views on and practical experience of the government policies needed to create and facilitate favourable conditions for restructuring non-competitive industries and sectors were exchanged by experts from west and east European countries, representing governments, international organizations, trade unions and academia. The crucial issues under discussion, however, related to the role of the public sector and government institutions in enforcing property rights and good corporate governance, coherent competition policy, and the assistance of governments in the area of capacity building in the financial sector.

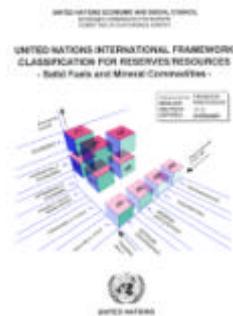
For further information, contact: Iouri Adjoubei (iouri.adjoubei@unece.org).

Russia & CIS Implement UN Framework Classification

A Regional Seminar organised by UNECE and the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources (Moscow, 24-25 April 2003) provided assistance to Russian and CIS countries in adapting their national classifications for energy and mineral resources to the UN Framework Classification for Energy and Mineral Commodities. National Geological Surveys in the Russian Federation and a number of CIS countries are developing new national classification systems for energy reserves/resources with a view to re-evaluating domestic energy and mineral resources (oil, natural gas, coal and uranium, as well as mineral commodities) by applying the market criteria of the recently-developed UNFC, as recommended by ECOSOC/1997 for worldwide application. The UNFC has already been approved and applied by law in Ukraine. In the Russian Federation, however, a trial

period of 1-3 years has begun. By October 2003 the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources together with a number of energy companies will proceed with testing the UNFC on individual deposits (two oil, one gas, and one uranium), the results of which will be reported to the Committee on Sustainable Energy in November 2003. A national Task Force has been created to finalize the Russian Classification, which will be based on the UNFC principles.

For further information contact Slav Slavov (slav.slavov@unece.org).



Innovation as a Vehicle to Assist Industrial Restructuring in Transition Economies

The legacy of the past has left many countries of Eastern, Central and Southern Europe and the CIS with hundreds of uncompetitive, energy-intensive and polluting enterprises. Transformation of these enterprises has become one of the key challenges for the governments as they strive to accomplish the transition to a modern market economy. Opportunities inherent in new rapidly developing sectors, undertakings based on modern technologies and new business models can all serve to assist transition economies in this endeavour. These issues formed the basis for expert discussions on 24 April at the UNECE conference on "Innovation as a Vehicle for Industrial Restructuring", that provided a forum for governments, international organizations, private companies and labour unions to exchange views on best restructuring practices based on modern technologies and business solutions. The role of new emerging sectors and industries in industrial restructuring, the use of new technologies as a means of enhancing the competitiveness of enterprises and the scope for new business models emerging as a result of globalization of production and distribution were also explored. The UNECE Team of Specialists on Industrial Restructuring is mandated to assist transition economies in handling this pressing issue.

For further information contact Iouri Adjoubei (iouri.adjoubei@unece.org).

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Promoting fundamental principles of official statistics

The 10 Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, adopted by UNECE in 1992, are a synthesis of the basic requirements for official statistics. They address legal, institutional and professional issues like relevance, impartiality, confidentiality of individual information, independence from political interference, etc. They provide a framework to be translated into national legislation and practices, as well as a guide for ethical and professional behaviour of statisticians. The heads of national statistical offices from eight CIS countries met on 28-29 April in Almaty (Kazakhstan) to discuss the implementation of these principles. Emerging from a past where official statistics followed

a completely different paradigm, the CIS countries have recently revised their legislation to incorporate the fundamental principles. However, many problems of interpretation and implementation still exist. There is a tendency at national level to perceive statistical offices and their output along the government/opposition or other partisan lines. All participants agreed that proactive communication with users, in particular with media and the government, is required to better explain the new role of official statistics. Together with strict adherence to fundamental principles in practice, and being fully professional in their activities, statistical offices can obtain trust and confidence as providers of impartial public information.

Challenges to water management in the UNECE region

Implementing decisions of the WWSD, the Third World Water Forum, and the decisions expected at the Fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Kiev, May 2003) were the main issues discussed by the Working Group on Water Management, of the UNECE Water Convention, in Helsinki (28-29 April). Implementing the Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, launched as an EU Water Initiative at the WSSD, will become a UNECE core activity. The Parties to the Water Convention will play a leading role to improve integrated management of water resources, including transboundary rivers and regional seas, to ensure the best possible balance between economic efficiency, environmental sustainability and social equity as well as to prevent conflicts over the distribution of water among countries. Parties will provide guidance on the ecosystem approach to water management as recommended by the Ministerial Declaration of the World Water Forum, and they will – on the occasion of the 2004 international conference on flood prevention - provide best practice for sustainable flood management in the whole UNECE region. Cooperation between UNECE's environmental conventions will be strengthened to implement the expected

decisions of the Kiev Conference related to civil liability for industrial accidents, environmental impact assessment of water-related projects, and public participation in water management

Facts and figures:

Shares of Exports and Imports in GDP
for selected UNECE countries
(per cent at current prices)

	Exports/GDP			Imports/GDP		
	1995	2000	2001	1995	2000	2001
Bulgaria	44.7	55.7	55.7	46.3	61.1	63.3
Croatia	38.6	47.1	49.1	49.5	52.3	54.7
Czech Republic	53.6	69.8	70.8	58.4	73.2	73.5
Estonia	72.0	93.8	90.6	80.0	97.9	94.4
Hungary	44.4	74.9	74.4	44.3	78.7	75.9
Latvia	47.3	45.6	44.4	49.7	54.3	55.6
Lithuania	51.5	45.7	50.9	63.0	52.2	56.4
Poland	24.4	28.3	28.1	22.1	34.9	31.8
Romania	26.6	33.0	33.5	32.3	38.7	41.6
Slovakia	57.4	71.8	74.0	55.7	74.2	82.5
Slovenia	55.2	56.5	57.9	57.2	60.1	58.5
The FYR Macedonia	33.0	48.3	...	42.8	62.4	...
Armenia	23.9	23.4	25.6	62.2	50.5	45.9
Azerbaijan	32.5	40.2	42.9	53.4	38.4	38.0
Belarus	49.7	69.2	66.7	54.1	72.4	70.3
Kazakhstan	39.0	57.0	46.5	43.5	48.4	48.1
Kyrgyzstan	29.5	41.8	36.7	42.4	47.6	37.0
Republic of Moldova	60.1	49.6	50.1	67.9	76.6	74.4
Russian Federation	27.7	44.1	36.2	24.3	24.0	23.5
Ukraine	47.1	62.4	56.1	50.2	57.4	54.4

Source: UNECE Statistical Division, secretariat estimates based on data from national sources, Eurostat, OECD, and the Statistical Committee of the CIS.
Notes: Exports and imports include goods and services

For further information please contact:

Information Service

UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

CH - 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Tel: +41(0)22 917 44 44 Fax: +41(0)22 917 05 05

E-mail: info.ece@unece.org Web site: <http://www.unece.org>

Coming up soon ...

12-13 May	Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)
13 & 16 May	Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development
14-15 May	International Forum on Trade Facilitation
15 (pm) May	Workshop on Technical Issues on Trade Facilitation
15-16 May	Ad Hoc Meeting on Harmonization of Sustainable Urban and Regional Transport Statistics (Prague, Czech Republic)

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