



UNECE Weekly

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It's just happened ...

Avoiding “two parallel Europes”

In the light of the recent enlargement of the European Union to 25 Member States, UNECE, in cooperation with UNDP, held on 11-12 May an Executive Forum on “Competing in a Changing Europe”. The Forum examined strategies for trade and business in the region, for integrating regional markets through trade facilitation and information and communication technologies (ICT) and for promoting agricultural quality standards in international food supply chains. Participants highlighted factors driving competitiveness, including regulatory convergence, good public and corporate governance, and promotion of entrepreneurship. There was also general agreement on the importance of ICT and support for a growing knowledge-based economy



throughout the region as foreseen by the EU's “Lisbon Agenda”. The elimination of barriers to trade is expected to bring important economic gains to the EU, benefits which will not

accrue automatically or be shared uniformly without regional financial cooperation and strong partnerships between governments, businesses, regional and international organizations and civil society. One of UNECE's priorities is to help its least advantaged member States adapt to the challenges of the new trading environment, to avoid the creation of “two parallel Europes” that would grow and develop at different speeds, and possibly in different directions.

For more information contact Lorenza Jachia (lorenza.jachia@unece.org)

Green Groups challenge Governments over compliance with treaty obligations

The UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) is facing a new test as its innovative compliance mechanism is presented with claims by NGOs that certain Parties are failing to comply with their obligations. The Aarhus compliance mechanism is unprecedented among multilateral environmental agreements by the extent to which it gives the public, including NGOs, a role in triggering a review of a Party's compliance. Several environmental organizations have taken advantage of this relatively open regime to challenge certain Parties over their compliance with the Convention. The independent Compliance Committee, set up at the first Meeting of the Parties in 2003, met on 13-14 May. It is investigating, initially through a process of dialogue with the Parties concerned, the

five claims that have so far been submitted to it (concerning among others nuclear waste, high-voltage power lines, navigation through the Danube



Delta). Any conclusions that the Committee may reach will be referred to the Meeting of the Parties, which will be the final arbiter as to whether or not there is a

case of non-compliance. It is hoped that the mechanism, which was designed to improve compliance and was not intended as a redress procedure for violations of individual rights, will encourage Governments to take their obligations seriously and thereby promote a high level of compliance.

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Hungary accedes to the ADN

On 4 May 2004 Hungary acceded to the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (ADN). After the Netherlands and the Russian Federation,

Hungary is the third Contracting State to the Agreement. Adopted on 25 May 2000, the ADN will enter into force when four more States deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or

Not an official record - For information only

accession with the UN Secretary-General. The ADN was established for the purpose of increasing the safety of the international carriage of dangerous goods by inland waterways and of preventing any pollution that might result from accidents during such carriage, while facilitating the international trade and transport of such goods. The Regulations annexed to the ADN contain the technical requirements for the international carriage of dangerous substances in packages or in bulk on board inland navigation vessels and tank vessels, as well as uniform provisions concerning the

construction and operation of such vessels. It also sets up international requirements and procedures for inspections, issue of certificates of approval, recognition of classification societies, monitoring, and training and examination of experts. Pending entry into force of the ADN, the annexed Regulations are updated on a regular basis for recommended application through national legislation.

For more information, see <http://www.unece.org/trans/danger/danger.htm> or contact: Olivier Kervella (Olivier.kervella@unece.org)

UNECE marks 10th Anniversary of Gas Centre



On 4-5 May, the UNECE celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the UNECE Gas Centre on the occasion of the Gas Centre's 9th High Level Conference held in Bratislava, Slovakia, and hosted

by Slovak Gas Company SPP. UNECE Executive Secretary, Mrs. Brigita Schmögnerová, opened the High Level Conference, which this year focussed on "Gas Industry Regulatory Regulations". In her opening remarks Mrs Schmögnerová stated that the Gas Centre was an excellent example of the cooperation between the United Nations and the business community; the UNECE was no doubt a pioneer in the UN system in developing good working relationships with the business sector – a

partnership which she saw as an excellent contribution to strengthening UN values to the benefit of all. Mrs Schmögnerová went on to highlight the positive role of the Gas Centre in terms of EU enlargement by commenting "I believe that there is a role for UNECE to play in preventing new divides in Europe and the UNECE region. In the case of UNECE gas activities we have an excellent ally – a gas pipeline connecting suppliers and consumers, connecting countries and its peoples and bringing peace. The Gas Centre is one of the UNECE activities by which we contribute to the strengthening of integration in the UNECE region".

For more information see the Gas Centre website at: www.gascentre.unece.org or contact Tans van Kleef (tans.van-kleef@unece.org)

Facts and figures:

Unemployment rate, total

South-east Europe and selected CIS countries
(Per cent of labour force, end of period)

	2000	2001	2002	2003 Q1	2003 Q2	2003 Q3	2003 Q4	2004 Q1
South-east Europe								
<i>Albania</i>	16.9	14.6	15.8	15.5	15.2	15.0	..	..
<i>Bosnia and Herzegovina^a</i>	39.4	39.9	42.7	43.1	43.1	43.8	..	..
<i>Bulgaria</i>	21.5	19.7	16.8	15.6	13.7	12.7	...	...
<i>Croatia^d</i>	15.1	15.3	15.2	...	14.1	...	...	...
<i>Romania</i>	7.7	6.4	8.0	8.1	6.9	6.2	...	...
<i>Serbia and Montenegro^c</i>	12.6	12.9	13.8	...	...	...	...	...
<i>The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia^d</i>	32.2	30.5	31.9	...	36.7	...	...	...
<i>Turkey</i>	6.5	8.3	10.3	12.3	10.0	9.4	10.3	..
CIS								
<i>Armenia</i>	10.9	9.8	9.1	10.5	10.0	9.8	9.8	9.8
<i>Azerbaijan</i>	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4
<i>Belarus</i>	2.1	2.3	3.0	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.0
<i>Kazakhstan</i>	12.5	10.2	10.2	9.3	8.3	7.9	9.1	8.6
<i>Kyrgyzstan</i>	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0
<i>Moldova</i>	...	...	5.8	7.3	9.8	6.9	6.6	...
<i>Russian Federation</i>	9.8	8.7	8.8	8.9	8.0	7.9	8.1	7.9
<i>Tajikistan</i>	3.0	2.6	2.7	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.3
<i>Ukraine</i>	12.1	11.2	11.2	9.4	8.8	9.2	9.0	...

Source: UNECE Statistical Database, compiled from Eurostat and national sources.

Note: Labour force survey data are according to ILO definitions. In *italics* - registered unemployment.

^a Figures cover only the Bosnian-Croat Federation.

^b Average for the first half of the year.

^c Excluding Kosovo and Metohia, mid-year estimate for 2002.

^d April.

Coming up soon ...

17-19 May

Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business
UN/CEFACT

17-19 May

Joint ECE/Eurostat/OECD Meeting on Management of Statistical Information Systems

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