



UNECE Weekly

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 167 – 10-14 April 2006

Retreaded tyres: UNECE regulations mandatory within EU



Consumer confidence in purchasing retreaded tyres will be enhanced by new standards for the retreading process and the final quality of such tyres. The EU Council of Ministers has adopted a Decision by which all new retreaded tyres sold in the EU will now have to align with the requirements of UNECE Regulations 108 and 109. These regulations introduce similar standards of safety and quality control for retreaded tyres as for new tyres.

More such initiatives will follow ...

Commissioner Verheugen, responsible for enterprise and industry policy, said: "This is an elegant way of keeping EU

legislation slim while regulating effectively on safety in the automotive sector. More such initiatives will follow."

Safer and more environmentally friendly

Retreaded tyres offer significant environmental advantages over new tyres. Using less raw materials and less energy and thus generating less tyre waste, retreading is a well known technique which permits tyres to be reused instead of being thrown away. Each year Europe produces many millions of tyres which are used only for a few years and then are thrown away. Retreading is a frequent practice, particularly for some of the heavier vehicle categories like trucks, buses and trailers. More than 50 % of these vehicles currently run with retreaded tyres on the streets of the EU. Setting safety



requirements will also enhance the use of retreaded tyres.

EU avoids making its own technical prescriptions

The Council Decision is the first one to make Regulations of the UNECE mandatory within the EU. Up to now, technical prescriptions of UNECE

Regulations have only been recognised as alternatives to those contained in EU directives. By making these UNECE Regulations compulsory for retreaded car and commercial vehicle tyres respectively, the EU avoids the necessity to develop its own prescriptions for retreaded tyres, while at the same time ensuring that its tyre manufacturers can benefit from a wide market which extends far beyond EU borders. **

Preventing major dam accidents in Central Asia



Central Asia has around 300 major dams and other water control facilities, mostly on rivers separating countries. The dams are aging and are not adequately maintained. Meanwhile, the number of people living downstream

from dams is growing. For example, the Fergana valley, which is divided among Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, has 9 million inhabitants. If a dam upstream from this valley were to break, the consequences could be disastrous.

To prevent major dam accidents in Central Asia, a joint UNECE/ESCAP (UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) project to help Central Asian countries* work together to improve dam safety will be launched at a meeting in Almaty (Kazakhstan) on 10-11 April.

Forests – critical for energy supply this winter?

Winter 2005/2006 has been harsh in most of Europe, and the Central European States and countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) have suffered more than most. Some have seen threats to supplies of conventional energy like gas and petrol and many people, especially in remote and rural parts of Europe, are therefore using wood from local sources to heat their homes.



The UNECE and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have made a rapid assessment in cooperation with the Heads of Forestry and the related Ministries to see if people have really made use of wood energy, and whether this is harming forests. Wood when properly managed, as is the case in most of the UNECE region, is a sustainable and renewable source of energy and raw material.





Through regulatory networks....

The first goal of the project is to help countries establish dam safety regulatory networks that are in harmony with the networks of neighbouring countries, and to ensure that relevant principles are reflected in national legislation. While Uzbekistan has an adequate legal framework in this regard, frameworks in the other countries are not as well developed. Having harmonized institutional and legal networks makes it easier to share information about the status of specific dams.

... and cooperation between countries

The project's second goal is to promote cooperation between countries so that information can be shared quickly about the risk of accidents, and so that countries

can effectively warn and help neighbouring countries in case of an actual accident. In this way if a dam is in serious risk of collapsing, downstream regions are given a chance to react in time.

The April meeting, arranged in collaboration with Kazakhstan's branch of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, will focus on national legislation and the institutional structure. A second meeting in autumn 2006 will focus on subregional cooperation. *

For more information visit <http://www.unece.org/env/water/damsafety.htm> or contact Bo Libert (bo.libert@unece.org) or Koji Iwakami (iwakami.unescap@un.org)

* The Central Asian subregion includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.



More wood as energy source

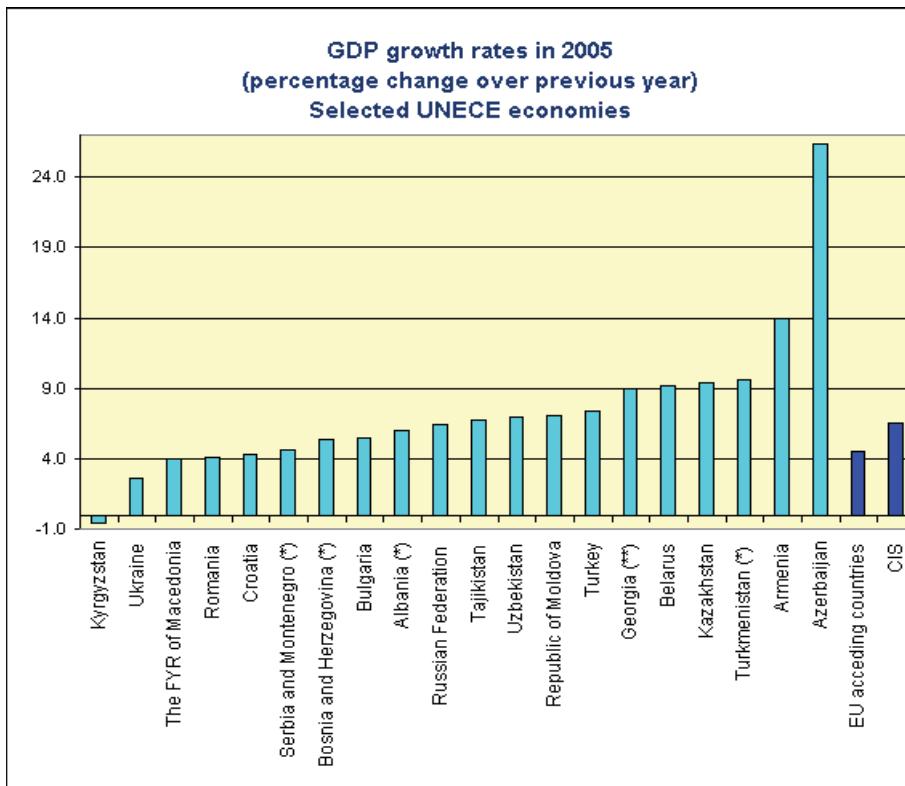
The assessment confirms that wood energy use has increased more than any other fuel source during this winter in the region. Fourteen out of the 20 countries evaluated reported an increased use of wood energy, of which 9 considered the increase to be "significant". In addition, 17 countries confirmed that wood is a significant source of energy, especially in rural areas. Thanks to local distribution systems already in place, wood could easily be provided to the consumer. Only one of the countries observed slightly higher illegal exploitation activities than in other years.

Despite the changes that have been seen this winter, only five countries have adopted measures to improve or regulate wood energy supply and use. **

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Facts and figures

Most of the CIS countries continue to show strong economic growth



(*) IMF projected % change

(**) Country estimate 8.5%-9.5%

In 2005, most of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) continued to demonstrate strong growth with average economic expansion of +6.5%. The countries' GDP growth rates varied from -0.6% for Kyrgyzstan up to +26.4% reported by Azerbaijan. The 2005 GDP rates for Ukraine (+2.6) and Kyrgyzstan (-0.6) differed considerably from the previous year's performance (+12.1 and +7.1 respectively).

During 2005 the EU candidate countries: Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey grew by more than +4.0%. In the same period the EU acceding countries: Bulgaria and Romania achieved an average growth of +4.5%.

Coming up ...

10-11 April

Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents

Website: <http://www.unece.org/env/teia/water.htm>

10-11 April

Steering Committee for the Transport, Environment and Health Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) (WHO Headquarters, Geneva)

Website: <http://www.thepep.org>

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