



UNECE Weekly

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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Sustainable Energy Policies: the Key to Energy Security

The 15th session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy will take place on 28-30 November (Palais des Nations, Conference Room XII, starting at 10 a.m.)

Keynote Speakers will be

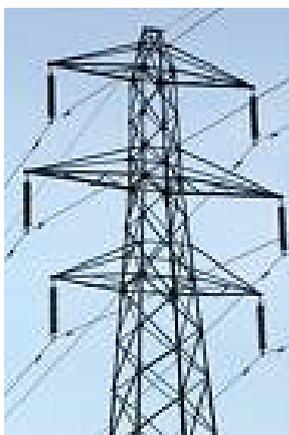
Marek Belka, UNECE Executive Secretary,
Claude Mandil, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency,
Andrei Reus, Deputy Minister for Industry and Energy of the Russian Federation,
Stanislav Tsygankov, Head of the Foreign Relations Department of JSC "Gazprom"

Thematic sessions will focus on key areas of the UNECE sustainable energy work programme, including

- ✦ Emerging energy security risks and risk mitigation
- ✦ Investment and regulation in the electric power sector
- ✦ Energy efficiency, import dependence and climate change
- ✦ Maximizing energy reserves and resources
- ✦ Mitigating environmental and social consequences of coal use: coal mine methane capture and use, clean coal technologies and carbon capture and storage
- ✦ Natural gas: transition fuel to cleaner energy consumption patterns

UNECE works for energy efficiency

Energy has been one of the cornerstones of UNECE since it was first established in 1947. Some of the first ECE energy activities were part of post-war reconstruction – pumping water out of flooded coalmines. Thereafter, East-West energy cooperation expanded to include work on coal, electric power and natural gas. Energy security arose as a priority during the 1970s "energy crisis" as east-west energy trade and cooperation allowed western consuming countries to diversify their sources of oil and natural gas supplies away from the Middle East. In the 1980s and particularly in the 1990s, energy-related environmental issues were



added to the menu of subjects addressed by the UNECE energy programme.

For more than fifteen years, the Energy Efficiency 21 Project (EE21) has been devoted to achieving sustainable development in the energy sector at a regional level.

The main effort is to assist Southeast European and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) countries to enhance their energy efficiency, diminish fuel poverty arising from economic transition and meet international environmental



treaty obligations under the

Waters are increasingly polluted

Pollution is an increasingly serious problem for rivers and lakes in the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) region, according to a newly released preliminary assessment of the status of transboundary rivers and lakes in the region, presented at the fourth Meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, (Bonn, 20-22 November).

Most of the lakes assessed are affected by eutrophication, a condition that kills animal life in water bodies. (When water

In the EECCA region more than 80 per cent of the rivers and 75 per cent of the lakes assessed are polluted, some heavily.

is too rich in nutrients, it supports a very dense plant population. When the plants rot, their decomposition kills fish and other animal life by depriving them of oxygen.) Eutrophication is increasing throughout the region except in areas where wastewater treatment has been introduced.

Some lakes are shrinking because of excessive water use linked to urbanization. Lake Balqash, shared by China and Kazakhstan, is rapidly decreasing in volume. Only stringent joint measures by China and Kazakhstan can prevent



Lake Balqash from sharing the fate of the Aral Sea, which has been drying out since the 1950s. Lake Jandari, shared by Azerbaijan





cont.

UNFCCC and the UNECE. EE21 focuses on developing the skills of private and public sector experts at the local level for energy efficiency and renewable energy investments.

It promotes the formation of an energy efficiency market in these countries so that cost-effective investments can provide a self-financing method of reducing global

greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. It will complement other initiatives and assist participating countries to address the financial, technical and policy barriers to energy efficiency and renewable energy investments. ✱

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Taken from What the UNECE Does For You No. 6



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and Georgia, also suffers from decreasing water levels, which in turn concentrate pollution (carried mainly by the lake's tributaries).

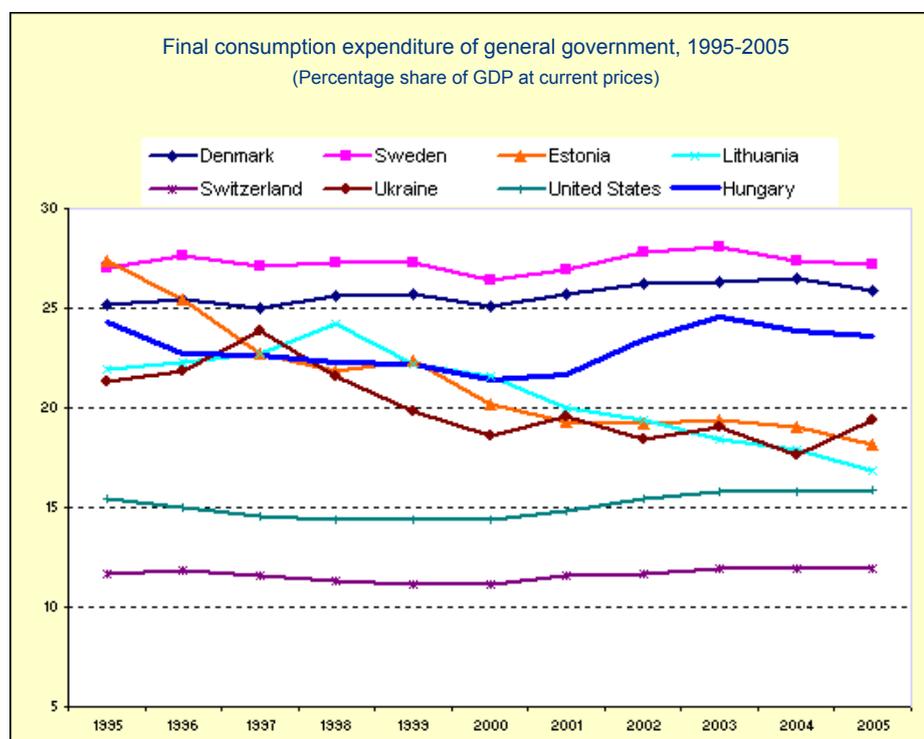
Over-abstraction of water, increased urbanization and poor water management in the basins of transboundary rivers and lakes are major causes of poor water conditions and excessive pollution. The accelerated melting of glaciers (owing to rising temperatures and contamination of rainwater) is changing the rivers' hydrological and ecological regimes. In most EECCA countries, owing to a lack of appropriate legislation and institutional capacity, there are no comprehensive basin-wide water management or water monitoring programmes. Increased cooperation and harmonization of legislation and monitoring and assessment practices, along with the establishment of transboundary commissions, could improve water conditions in the region.

A complete assessment of the status of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters in the UNECE region will be presented at the sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in Belgrade in October 2007. ✱

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Facts and figures

More than a quarter of GDP is redistributed through government final consumption in two Scandinavian countries



Source: UNECE Statistical Database.

Note: General government final consumption reflects current expenditure incurred by central and local government on goods and services to the households.

The share of GDP redistributed via government final consumption varies noticeably across the UNECE countries. Moreover, its dynamics over the last decade differs significantly between the developed market economies and countries that were transforming their economies since the early 1990s. The high-income developed market economies are found on both the lowest and highest sides of the scale (Switzerland and the United States versus Denmark and Sweden), with a virtually constant share of government consumption over the years, reflecting long-established degrees of government involvement.

On the other hand, the government consumption shares in many UNECE emerging market economies fall in between those extremes and vary somewhat less amongst them, but they seem to be much more prone to fluctuations over time. In fact, in our sample these countries saw the share of government consumption fall from 22-27% of GDP in the mid-1990s to below 20% by the mid-2000s, with the notable exception of Hungary, where an important rebound of the government consumption share was observed after 2001.

Coming up ...

27-29 November

Ad Hoc Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

28-30 November

Committee on Sustainable Energy

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