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New UNECE Executive Secretary

The United Nations Secretary-General has appointed Ján Kubiš of Slovakia as the new Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. Mr. Kubiš, who will replace Marek Belka of Poland, will assume his new functions in the middle of January 2009.

The Secretary-General is grateful to Mr. Belka, whose leadership and insight have been highly effective and who has played a key role in steering UNECE towards success and turning it into a highly useful mechanism.

Mr. Kubiš has outstanding qualifications and numerous accomplishments in his own country and internationally, in the area of diplomacy, foreign security policy, as well as international economic relations. Mr. Kubiš has served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia since 2006, as Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe from 2007 to 2008, and as Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) from 1999 to 2005.



Among his previous functions, Mr. Kubiš was the European Union's Special Representative for Central Asia with the office in Brussels from 2005 to 2006. In 2000, he was the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of OSCE for Central Asia, Director of OSCE's Conflict Prevention Centre, from 1994 to 1998, and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Tajikistan and Head of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan, from 1998 to 1999.

A graduate of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Mr. Kubiš worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the former Czechoslovakia from 1976 to 1992. ■

For more information contact the UNECE Information Service (info.ece@unece.org).

United Nations work on classification and labelling of chemicals adopted by EU Member States

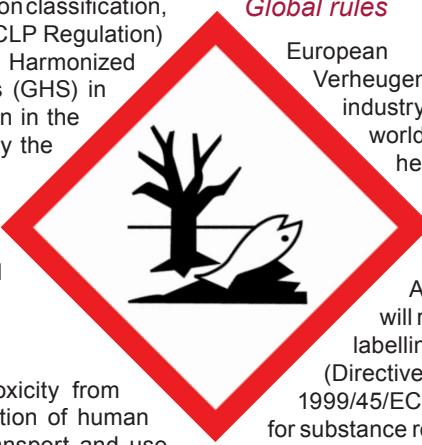
The European Union has just adopted a new Regulation on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures (CLP Regulation) which will implement the United Nations Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) in EU Member States. Publication of the new Regulation in the Official Journal of the European Union is expected by the end of December.

The GHS deals with the classification of chemicals by types of hazard and provides harmonized elements that communicate these hazards, including labels and safety data sheets.

Protecting health and environment

By making information on physical hazards and toxicity from chemicals available, this system ensures the protection of human health and the environment during the handling, transport and use of these chemicals. The GHS is also an important factor in trade facilitation in that it provides a basis for harmonization of rules and regulations on chemicals at national, regional and worldwide levels.

By adopting the new regulation, the EU meets the implementation target date of 2008 recommended by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, thus following New Zealand and Mauritius which implemented the GHS in 2001 and 2004 respectively. A number of other countries, such as China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, have also started amending their national legislation or standards and are likely to implement the GHS soon.



Global rules

European Commission Vice-President Günter Verheugen, Commissioner for Enterprise and industry, said in a press release: "In a global world, we need global rules. This agreement helps to remove trade barriers and enterprises will save costs. This kind of regulation at United Nations level will be a great help to European industry."

After a transitional period, the regulation will replace the current rules on classification, labelling and packaging of substances (Directive 67/548/EEC) and mixtures (Directive 1999/45/EC). After its entry into force, the deadline for substance reclassification according to the new rules will be 1 December 2010 and for mixtures 1 June 2015.

The new regulation will also have a direct impact on labelling. The current EU pictograms (black symbol on an orange background) will be replaced by the GHS pictograms (black symbol on a white background inside a red frame) not only for chemicals used at the workplace but also for consumer products such as detergents or house cleaning products.

The adoption of the GHS at EU level will also have an impact in other EU "downstream" legislation. As part of the agreement reached by





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the European Parliament and the European Council on the adoption of the CLP Regulation, a number of Directives and Regulations (see list below) will be amended. Other EU pieces of legislation, such as the so-called Seveso II Directive on the control of major-accident hazards (Council Directive 96/82/EC), may follow in the future.

UNECE provides the secretariat to the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals which manages the work on GHS. The Sub-Committee is a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. ■

More information on the status of implementation of the GHS worldwide and on the work of the GHS Sub-Committee is available on the UNECE website: http://www.unece.org/trans/danger/publi/ghs/implementation_e.html or contact Rosa Garcia Couto (infotransport@unece.org).

In the transport sector, the GHS is already implemented through the following international legal instruments: European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR); European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (ADN); Regulations concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail (RID); International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code (IMDG Code); and Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air (ICAO TI), all applicable in EU countries not only for international transport but also for domestic traffic through Directive 2008/68/EC on the inland transport of dangerous goods. ■

Accessions to UNECE transport legal instruments

European Agreement Supplementing the Convention on Road Signs and Signals entered into force for the Netherlands on 8 November 2008. Contracting Parties: 30.

Jordan acceded to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR) and to the Protocol to the CMR (13 November 2008). Total number of Contracting Parties: 55 and 40 respectively. Conventions will enter into force for Jordan on 11 February 2009.

Jordan also acceded to the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods on 13 November 2008. Convention will enter into force for Jordan on 13 February 2009.

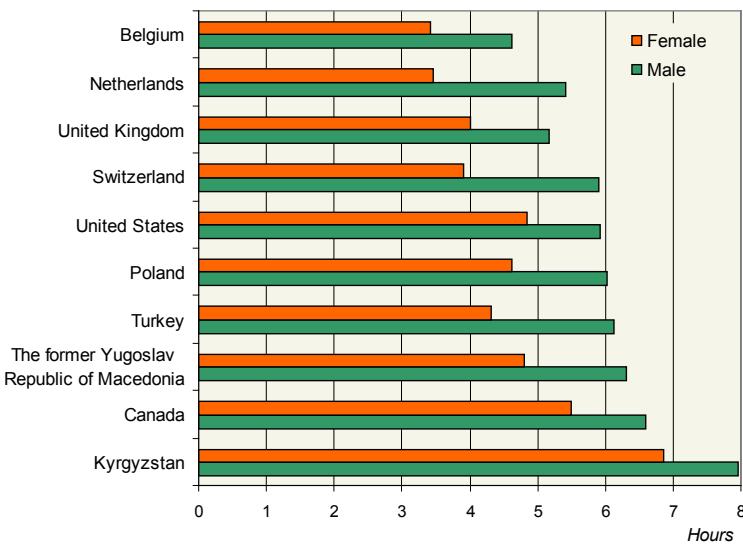
Romania acceded to the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (ADN) (3 December 2008). Total number of Contracting Parties: 10. Agreement will enter into force for Romania on 2 January 2009.

The Republic of Moldova acceded to the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 ("Harmonization Convention") (5 December 2008). Total number of Contracting Parties: 54. Convention will enter into force for the Republic of Moldova on 3 March 2009. ■

For a full list of ratifications to UNECE transport conventions, as well as the number of contracting parties, visit <http://www.unece.org/trans/conventn/cparties.html>.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Average daily time spent by men and women in gainful work, 2003-2006



Daily time spent in gainful work by women is notably shorter than by men

The average time people spend daily in gainful work varies noticeably among UNECE countries, but across the region there seems to be a common tendency for men to spend more time in gainful work than women do.

According to the findings, based on a series of time-use surveys conducted between 2003 and 2006 in several UNECE countries, the median of gainfully worked time per economically active person in these countries is 5 hours 25 minutes in any day of the week, including holidays. The longest hours in gainful work (7 hours 25 minutes on average) are spent in Kyrgyzstan, while the shortest hours worked are reported in Belgium (4 hours 4 minutes) followed by the Netherlands (4 hours 33 minutes) and the United Kingdom (4 hours 38 minutes). Although women generally spend less time than men in gainful work, the gap in hours worked between the two sexes varies markedly as well: from 1 hour 5 minutes in the United States to 2 hours in Switzerland. These differences reflect among other factors the flexibility of labour markets and the incidence of part-time work. ■

Source: UNECE Gender statistics database (<http://www.unece.org/stats/data>).

Notes: (i) Gainful work: includes time spent on main and second jobs (including informal employment) and related activities, breaks and travel during working hours, and on job seeking; (ii) the sample refers to economically active persons only and does not include inactive persons.