



United Nations

UNECE Weekly

Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 322 — 8-12 June 2009

Executive Secretary at St. Petersburg Economic International Forum

UNECE Executive Secretary Ján Kubiš was one of the many high-level officials from the public and private sector who participated in the St. Petersburg Economic International Forum, held on 4-6 June in the former Russian capital.

On 5 June he participated in an interactive panel discussion on *"The power of innovation, when will tomorrow start?"*.

In his comments he stressed that an innovation policy must focus not only on technology but also on human capital. He also emphasized that *"The current crisis should be seized as a key opportunity to promote a knowledge-based innovative economy – alongside environmentally-friendly policies – as the basis of future growth. UNECE can contribute to this goal with its work, promoting innovative development through international cooperation (bringing together representatives of governments, academic institutions, the business community and NGOs), using cross-border pooling of efforts in joint projects, exchange of best practices or definition of standards that facilitate economic interaction and forward-looking strategic decisions by businesses."*

On 6-7 June, Ján Kubiš participated in the World Grain Forum, also held in St Petersburg. During a panel discussion on the financial crisis and global food aid, he spoke about the rising poverty and hunger affecting a number of countries the world over, including those with economies in transition. Speaking about food aid, he stressed that in addition to providing food aid, it is necessary to help local farmers get the means to develop their agriculture production.

Turning to UNECE, he highlighted the three-fold contribution that UNECE makes to food security in the region and beyond trade facilitation procedures, which shorten delays, a particularly crucial issue for perishable produce; agricultural quality standards, which contribute to securing higher yields and export opportunities, and sustainable water management, particularly in Central Asia, which is key to guaranteeing the water needs



of the agricultural sectors in the long term.

On the occasion of these two forums, the Executive Secretary had meetings with several cabinet members of the Russian Federation, including Deputy Prime Minister Zhukov, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Kudrin, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Yakovenko, Minister of Agriculture Skrynnik, as well as with cabinet members from CIS countries, and high-level officials from businesses, academia, international and financial institutions. ■

Regional commissions cooperate on energy efficiency

Representatives from the five United Nations regional commissions* met in Geneva on 4 June for the first meeting of the Global Energy Efficiency 21 (GEE21) project.

The aim of the project, officially launched in Poznań, Poland in December 2008, is to share the acquired expertise of UNECE's Energy Efficiency 21 Project (EE21) which promotes the formation of an energy efficiency market in Eastern Europe so that cost-effective investments can provide a self-financing method of reducing global greenhouse gas emissions.

UNECE efforts in the framework of EE21 notably saw the creation in 2007 of a €354 million mezzanine fund, more than 70% of which has been invested to finance energy efficiency and renewable energy investment projects in the European Union. A new investment fund is to be created to finance projects aimed at reducing CO₂ emissions and generating carbon credits or tradable certificates in 12 countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe.

Energy efficiency is widely regarded as the only self-financing method to fight climate change and accounts for 54% of the abatement effort projected by 2030 by the International Energy Agency in its "BLUE Scenario" of the "Energy Technology

Perspective 2008". However, little progress has hitherto been achieved. GEE21 aims at fostering energy efficiency globally, promoting technology transfer and acquisition, through a more systematic exchange of experience on capacity building, policy reforms and investment project financing in the various regions of the world through the respective regional commissions.

In the months to come, the work of the regional commissions under GEE21 will concentrate on assessing how they may effectively respond to the transfer, adoption and local adaptation of activities such as those carried out by UNECE in energy efficiency investments. ■

For more information contact Gianluca Sambucini (info.energy@unece.org).



Not an official record - For information only

Wikis, blogs and open-source in statistical information systems

In his summary of the Joint UNECE /Eurostat/OECD Meeting on Management of Statistical Information Systems, held in Oslo on 18-20 May, the Chairman noted that the key word from the meeting was “open”. This applies not only to open-source and standards but also to international cooperation in the field of statistical IT management.

The meeting brought together senior IT managers to discuss the following topics:

- **Sharing statistical software:** open-source software is gaining in acceptance and becoming more widespread, facilitated by new communication tools such as wikis and blogs, and a philosophy of developing software for re-use rather than just for one specific application. The meeting supported the creation of a Sharing Advisory Board, to provide strategic direction in this area.
- **e-Governance:** In the pursuit of good e-governance, high quality software and clear standards are essential for the success of all statistical work. The “Generic Statistical Business Process Model” developed by UNECE and the Steering Group on Statistical Metadata, will help to standardize terminology and facilitate cooperation and benchmarking between statistical organizations. Concerns were expressed about tensions between standardization and innovation, and between outsourcing policies and statistical confidentiality requirements.
- **Systems architecture:** From the design and development of applications for specific projects to organization-wide systems, statistical organizations are looking for ways to better manage their considerable investments in statistical information systems, whilst developing approaches that promote re-use and standardization.



There was a strong interest in enhancing cooperation between Asia and Europe. As a result, the next meeting will take place in April 2010 in the Republic of Korea, providing an ideal opportunity for more “open” cooperation with statistical organizations in the Asia-Pacific region. In the meantime a wiki will be established to allow participants to continue sharing ideas and experiences in statistical information systems. ■

For more information contact Steven Vale (support.stat@unece.org).

FACTS AND FIGURES

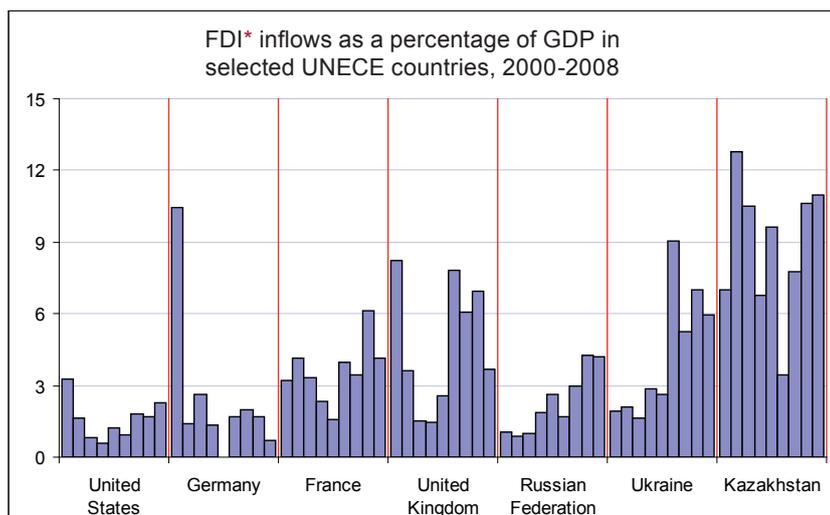
Foreign direct investment inflows remained high in 2008 in many CIS countries

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is one of the key elements of economic globalization. FDI flows generate trade between the parent enterprise and its foreign affiliates. The flows are in most cases accompanied by transfers of technology and know-how. Therefore, FDI is a crucial factor in the worldwide

restructuring of production processes. The percentage share of FDI inflows in GDP is a commonly used measurement of globalization. It also describes both the attractiveness of an economy and additional capital injected into it.

Within the UNECE region during the early 2000s, FDI inflows as a percentage of GDP declined in the United States and in many west European countries, but increased in most CIS countries. The largest FDI inflows were seen throughout the region in 2007. In 2008, the share of FDI inflows in GDP declined in most EU countries, while it stayed close to the peak of 2007 in many CIS countries.

In 2008, the largest FDI flows were directed to the United States, France, United Kingdom and the Russian Federation. Even though the United States received the largest amount of FDI, it accounted for only 2.3% of GDP. FDI inflows as a percentage of GDP were around 4% in France, United Kingdom and the Russian Federation. ■



Source: UNECE Statistical Database (<http://www.unece.org/stats/data>), Eurostat, IMF and national statistics.

* Investment is regarded as FDI when the parent enterprise gains control over its foreign affiliate (10% or more of the voting power).