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CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES AGREE TO WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP DYNAMIC PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMMES



Representatives from the five central Asian republics agreed on a unique initiative to work together to build their respective capacities to deliver Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) on the occasion of a PPP event organized by UNECE in Istanbul, Turkey, on 29-30 April 2010.

PPPs have become commonplace in many countries as a means to develop infrastructure on time and within budget, thus increasing the access of citizens to important public services. In central Asia, despite the huge needs in sectors such as transport, energy and health and education, the model is not yet widely applied or understood.

For more information, please visit:
<http://www.unece.org/ceci/ppp.html>

To address this challenge the representatives of each of the five Central Asian republics agreed to establish a Team of Specialists on PPPs. The mission of this new group will be to develop PPPs in central Asian countries and to increase public and private sector capacity in PPP building in Central Asia.

Its objectives will be to:

- create a team of PPP specialists capable of sharing their PPP knowledge and experience with public and private sector;
- share information on PPP developments in Central Asia;
- deliver PPP knowledge to the public and private sector in Central Asia;
- establish contacts with PPP team of specialists from other countries and regions for implementing the best PPP international practices in Central Asia.

UNECE's Information Exchange Platform, set up to facilitate virtual meetings and exchange information, will be open to the group

All the members emphasized the importance of the new grouping working with international agencies and organizations from outside the region. Ms Muhabaat Mahmudova of Turkmenistan, stressed that "the initiative to form a Central Asian PPP Expert Group is essential for facilitating the access of the international community to Central Asia infrastructure development." □

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UNECE LAUNCHES PROGRAMME OF PILOT PROJECTS ON ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN TRANSBOUNDARY BASINS

The new programme of pilot projects aimed at promoting cooperation on adaptation to climate change under the UNECE

Water Convention was launched at the workshop "[Water and Climate Change-How to develop an Adaptation Strategy in Transboundary Basins](#)" held on 10-11 May 2010 in Geneva. The first cycle of work on climate change adaptation under the Convention (2006-2009) focused on the development of strategic material to guide Parties. This workshop inaugurates the second cycle (2010-2012), which will focus on promoting action on the ground.

The programme of pilot projects currently comprises projects on the Chu Talas River (shared by Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan), the Dniester (shared by Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova) and the Sava (shared by Slovenia,

Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia) implemented in the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) with partner organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The pilot projects aim to support countries in developing adaptation strategies and measures, to create positive examples of transboundary cooperation in adaptation and to support dialogue and cooperation on the design of an adaptation strategy in the transboundary context.

Most of the water resources in the UNECE region, and worldwide, are transboundary, thus they create hydrological, social and economic interdependencies between States. In the UNECE region alone there are more than 150 transboundary rivers, 50 major transboundary

lakes and more than 170 transboundary groundwater systems. That makes adaptation an international issue requiring cooperation.

Some 100 participants were expected at the workshop, to launch the pilot projects and share experience between the ongoing initiatives in the region. Difficulties and lessons learnt from the Rhine, Danube, Portugal, the Great Lakes, the United Kingdom and many more were to be discussed. □

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UNECE PROMOTES THE PRTR PROTOCOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

On 5 May 2010, UNECE participated in a workshop in Astana on the possible ratification by Kazakhstan of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) and the establishment of the National Register.

Participants discussed and reviewed existing national legislation, obligations under the PRTR Protocol and worked on identifying possible ways to assess and implement the Protocol in Kazakhstan.

The event, organized by the OSCE Centre in Astana, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Kazakhstan, the Asian-American Partnership non-governmental organization and the national Aarhus Centre, brought together more than 40 representatives from state and non-governmental organizations, as well as the business community.

"The implementation of the PRTR Protocol would contribute to constructive dialogue between government authorities, industrial companies and civil society, help to achieve a balance of interests and protect the environmental rights of citizens," said Jeannette Kloetzer, Deputy Head of the OSCE Centre in Astana. "The Centre is ready to further provide its assistance to support this important initiative."

"Kazakhstan's government currently considers a possibility of ratification of the Protocol. The PRTR is a source of comprehensive information on risks of environmental

pollution, and can help the government to address difficult ecological issues in Kazakhstan, stimulate civil sector development and facilitate co-operation between governmental authorities, industrial companies and non-governmental organizations," said Eldana Sadvakasova, Kazakhstan's Deputy Minister for Environmental Protection.

Workshop participants developed recommendations for government institutions and other stakeholders taking



into consideration best practices and international experience, the need to enhance public access to environmental information and to ensure effective pollution prevention and control. The recommendations were developed with the view of the future ratification of the Protocol and the establishment of the National Register.

This workshop was part of the OSCE Centre's support to Kazakhstan in implementing the Aarhus Convention and its three pillars - access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental issues □

For more information on the Protocol, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/prtr.htm>.

FACTS AND FIGURES

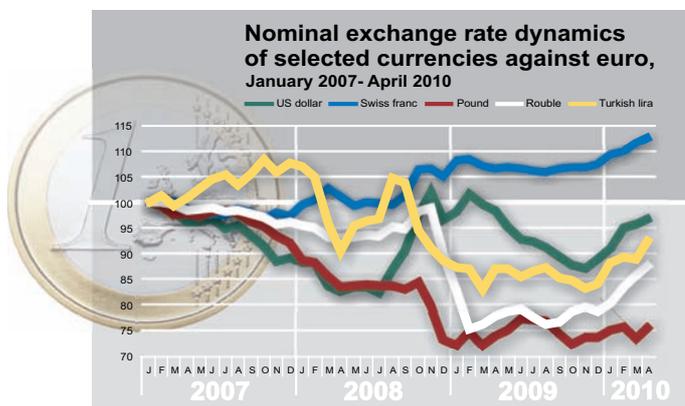
IS THE CURRENT WEAKENING OF THE EURO SET TO CONTINUE?

The appreciation of many internationally traded currencies against the euro that started by the end-2009 gained momentum in the first months of 2010. Only the exchange rate of the pound (United Kingdom) seemed to remain virtually unchanged in the last several months. The euro lost much of its strength as Greece's fiscal troubles have escalated and major financial rating agencies indicated readiness to downgrade ratings of some other eurozone members. The sluggish recovery

of the eurozone's main economies also played a role. By early May 2010, dropping below \$1.28, the euro was trading at its lowest level against the dollar in several months, and has fallen some ten per cent since the start of 2010.

On the other hand, the current strengthening of the dollar was backed not only by renewed concerns over the eurozone stability but also by robust economic data from the United States. Before regaining ground, the dollar lost some 15 per cent of its value against the euro from February to November 2009 following a brief spell of relative strength.

The Swiss franc, often seen by investors as a refuge during volatile periods, continued its appreciation against the euro since mid-2008 and strengthened also against the dollar by more than 15 per cent since early 2007. □



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

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