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## HUMAN RIGHTS DAY 2009

*"Discrimination lies at the root of many of the world's most pressing human rights problems. No country is immune from this scourge. Eliminating discrimination is a duty of the highest order."*

*Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*

Human Rights Day 2009 on 10 December will focus on non-discrimination. "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". These first few famous words of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) established 60 years ago the basic premise of international human rights law. Yet today, the fight against discrimination remains a daily struggle for millions around the globe.

"Our main objective is to help promote discrimination-free societies and a world of equal treatment for all," says the High Commissioner who this year will mark Human Rights Day in South Africa.

She encourages people everywhere – including the United Nations family, Governments, civil society, national human rights institutions, the media, educators, and individuals – to seize the opportunity of Human Rights Day 2009 to join hands to embrace diversity and end discrimination.

The realisation of all human rights – social, economic and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights – is hampered by discrimination. All too often, when faced with prejudice and discrimination, political leaders, governments and ordinary citizens are silent or complacent. ☒

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/HumanRightsDay2009.aspx>



## TOWARDS A SHARED VISION ON TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS IN WESTERN BALKANS

### UNECE INITIATES DRIN DIALOGUE

Representatives of the ministries responsible for water management in Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro, the Lake Skadar/Shkoder Commission, the Lake Ohrid Committee and stakeholders from the Prespa Lake Basin met on 1 December 2009 in Podgorica, Montenegro, to launch the *Drin Dialogue*.

The *Drin Dialogue* is facilitated by UNECE and the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med) using the platform of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and the Petersberg Phase II/ Athens Declaration Process. The Dialogue is a structured consultation process that aims to develop a shared vision among the riparian countries and stakeholders for the sustainable management of the Drin Basin.

The Drin Basin covers a geographical area that includes Albania, Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo (under UN Security Council resolution 1244). The Drin River is the "connecting body" of this water system, linking the lakes, wetlands, rivers and other aquatic habitats into a single ecosystem of major importance.

The region is very rich in endemic species and exceptional in terms of biodiversity conservation, and so has great potential for the development of sustainable tourism.

The meeting established a coordinating body, the Drin Core Group, which will be composed of representatives of the ministries



responsible for water management in the riparian countries as well as the formal and informal joint structures established in the shared sub-basins (the Prespa, Ohrid and Skadar/Shkoder Lakes), UNECE, GWP-Med and NGOs.

As the agencies supporting the initiative, the European Commission, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and UNDP/GEF will be invited to participate as observers. It is expected that an agreed shared vision will be developed by the end of 2011. ☒

For more information contact Bo Libert ([water.convention@unece.org](mailto:water.convention@unece.org)).

Not an official record - For information only

## BLUE FUEL FOR BLUE SKY

Compressed natural gas (CNG) has been known since the mid 1980s as a motor fuel. It is the most ecological fuel available on a large scale, even if it has – for various reasons – failed so far to reach high market penetration. There is, however, great interest at a political level in supporting a CNG breakthrough.

The ecological advantages of CNG as opposed to Super Fuel (CO 75%, CO<sub>2</sub> 25%) or Diesel (CO 50%, NO<sub>x</sub> 80%, SO<sub>2</sub> and Particles more than 95%) are talking clear language. Creating "Blue Corridors", i.e. equipping the main East/West traffic routes (trucks and coaches) with CNG filling stations would motivate transport companies to switch to CNG since it is much cheaper than other fuels (for example, in 2007 in the Russian Federation,



it was 70% cheaper than Super and 45% cheaper than Diesel). Economic advantages and ecological needs are being met – but need support.

The international conference "Blue Fuel for Blue Sky" held on 25 November in Sofia, Bulgaria, organized by the European Business Congress (EBC, Berlin) and Overgas Inc. (Sofia) gathered together participants from local authorities, institutions and private gas companies to exchange views and to explore practical steps to develop the theoretic approaches gained under the UNECE initiative known as the *Blue Corridor Project* study.

The *Blue Corridor Project* study was launched by UNECE in 2003 with the main objective of establishing European transport infrastructure corridors for vehicles using natural gas as a fuel in the transboundary transport of goods and international passenger traffic. The project was based on the environmental and economic benefits of the use of gaseous fuels, and hence will result in significant greenhouse gas emission reductions in the UNECE region. Interest was expressed in the *Blue Corridor Project* as a way to promote the environmentally friendly transport of goods in a major East-West pan-European corridor. It can potentially be replicated for other main arteries in Europe.

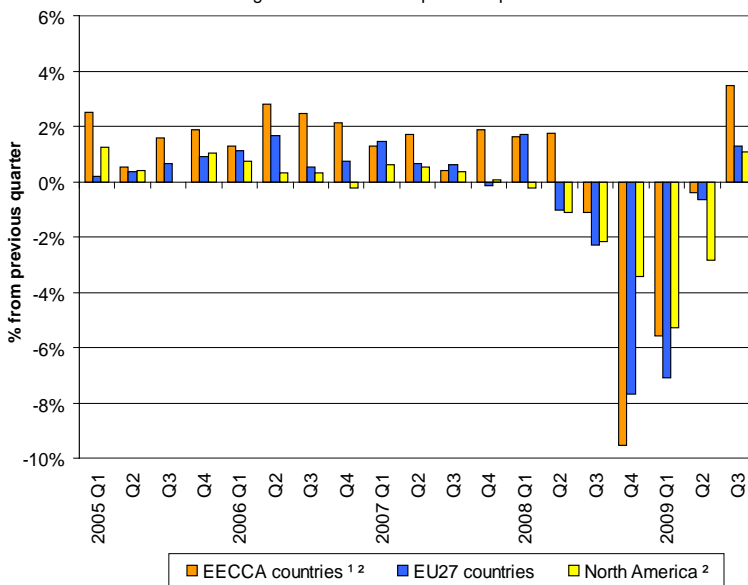
The conference underlined how today Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Russian Federation are strategically important energy suppliers and transit countries for West European energy security. The conference concluded that it was important to work on rising public awareness on CNG as an environmentally sound fuel solution and that it is therefore significant for UNECE to bring its expertise and to further strengthen cooperation with EBC on this project as well as with other interested partner organizations. ☒

For more information visit <http://www.unece.org/energy/se/wpgas.html>

## FACTS AND FIGURES

## AN UPSWING IN INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION

Seasonally adjusted industrial production  
growth rates from the previous quarter



<sup>1</sup> No data for Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. For Q3 2009 no data for Georgia.

<sup>2</sup> Data aggregated by gross value added in industry in 2005.

Source: UNECE Statistical Database (<http://www.unece.org/stats/data>)

Note: All data are seasonally adjusted to allow development to be compared to the previous period.

Industrial production grew in UNECE countries during the third quarter of 2009 by the fastest rate in two years. It seems that exports are recovering in Europe in response to a rising global demand. Consequently, OECD raised its global growth forecast for 2010 to 3.4 %, but predicted somewhat weaker growth for the EU compared to the United States.

In the third quarter of 2009, industrial production grew by 1.3% in the European Union and by 1.1% in North America compared to the previous quarter. The East European, Caucasus and Central Asian (EECCA) region recovered from the sharp contraction earlier in the year as industrial production took an upswing of 3.5%. Some of the large EU countries, e.g. France, Germany and Italy, reached the same growth, but industrial production continued to decline in about one fourth of the EU countries.

The most recent monthly data offer positive signs. An increase of over 3 % from the previous month was recorded in September 2009 in the Russian Federation, Belarus and Ukraine, and in some of the EU economies, e.g. Ireland, Luxemburg and Germany. In addition, some expansion is anticipated by the purchasing managers' index with France and Germany expected to power the recovery. ☒