



United Nations

# UNECE Weekly

Economic Commission for Europe

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## Executive Secretary attends ECO Council of Ministers ...

On 9 March, Executive Secretary Ján Kubiš attended the Council of Ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in Tehran. He delivered an address which highlighted the work of UNECE, especially in the areas of transport, energy and trade, three subjects of particular interest to the ECO member states, seven\* of which are also members of UNECE.

ECO is interested in further developing its concrete cooperation with UNECE and subsequent discussions with the ECO Secretary-General focused on this subject. The Executive Secretary also met with the representatives of the ECO member states.

\* Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan



*The Executive Secretary with the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan, Marat Tazhin*

## ... and Astana Economic Forum



On 11 March the Executive Secretary spoke at the Second Astana Economic Forum. The Forum, organized by the Ministry of Economy and Budget Planning of Kazakhstan, and opened by the President Mr Nursultan Nazarbayev, included interventions by two Nobel Prize laureates in economics, the former President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Secretary-General of the Eurasian Economic Community, the President of the Islamic Development Bank, and a Senior Aide to the President of the Russian Federation.

While in Astana, the Executive Secretary had bilateral meetings with the President of Kazakhstan, the Foreign Minister, the Minister of Economy and Budget Planning, the Vice-Minister of Energy, the Vice-Minister of Trade and Industry, the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Environment, and the Vice-Minister of Labour and Social Protection. These meetings centred around discussions on the work of UNECE and its concrete cooperation with Kazakhstan. \*

## Education for sustainable development

### Developments in the UNECE region

In terms of facing the challenges of the current global crisis and finding approaches to sustainable development, education is a prerequisite for empowering society to make the transition to a sustainable future. Education for sustainable development (ESD) is crucial for good governance, informed public decision-making and the promotion of democracy.

UNECE countries took an important step in 2005 by adopting the UNECE Strategy for ESD, thereby placing the topic high on the international political agenda. The Strategy encourages UNECE member States to integrate ESD into their formal, non-formal and informal education.

The Strategy is the regional implementation pillar of the United Nations Decade of ESD (2005-2014) and is being carried out by UNECE in close cooperation with UNESCO. It is currently in its second phase of implementation (2008-2010), which has two key priorities: (a) developing and implementing national action plans for ESD and (b) building competences in ESD. The governing body for the regional ESD process is the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD, with representatives of both the environment and education sectors.



*Not an official record - For information only*

## Education for sustainable development (cont.)



Progress has been made in coordinating ESD activities at the national level and in developing materials and tools to support teachers' work in ESD. However, more work is needed to put these policies and tools into practice. A persistent bottleneck to furthering ESD is the lack of competences in the area, as well as diverging views on what these competencies should entail. To address this challenging issue, this autumn an expert group will start to prepare general recommendations for policymakers and a

range of core competences in ESD for educators.

ESD will be promoted at two upcoming events, the UNESCO World Conference on ESD (Bonn, Germany, 31 March–2 April 2009) and the fourth Regional Implementation Meeting on Sustainable Development (Geneva, date to be decided). The UNECE region's progress in ESD will be shared at the Bonn Conference as a valuable regional good practice.

In view of the next cycle of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (2010-2011) and the increasing emergency of dealing with the issue of sustainable consumption and production (SCP), the Steering Committee on ESD discussed at its meeting in February 2009 how this complex and challenging issue should be addressed through ESD. While more efforts are needed to integrate SCP into ESD, the draft Recommendations and Guidelines on education for sustainable consumption developed under the Marrakech process are a useful tool to facilitate countries' activities in this regard.

Good practices serve as a key tool in promoting ESD, and teachers and researchers are discovering a wealth of innovative approaches at the ground level. UNESCO and UNECE jointly published a major collection of good practices in 2007, and planned new collections will focus on addressing ESD through sustainable transportation and SCP in the light of climate change.



The use of indigenous, traditional and local knowledge will be a valuable component of these collections, which can serve important inputs to related international events. With the considerable increase in ESD activities, communication and coordination among partners is a further prerequisite. Annual meetings bringing together the main ESD partners in the region not only enable the sharing and coordination of ongoing and planned ESD-related activities. They also offer a way to promote synergies and to avoid overlap and duplication. \*

For more information see <http://www.unece.org/env/esd/welcome.htm> or contact Angela Sochirca ([esd@unece.org](mailto:esd@unece.org)).

## OFF THE PRESS



Participants in UNECE's capacity-building activities in Eastern Europe noted with surprise that there were at least four ways to translate "trade facilitation" into Russian, and some of the aid agencies use ad hoc translations very different from the established United Nations term in the Russian language.

Consequently, the representatives of the countries requested the UNECE secretariat to prepare an English-Russian Glossary of trade facilitation terms, with the objective of clarifying the use of Russian terms related to trade facilitation.

After almost two years of gathering and checking the use of various terms, led by the Regional Adviser of the UNECE Trade Division, the Glossary has been finalized. This is a publication which is expected to become a standard reference work on trade facilitation in the countries where Russian is a key working language. \*

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