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Seminar on UNECE Water Convention at World Water Week Stockholm, 19 August

UNECE will organize a seminar on its Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) in the framework of the World Water Week 2009, to be held in Stockholm from 16-22 August.



Under the motto *“How a legal framework is making a difference on the ground”*, the seminar will illustrate the practical usefulness of the Convention as a platform promoting action at different levels: from the development of strategic approaches for the whole UNECE region to concrete projects furthering cooperation in specific basins. Issues discussed will range from traditional aspects of transboundary cooperation — such as legal issues, monitoring and assessment, etc. — to emerging challenges such as climate change adaptation in the transboundary context.

The second part of the Seminar will focus on transboundary water cooperation in Central Asia. Challenges and possible solutions will be discussed as well as the activities of the Water Convention in this sub-region, such as the recently started programme linked to the Berlin Water Process.

By presenting a broad range of experiences and lessons learnt under the Convention, the Seminar will demonstrate how a legal framework and its implementation have made a real difference, and can therefore also be of interest beyond the UNECE region.

The seminar, which will be chaired by Heide Jekel, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany, and Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention, will be opened by Ján Kubiš, UNECE Executive Secretary.

The UNECE Water Convention, which was signed in Helsinki in 1992 and entered into force in 1996, provides a unique legal framework and practical support for transboundary

WORLD WATER WEEK
in Stockholm,
August 16-22, 2009

World Water Week in Stockholm, organized since 2005 annually by the Stockholm International Water Institute is an important meeting in the global water agenda which promotes the exchange of views and experiences between the scientific, business, policy and civil society communities, thereby advancing the water, environment, health, livelihood and poverty reduction agendas.

water cooperation in the pan-European region, contributing to improving the management of shared waters.

The seminar is organised by UNECE in cooperation with the Bureau of the UNECE Water Convention represented by the Governments of Germany, Finland and Switzerland, and the Stockholm International Water Institute. ■

For more information, visit http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/Stockholm_WW09_Seminar.html

Agreement between UNECE and Slovakia secures TER Project Office

Ján Kubiš, UNECE Executive Secretary signed an agreement on 27 July with the Slovak Minister of Transport, Post and Communications, Ľubomír Vážny, for Slovakia to host the [Trans-European Railway \(TER\) Project](#).

The signing of this Agreement secures a stable and long-term functioning of the TER Project Office. It comes at a critical moment in the [Trans-European Motorway \(TEM\)](#) and [TER Master Plan](#) revision process as it will not only facilitate completion of the revision but also ensure efficient continuation of other activities and tasks of the TER Project.

The Master Plan outlines an investment plan which, if implemented, would contribute to economic growth for the countries concerned and to the well-being of their populations. Furthermore, it would greatly benefit the integration and harmonization of transport within Europe and beyond.

The TEM and TER Master Plan, first published in 2006, set out the priority infrastructure needs of 21 Central, Eastern and South-Eastern European countries. It identified the backbone road and rail networks in those countries and presented a realistic investment strategy to gradually



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TER Project Office (cont.)



develop them. As many as 491 projects with an estimated total cost of EUR 102 billion were evaluated and prioritized.

The current revision of the Master Plan will review the latest developments in the TEM and TER projects, and in particular;

- Update data related to traffic flows for TEM and TER networks,
- Check the conformity of new projects and regulations with the TEM and TER backbone networks, and review the original TEM and TER networks,
- Review border crossing issues,
- Improve data collection procedures,
- Update information about TEM and TER funding,
- Identify interrelationships of the TEM and TER Master Plan backbone networks with intermodal points and links and
- Draw up conclusions and recommendations.

The agreement between UNECE and Slovakia provides the framework which will regulate the operational status and obligations of both signatories regarding the functioning of the UNECE TER Project Central Office as well as its staff, kindly hosted by Slovakia until 31 December 2011. ■



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FACTS AND FIGURES

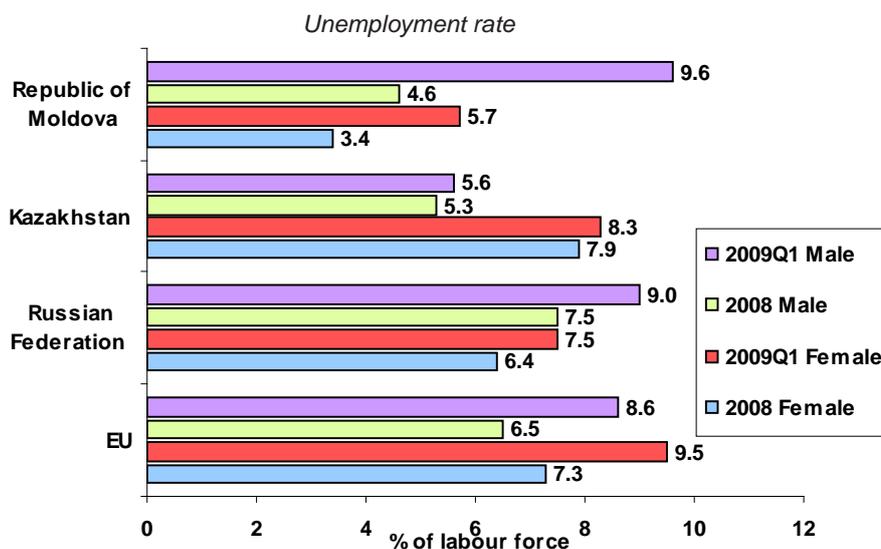
Recession affects male and female unemployment but not evenly

Unemployment continues to rise as countries are affected by recession. Although the latest data for 2008 and the first quarter of 2009 demonstrate a steady unemployment rate in some countries of the European Union (EU), the situation is not consistent across the region. Data on the work force of several EU member states – Czech Republic, Estonia, Spain and Slovakia – indicate a sharp increase in unemployment in the first quarter of 2009, with some countries exceeding the 10% rate.

The economic downturn is also reflected in the dynamics of unemployed men and women. In a number of European countries such as Belgium, Denmark, Germany, and the United Kingdom, but

also in the CIS area, in particular the Republic of Moldova and Russian Federation, the male unemployment rate continued to exceed female unemployment rate with the gap increasing in the first quarter of 2009.

At a time when countries are attempting to minimize the consequences of the crisis, communities might be significantly affected by the current job losses among men and women. While state policies are aimed at curbing unemployment trends, businesses are likely to show caution, thereby continuing to reduce the workforce despite some recent signs of economic recovery. ■



Source: Eurostat (<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/>) and national statistics.