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REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON MDGs

17 March 2010, Palais des Nations, Geneva

UNECE is organizing a regional consultation on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on 17 March 2010 at Palais des Nations (Salle VIII). Achieving the MDGs is still a challenge for many countries of the UNECE region, which gathers a large group of advanced economies, but also a significant group of emerging economies, and a few of the world's most vulnerable countries. The latter two categories are located in the eastern part of the region, which includes the 12 countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia (EECCA) and 6 countries in South-East Europe (SEE). In addition, the UNECE region comprises a number of intermediate-income economies, primarily the EU new member states to which some MDGs targets apply while others do not.



A few targets apply even to the advanced European economies, particularly in the areas of gender equality, environmental sustainability and, to a lesser extent, poverty. These economies have also made a global commitment to help the developing world achieve its targets through financing for development, including ODA, and improving the world's trading system.

This consultation will thus be an opportunity to substantiate the relevance of the MDGs for the UNECE region by identifying the major gaps in their achievement. It will also look ahead by considering the set of policies needed to address these gaps in the forthcoming years.

This substantive review will draw extensively from the Heads of Europe and Central Asia of the UN organizations that are actively supporting the MDGs in the region within their respective areas of competence. They will participate in the panel discussions dedicated to each MDG, which will be followed by an interactive debate with the audience.

The conclusions of this consultation will provide inputs to the preparations for the High-level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly's 65th session, which will be held on 20-22 September 2010 and will focus on accelerating progress towards achieving all MDGs by 2015. □

The programme of the meeting is available at:

http://www.unece.org/Programme_Regional_Consultation_MDGs.pdf

UNECE LAUNCHES DATA COLLECTION ON PAN-EUROPEAN FORESTS

The UNECE/FAO Timber Section has just launched its periodic enquiry on the state of forests and forest management in Europe. National correspondents from 46 countries in the pan-European region were invited to provide information on the status and changes of forests, their management and applied policies. Indicators monitored cover forest health and vitality, productive and protective functions, e.g. the protection of biodiversity, as well as the social and economic dimensions of forest management.

The national enquiries include a broad variety of numeric data, both general (e.g. area, growing stock, carbon) and specific (e.g. defoliation, trade, employment, etc.), as well as a description of the policies, institutions and financial instruments developed in the pan-European region.

The results will be presented in the State of Europe's Forests report, which will be released at the 6th Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Forest Europe), to be held in 2011 in Norway.

The results of this enquiry, the most comprehensive of its kind on pan-European forests, offer a particularly valuable source of information both for practitioners and policy makers. □



The results of the previous reporting of 2007 are available at
<http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=33>

For further information, please contact Roman Michalak or Marion Briens at info.timber@unece.org

INTRODUCTION OF TYPE APPROVAL FOR ELECTRIC AND HYBRID VEHICLES' ELECTRIC SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

On 10 March, the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations adopted a new version of UNECE Regulation No. 100, which introduces type approval requirements for all types of electric and hybrid vehicles' electric safety requirements.

Type approval refers to the administrative procedure by which the competent authorities in one Contracting Party declare, after carrying out the required verifications and tests, that a vehicle submitted by the manufacturer conforms to the requirements of the given Regulation. Once this approval has been obtained, the vehicle will benefit from the mutual recognition of this approval in all Contracting Parties applying UNECE Regulation No. 100 (currently 40 countries). Several Asian countries, including Japan, are expected to apply the new version of Regulation No. 100.

The new version of UNECE Regulation No. 100 will cover all types of electric vehicles: pure electric, hybrid, plug-in, as well as hydrogen fuel cells vehicles as regards electric safety requirements. The Regulation encompasses the electric safety requirements of all types of road vehicles (passenger and commercial vehicles) which can exceed 25 km/h. One of the key requirements is that vehicles must provide users with an effective protection against electric shocks.

This change in UNECE Regulation No. 100 reflects the growing interest of both manufacturers and customers for electric and hybrid vehicles, as evidenced at the Geneva motor show this year. It offers car manufacturers the legal instrument to put into the market passenger and commercial vehicles with greener standards, reducing the costs and delays associated with multiple approvals in various countries. □

For further information visit <http://www.unece.org/trans/doc/2010/wp29/ECE-TRANS-WP29-2010-52e.pdf> or contact Juan Ramos Garcia at wp.29@unece.org

The World Forum is a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), which develops vehicle regulations aimed at increasing vehicle safety and environmental performance. More than fifty countries, as well as vehicle manufacturers, consumers and road users, participate in the elaboration of these regulations, which are adopted by representatives of the countries under the so-called "1958 and 1998" Agreements.



FACTS AND FIGURES

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES JUMPED TO DOUBLE-DIGITS IN SOME UNECE COUNTRIES IN 2009

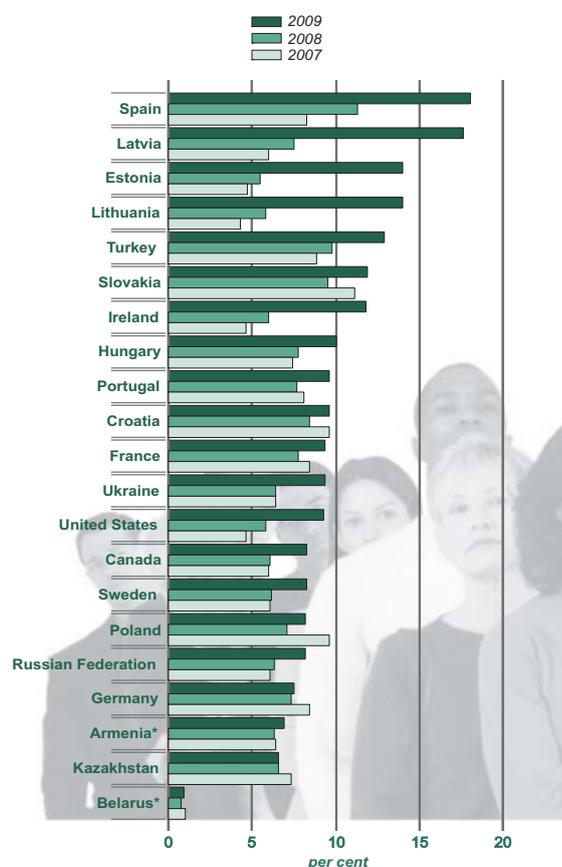
In 2009, the global economic downturn spilled heavily onto the labour markets: new job offers became scarce and unemployment rates edged up sharply in many UNECE countries. The available data for January 2010 signal that numbers of jobseekers continue to rise in a large part of the region, although the pace seems to be slowing down gradually. The analysts expect the rate of unemployment to stabilize by mid-2010 in many economies if output recovery picks up.

In Spain, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, countries with the highest unemployment rates depicted in the chart, the rates for 2009 were two-to-three times higher than in 2007. The increase in unemployment was substantial also in Ireland, Turkey, Ukraine and the United States. Germany, in contrast, has managed to limit the increase of unemployment despite the recession by providing state subsidies that allowed for shorter working hours at a little below normal pay levels and other labour-market policy schemes (In fact, according to the Institute for Employment Research, the number of hours worked in Germany had fallen by 1.8 billion in 2009, the equivalent of 1.2 million full-time jobs).

The virtually unchanged unemployment rates in Belarus and some other EECOA countries might be seen as an exception to the general trend, but they often refer to registered unemployment only, and may thus not fully reflect the situation in the labour market. On the other hand, the economic downturn was less marked in some of these countries while labour-hoarding remains a quite common practice, as reported wage arrears indicate (i.e., in June 2009, about 0.5 million employees in the Russian Federation were affected by wage arrears). □

Unemployment rate, 2007-2009

(per cent of labour force)



Source: UNECE Statistical Database (www.unece.org/stats/data) and national statistics.

* Registered unemployment instead of Labour force survey data.