



**United Nations**

# UNECE Weekly

**Economic Commission for Europe**

**Issue N° 237 – 17-21 September 2007**

## **Addressing the problem of informal settlements in the UNECE region**

Population increase and migration to urban areas have given rise to numerous unplanned or informal urban developments in the UNECE region, particularly in the countries of Southern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. Major reasons for this are the lack of spatial planning, unrealistic zoning regulations, the lack of affordable housing for marginalized population groups, inconsistent and bureaucratic systems of land development, and the practice of illegal construction on agricultural or forest land. Illegal construction is often of poor construction quality and cannot be transferred or mortgaged, thus tying up a considerable amount of capital.



*Informal settlement in Albania*

The Committee on Housing and Land Management will hold an in-depth discussion on informal settlements at its 68th session (17–18 September) following a workshop held earlier this year in Athens and based on a discussion paper prepared by the secretariat.

The Committee will discuss the instrument of legalization – including conditions and the payment of penalties – as a possible solution, bearing in mind that legalization of existing informal structures raises certain concerns, as land-use regulations may be undermined and new unplanned developments might subsequently be encouraged.

Buildings constructed illegally to overcome housing shortages should be differentiated from those constructed for commercial purposes. If the latter do not comply with the standards, they should be demolished.

Further approaches to tackling existing informal



## **Extending UNECE's air pollution monitoring and modelling**

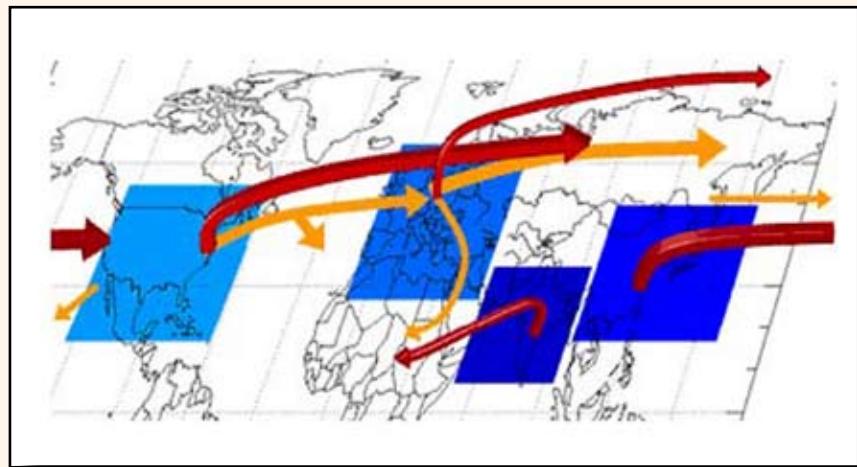
The air pollution monitoring network under the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution continues to expand, delegates to the Convention's Steering Body to EMEP\* heard last week. New monitoring sites in Kazakhstan, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia had been set up with help from EMEP's Chemical Coordinating Centre, and funding from UNDP and Norwegian projects.

The expanded network will provide important data to underpin the atmospheric models, which are also planned to cover a greater geographical area in the future. The Steering Body agreed to plans to extend the current European EMEP model to include all five Central Asian States from 2008, while global models will be developed as a next step.

Delegates heard more about the global movement of air pollutants from EMEP's Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution. The Task Force's Interim Report, based on written submissions by some 50 experts, describes the global observations, models and experiments showing that air pollutants can move between continents. First sets of experiments analysing movement between continents, have demonstrated the importance of tackling pollution worldwide to control levels of ground-level ozone and particulate matter.



\* Cooperative Programme for the Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe



*Models show pollutants can move around the globe*

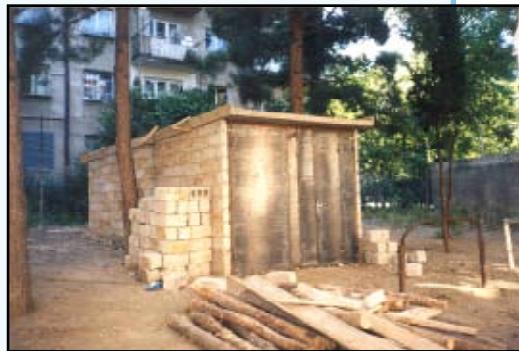


continued

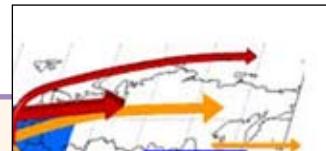
sound land-use planning and the registration of property rights, as well as clear institutional responsibilities regarding land policies on the part of central, regional and local governments.

Strong emphasis will be put on integrated policy responses which combine appropriate housing, spatial planning and land administration policies. It is foreseen that the outcome of the in-depth discussion will be the basis for a study on informal settlements, to be carried out jointly by the Committee and the Working Party on Land Administration.

For more information visit <http://www.unece.org/hlm/sessions/68thsession.htm>.



*Private garage, illegally constructed in the public yard of a multi-family estate in Georgia*



continued

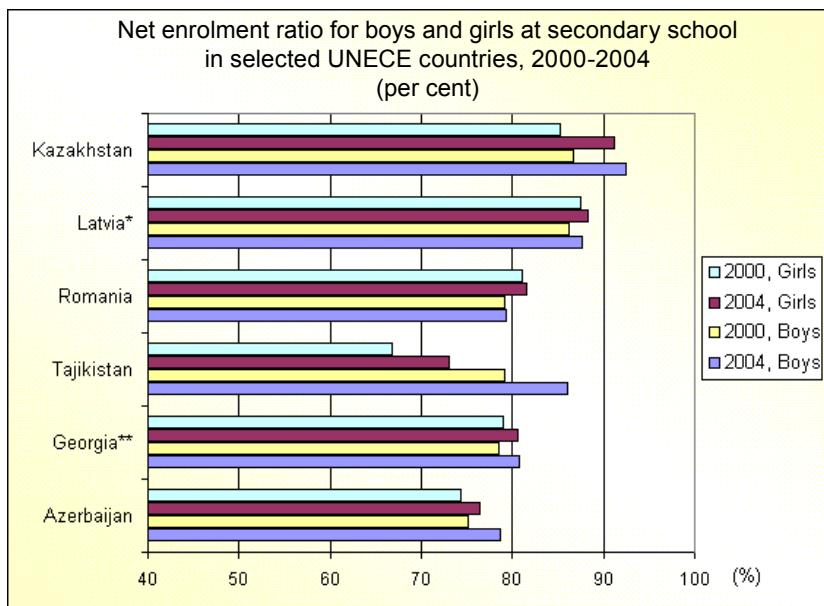
Calculations show that the fall in particle concentrations in one continent due to it cutting its own emissions by 20%, is up to 18% more if other continents also cut their emissions by 20%. For ozone, cuts in pollution emissions outside a continent can have an even greater effect within.

The global interests of the Convention were further emphasized by the attendance of representatives from the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and from the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asian (EANET). They described air pollution monitoring activities in Asia that aimed at international agreements similar to those already existing under the UNECE Convention. They stressed the importance of continued collaboration between the regions on the technical aspects of air pollution.

For further information visit: [http://www.unece.org/env/emep/emep31\\_docs.htm](http://www.unece.org/env/emep/emep31_docs.htm) and [www.htap.org](http://www.htap.org).

## Facts and Figures

### Progress in enrolment in secondary schools in selected UNECE countries



Secondary education provides young people with the opportunity to acquire aptitudes and skills which are needed in the labour market and to support further self-development. The expansion of secondary education is also essential for economic growth, since modern open economies increasingly rely on a well-educated and highly-skilled population.

According to UNESCO, at the global level about 59% of all children of secondary school age, boys as well as girls, were enrolled in secondary school in the early 2000s. The secondary school net enrolment ratio (NER), which refers to the proportion of youth of relevant age effectively enrolled in the secondary education, was highest among West European countries (above 90%), and was also relatively high in the East European and CIS region (above 80%).

The chart depicts the progress since 2000 in the secondary school NER in six selected countries of that region. For both boys and girls the rise in secondary school enrolment was highest in Tajikistan – from an average of 73% in 2000 to 80% in 2004. However, gender disparity in Tajikistan remains an important issue. Gender discrepancies, although smaller, persist in other countries as well.

Source: UNECE Gender Statistical Database, compiled from official (national and international) sources ([www.unece.org/stats/data](http://www.unece.org/stats/data)).

\* Data refer to 2002 instead of 2004.

\*\* Data refer to 2001 and 2003 instead of 2000 and 2004.