



UNECE Weekly

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 154 – 9-13 January 2006

The Editorial team of UNECE Weekly wishes all its readers a Happy New Year

New UNECE Executive Secretary

The Secretary-General has appointed Marek Belka of Poland as the new Executive Secretary of the UNECE.

Mr. Belka served as Prime Minister of Poland between May 2004 and November 2005.

His previous positions include Chairman of the Council for International Coordination for Iraq (responsible for international aid coordination for the reconstruction of Iraq, June-October 2003), and Director of Economic Policy (responsible for the preparation of economic reforms in Iraq, October 2003-March 2004). He served as Poland's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance (February-October 1997 and October 2001-July 2002), and also as Chief Economic Adviser to the President of Poland (1996-1997 and 1998-2001).



Mr. Belka has written several books and articles dealing with socio-economic issues.

Previously, Mr. Belka was an adviser and consultant to the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Ownership Transformations and Central Office of Planning (1990-1996). He was also a Consultant to the World Bank between 1990 and 1996 dealing with projects in Poland, Central and Eastern Europe, Russia, Uzbekistan and China, and again from 1997 to 2001. He also served as Adviser to the Prime Minister of Albania (1997-2001) and Senior Adviser to JP Morgan for Central and Eastern Europe (November 2002-June 2003).

UNECE Reform

Substantial achievements

We find the results of the negotiation process on the UNECE reform fully satisfactory. The reform of the Commission will make it possible to increase the overall efficiency of the Commission and enhance the role of the member States in directing the day-to-day activity of the UNECE.



The substantial achievements like the streamlining of the governance structure, establishment of a new subprogramme on economic cooperation and integration, as well as redeployment of the UNECE staff, will have a positive impact on the Commission. Kazakhstan supports the schedule of the Work Plan implementation with the reform entering into force at the annual session of the Commission.

Ambassador Kairat Abusseitov, Kazakhstan

Unique economic dimension

Following the changes in the world, the break-up of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war, there was a fundamental change in the European architecture. We had to adjust ourselves to this new emerging architecture. We happen to be, with some other countries of the region, outside some of the economic organizations in Europe, such as the European Union and the OECD, while being part of other structures such as the OSCE and Council of Europe.

The problem is that the economic components of these latter structures are not strongly expressed. For us, the reformed UNECE is not only

a UN entity which enables global decisions to be channelled at the regional level, it is also a truly pan-



European institution with an economic dimension which is unique for us. The fact that we have established a programme on Economic Cooperation and Integration inside the UNECE is a matter of great hope for us. We are very satisfied with the outcome of the reform and we are very happy that our delegation was forthcoming in bringing about such fundamental changes.

Ambassador Zohrab Mnatsakanian, Armenia

Focus on specific needs of countries in transition

The reform process of the UNECE launched by the member States within the broader framework of the ongoing reforming process of the United Nations is a matter of crucial importance for the Kyrgyz Republic. Especially encouraging is the creation of a mechanism which, I believe, enables the UNECE to work closer together with countries in transition, to focus on their specific needs and to assist them in overcoming challenges of transformation.



The SPECA Programme is gaining new breath and my country, in close cooperation with the UNECE and other States involved, will do whatever possible to ensure better collaboration and fruitful cooperation to sustain and promote development, stability, security and prosperity for all. I believe that the UNECE empowered with a new vision, a renewed set of priorities and a new governance structure will do its noble job for the benefit of all member States.

Ambassador Muktar Djumaliev, Kyrgyzstan

Closer to member States

We have participated in the negotiation process and followed very closely the developments during that process. We highly appreciate the cooperative spirit of participating member States and the openness of the secretariat, which was of good help to us.

We expect that the actual deep reform will contribute to bringing UNECE closer to member States, and that its activities will be more transparent, result-oriented and demand driven.

We hope the reform will enter into force as soon as possible. Thus, UNECE should confirm its place as a political and economic platform for deeper cooperation and the promotion of best practices and experiences. We are confident that through its new Economic Cooperation and Integration sub-programme, the Commission will get to be more transparent and more present in the transition economies, and its results will get better known in member States' governments and societies. We also highly appreciate the support of all UNECE member States for our sensitive issues that are reflected in the Work Plan.

Ambassador Dumitru Croitor, Republic of Moldova

More demand-driven activities

The UNECE has always been an important body for the countries with economies in transition, both as part of the UN system and an organization active in the transatlantic region. This reform confirmed that the Commission is important for all the member States and that it is a valuable element of the pan-European economic network.



make it truly helpful. At the same time it is crucial to strike the right balance between the interests of all the countries and sub-regions of the UNECE so that all of them are the beneficiaries of the knowledge and expertise of the Commission.

Andrey Pirogov, Russian Federation

Russia was active in the reform process and will do its best to implement successfully the decisions adopted by all the UNECE membership. Our common goal is to make the Commission more efficient, more modern, and its activities more demand driven. The UNECE region faces too many real challenges to spend precious resources, including intellectual ones, on scholastic debates and outdated programmes.

One of the results of the reform is the creation of a sub-programme focused on transition economies. This is a clear sign for us that we should play a leading role in setting the priorities of this sub-programme, elaborating its work plan to

Implementation: we are just beginning major work

The UNECE reform made perhaps a modest but certainly important contribution to the efforts to implement broad and deep changes in the United Nations system as the Organization was marking this year its 60th anniversary. The reform was carried out as a result of a genuine desire of the Commission's member countries to make it more useful and efficient. It was a members-driven process, characterized by concrete and in the UN context short and businesslike negotiations in the final stages, which rendered a very successful outcome. The UNECE now appears to be better structured to address the needs of its members and to better interact and



cooperate with other organizations in the wider European economic area, which have compatible agendas.

However, in a sense we are just beginning major work. UNECE member countries now have to ensure that changes are effectively implemented and to utilize as much as possible the capacities of the Commission to their benefit. This is especially true for the least developed countries of the UNECE area, such as mine – Serbia and Montenegro. In the final analysis, members have to be proactive and act within the UNECE in a manner that will ensure that in the longer run this reform process proves to be as meaningful as it seems now.

Ambassador Dejan Šahović, Serbia and Montenegro

This week ...

10-12 January

Working Party on Rail Transport
(Paris, France)



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