



# UNECE Weekly

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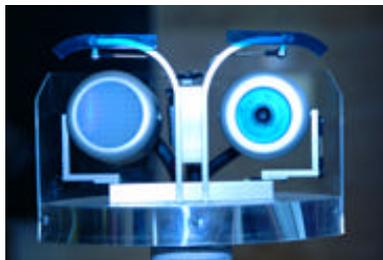
## It's just happened ...

### A Robot in Every Home?



On the occasion of the release of the *World Robotics* publication for 2004, prepared by the UNECE in cooperation with the International Federation of Robotics (IFR), a conference entitled *A Robot in Every Home?* was held in the Palais des Nations on 20 October, with chief executive officers from

companies in United States, Germany and the Republic of Korea. An opening address was given by the European Union. As hands-on illustration of the issues presented in the Conference, an Exhibition of Service Robots was also organized, featuring vacuum cleaning robots, lawn mowing robots, home robots, guide robots, guard robots, to mention just a few of the applications. The Conference was timely also because it was exactly 50 years ago that the first patent was filed for an industrial robot, although it was then called “programmed article transfer”. The first industrial robot was installed and put into operation some 40 years ago. Since then close to 1.5 million general purpose industrial robots have been sold.



For some years now another type of robot has emerged. Service robots for professional use in non-manufacturing environments, such as underwater robots, surgical robots, space robots, and bomb disposal robots are rapidly growing in importance. Well over 20,000 service robots for professional use are now in operation, with an additional 50,000 units expected to be put in service over the next five years.



A second category of service robot, those for domestic home use, was the focus of the Conference. The UNECE estimates that there are already at least 1.3 million service robots for home use – from vacuum cleaning robots, lawn mowing robots to toy and hobby robots – with an estimated 6-7 million units to be added in the next five years.

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### Capacity Building Workshop on Trade Facilitation Implementation: Tools, Techniques, Methodologies

The Workshop (18-20 October) helped policy makers and trade facilitation practitioners to better understand existing UN/CEFACT trade facilitation standards and tools and assessed needs and priorities in implementing those tools. It provided training in document harmonization and simplification, standards and codes supporting GATT Articles V, VIII and X and supply-chain efficiency. Presenting practical examples of successfully operating Single Window systems for trade information and documents from 7 developing and developed countries, experts recognized clear benefits of such a system for all stakeholders. For successful trade facilitation implementation, participants highlighted the need to adopt a strong

partnership approach between Governments and business, address border-crossing and customs procedures, including transit issues, and increase technical assistance and capacity building. Information flows in international trade and document standards are an important precondition of moving to electronic documents and paperless trade, and the Workshop called for establishing a task force for electronic documents in early 2005. The Workshop recognized that while WTO negotiations will address the “what” of trade facilitation in relation to GATT Articles V, VIII and X, UN/CEFACT could provide “how” – the solutions and tools for implementation.

For more information visit: [www.unece.org/trade](http://www.unece.org/trade).

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## UNECE economists discuss economic policy issues with the President of Croatia

At the invitation of the Office of the President of Croatia, a team of economists from the UNECE Economic Analysis Division led by the Executive Secretary, Mrs. Brigita Schmögrerová, visited Zagreb on 15 October to present results of their research to high level government officials and to the wider public. The UNECE delegation was invited to speak at a working seminar organized by the Office of the President and attended by the President and his team of advisors. Presentations by the UNECE economists included an overview of the current situation and prospects of the global and European economy, a comparative assessment of Croatia's recent economic performance vis-à-vis other central and east European countries as well

as a review of some specific policy issues relevant for Croatia. The presentations were followed by a policy discussion focused on Croatia. The team visited the Faculty of Economics of the University of Zagreb, and gave a public seminar "Croatia in the European Economy", attended by some 200 participants including government officials, representatives of the business community, university staff, students and the Croatian media. The seminar was also an opportunity to present the UNECE flagship publication, the *Economic Survey of Europe*, to the wider public in Croatia.

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## International transit of goods –enhancement of controls through the use of modern technology



The UNECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport and the Administrative Committee of the TIR Convention

for the international transit of goods met on 11-15 October. The TIR Convention is an international Agreement administered by UNECE devised to facilitate, through the use of an international Customs document (TIR Carnet) the international movement of goods transported by vehicles or containers under Customs seals and to provide the required Customs security and guarantees. Around 3 million TIR transport operations were carried out internationally under the TIR system in 2003. The 65 Contracting Parties to the TIR Convention decided

to launch the ITDB-Online, a web based search and verification tool for authorized Customs officials whereby they can obtain information on the approximately 33,000 authorized TIR operators. The international TIR Data Bank (ITDB) is maintained by the UNECE TIR secretariat. They also adopted new provisions making possible the use of fibre-optic fastening cables for securing vehicles or containers. This will improve the control possibilities of Customs authorities in the Contracting Parties with a view to combating fraud. The new provisions will, if no objections are launched, come into force on 1 November 2005.

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## Facts and figures:

Public Life and Decision-making Percentage of Women and Men among Judges (selected UNECE countries)				
Country	Judges			
	1995		2001	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Armenia	87.3	12.7	79.4	20.6
Austria	80.9	19.1	77.0 <sup>3</sup>	23.0 <sup>3</sup>
Croatia	47.1	52.9	38.3	61.7
Cyprus	84.7	15.3	78.6 <sup>3,5</sup>	21.4 <sup>3,5</sup>
Czech Republic	38.4	61.6	37.8	62.2
Estonia	...	...	37.8	62.2
Finland	49.3	50.7	...	...
France	...	...	57.1 <sup>3</sup>	42.9 <sup>3</sup>
Georgia	84.7	15.3	62.5	37.5
Germany	73.7	26.3	72.3 <sup>3</sup>	27.7 <sup>3</sup>
Hungary	29.9	70.1	30.0	70.0
Iceland	73.3	26.7	76.6	23.4
Ireland	86.7 <sup>2</sup>	13.3 <sup>2</sup>	80.8	19.2
Kyrgyzstan	...	...	70.9 <sup>4</sup>	29.1 <sup>4</sup>
Lithuania	55.5	44.5	48.2	51.8
Netherlands	66.1 <sup>1</sup>	33.9 <sup>1</sup>	58.8 <sup>3</sup>	41.2 <sup>3</sup>
Norway	...	...	73.2	26.8
Republic of Moldova	87.2	12.8	66.8	33.2
Romania	37.3	62.7	31.3	68.7
Slovenia	38.4	61.6	32.3 <sup>3</sup>	67.7 <sup>3</sup>
Spain	69.0	31.0	61.9	38.1
United Kingdom	...	...	84.4	15.6

Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database

### Notes

1 refers to 1993 data      3 refers to 2000 data      5 data refers to Government  
2 refers to 1996 data      4 refers to 2002 data      -controlled area only

## Coming up soon ...

25-28 October

Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

27-29 October

Working Party on Road Transport

27-29 October

Working Party on Rail Transport

27-29 October

FAO/ECE/ILO Seminar on Disaster Preparedness in Forestry (Freiburg, Germany)

27-30 October

Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Budapest, Hungary)

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