



# UNECE Weekly

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 171 – 8-12 May 2006

## **GUNNAR MYRDAL LECTURE to be given by ALBERTO ALESINA**

**“Welfare policies in the UNECE region: Why so different?”**

**«Les politiques de protection sociale dans les pays de la CEE-ONU: pourquoi tant de différences?»**

### **Date and venue:**

Friday, 12 May at 3 p.m. in room XVIII of the Palais des Nations  
Entrance: Pregny Gate, Door 40

For security reasons, please arrive at Pregny Gate by 2.30 p.m. at the latest. Those without a valid badge allowing entry into the Palais des Nations will need to register in advance. A registration form can be obtained by calling +41 (0)22 917 5836 / 917 4444, or e-mailing [info.ece@unece.org](mailto:info.ece@unece.org) or online at <http://www.unece.org>.

### **Date et lieu:**

Vendredi, 12 mai à 15 heures en salle XVIII du Palais des Nations  
Entrée: Portail de Pregny, Porte 40

Pour des raisons de sécurité, il est recommandé de se présenter au Portail de Pregny au plus tard à 14 h 30. Les personnes qui ne possèdent pas de badge permettant d'accéder au Palais des Nations sont priées de s'inscrire à l'avance. Un formulaire d'inscription peut être obtenu en téléphonant au +41 (0)22 917 5836 / 917 4444, par e-mail à [info.ece@unece.org](mailto:info.ece@unece.org) ou en ligne <http://www.unece.org>.

**Professor Alberto Alesina**, born in Italy in 1957, is the Nathaniel Ropes Professor of Political Economy at Harvard University. Currently he is Chairman of the Department of Economics. He obtained his PhD from Harvard in 1986. He is also a member of the National Bureau of Economic Research and the Centre for Economic Policy Research.



Professor Alesina is a leader in the field of Political Economy and has published extensively in all major academic journals in economics. He has published several books and edited many more. His two most recent books are *The Size of Nations*, published by MIT Press, and *Fighting Poverty in the*

*US and Europe: A World of Difference*, published by Oxford University Press. The MIT Press will publish his book, *The Future of Europe: Reform or Decline* later this year. He has been a Co-editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* for eight years and Associate Editor of many academic journals. He has published columns in many leading newspapers around the world. In 1990 The Economist magazine named him one of the eight best economists under the age of forty in the world.

Professor Alesina's work has covered a variety of topics: political business cycles, the political economy of fiscal policy and budget deficits,

the process of European integration, stabilization policies in high inflation countries, the determination of the size of countries, currency unions, the political economic determinants of redistributive policies, differences in the welfare state in the US and Europe and, more generally, differences in the economic system in the US and Europe, the effect of alternative electoral systems on economic policies, and the determination of the choice of different electoral systems. His scholarly work has been widely cited and influential.

For more information contact UNECE Information Service ([info.ece@unece.org](mailto:info.ece@unece.org)) or visit [http://www.unece.org/press/Myrdal\\_lectures/Myrdal\\_2006.htm](http://www.unece.org/press/Myrdal_lectures/Myrdal_2006.htm).

See also UNECE Weekly No.170

## **Selected book review:**

***The Future of Europe: Reform or Decline***, by Alberto Alesina and Francesco Giavazzi, MIT Press, September 2006

Unless Europe takes action soon, its further economic and political decline is almost inevitable, economists Alberto Alesina and Francesco Giavazzi write in this provocative book. Without comprehensive reform, continental Western Europe's overprotected, overregulated economies will continue to slow--and



its political influence will become negligible. This doesn't mean that European countries that are now prosperous will become poor; their standard of living will remain comfortable. But they might become largely irrelevant on the world scene. In *The Future of Europe*, Alesina and Giavazzi (themselves Europeans) outline the steps that Europe must take to prevent its economic and political eclipse.

## Lebanon adheres to UNECE Convention

On 22 March 2006, Lebanon deposited with the UN Secretary-General an instrument of accession to the UNECE Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR). This brings to 47 the total number of States Parties to the Convention. On the same date, Lebanon also deposited an instrument of accession to the Protocol to the CMR Convention, thus bringing the total number of States Parties to this Protocol to 32.

In accordance with their respective provisions, both legal instruments will enter into force for Lebanon on 20 June 2006.

The CMR Convention fixes the conditions for the contract for the carriage of goods



by road between the forwarder and the carrier. In particular, it provides for the use of the consignment note and establishes the conditions for liability, for example in the case of loss of the goods or delays.

Within the framework of the UNECE Working Party on Road Transport, Governments are currently negotiating an additional Protocol to the CMR which would allow the use of electronic

consignment notes in international road transport.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the CMR, which was signed in Geneva on 19 May 1956 and entered into force on 2 July 1961. An international conference is being organized in Deauville, France, on 18 and 19 May 2006 to mark the anniversary.

For more information contact José Capel Ferrer ([jose.capel.ferrer@unece.org](mailto:jose.capel.ferrer@unece.org)).

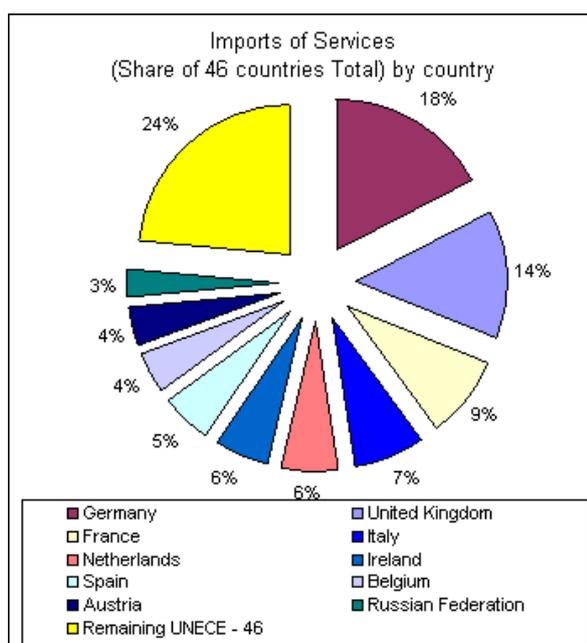
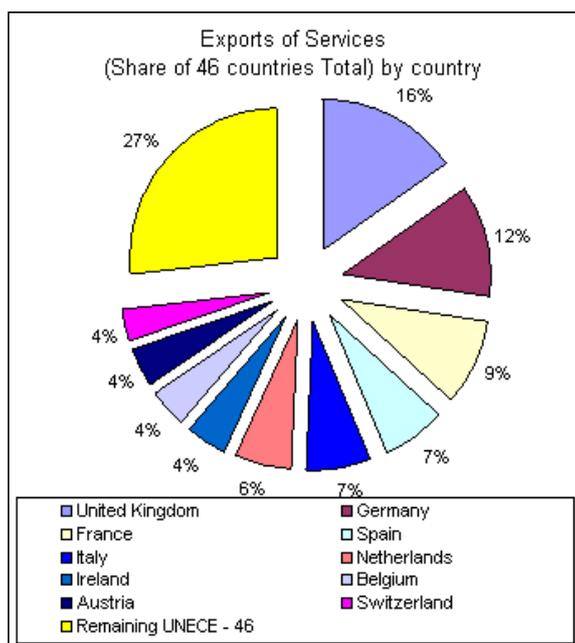
### Coming up ...

8-12 May  
Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

10-12 May  
Joint ECE/ILO Meeting on Consumer Price Indices

## Facts and figures

Imports and exports of services in 46 UNECE countries, 2004.



Source: UNECE Statistical Database

Exports and imports to other countries in the region are included.

The 46 UNECE countries included in the data are: Albania (data for 2003), Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

In 2004 the total value of services exported by the selected 46 countries in the Europe and CIS region was equal to US \$1,205,892 million, while the total value of services imported was equal to US \$1,101,846. The United Kingdom, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Ireland, Belgium, Austria and Switzerland were the most significant exporters of services in the region. Together they accounted for 73% of all the services exported. Germany, United Kingdom, France, Italy, Netherlands, Ireland, Spain, Belgium, Austria and Russian Federation were the most significant importers of services in the region and together they accounted for 76% of all the services imported.

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