



United Nations

UNECE Weekly

Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 424 — 9 - 13 May 2011

FIRST MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH MINISTERIAL BOARD



Ján Kubiš, UNECE Executive Secretary, took part in the first meeting of the European Environment and Health Ministerial Board, held in Paris on 4-5 May.

The Committee was created at the 5th Ministerial conference on Environment and Health held in Parma in March 2010. It will coordinate international policies in the field of environment and health with a view to implementing the commitments made in the Declaration adopted in Parma.

The European Environment and Health Committee includes the Ministers of Environment from Romania, Turkey, Azerbaijan and Belarus, the Ministers of Health from France, Malta, Serbia and Slovenia, as well as the Regional Director for Europe of the World Health Organization, the Executive Secretary of UNECE, the Director of UNEP Regional Office for Europe, the President and co-president of the Action Force for Environment and Health with the European Commission. In Paris, the Committee elected as co-chairs the Minister of Environment and Forests of Romania, Laszlo Borbély, and the Slovenian Minister of Health, Dorijan Marusic.

In his address, Ján Kubiš said: "I am pleased to be part of the Environment and Health Ministerial Board, which will

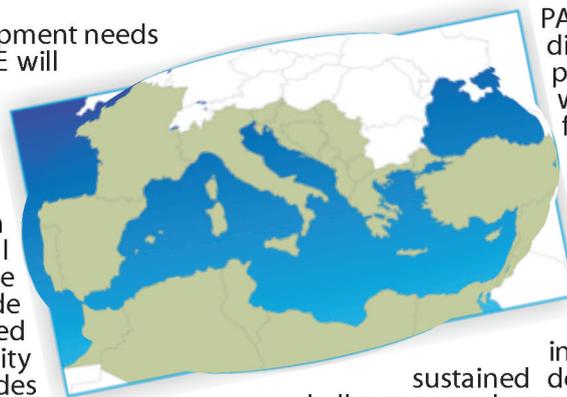
draw on experts from UNECE's Committee on Environmental Policy and on our longstanding cooperation with WHO. I very much hope that the new institutional structure will achieve its aim of attracting high-level political interest in considering health impacts in environmental policy and the importance of environmental sensitivity in health issues."

He added that the five Multilateral Environment Agreements administered by UNECE are instrumental in driving the Environment and Health Process. He also called attention to UNECE's programme on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, which has important implications for health through its capacity-building activities related to monitoring, e.g. air quality, water quality and soil-quality.

Finally, he stressed the need to ensure greater visibility of the Environment and Health Process in the forthcoming 7th "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference (Astana, 21-23 September 2011) and Regional Preparatory Meeting for Rio+20 (Geneva, December 2011). □

UNECE AND PAM WORKING TO FOSTER DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

In response to the emerging development needs of the Mediterranean region, UNECE will be working with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) and its Panel on External Trade and Investments in the Mediterranean to support the region's recovery, long-term development and regional integration. This was one of the conclusions of the two day Joint Trade Conference of PAM and the United Nations Trade and Productive Capacity Cluster, which was held at Palais des Nations on 4-5 May.



PAM and UNECE are exploring different frameworks for this new phase in their partnership, which will be formalized in the near future.

The Conference discussed the economic impact of the recent political developments in the region, challenges to regional integration, and the role of water and energy development in supporting trade expansion and sustained development. The most pressing challenges are those generated by the economic crisis that engulfed the region in the wake of social upheaval in a number of PAM countries. Dramatic falls in exports, investment inflows and tourism activities have left these countries with expanding trade and budget deficits as well as eroding foreign currency reserves.

The areas of cooperation between UNECE and PAM (17 out of PAM's 26 members are UNECE member States) will include:

- Trade facilitation and electronic business;
- Technical regulations and standardization policies;
- Transport development;
- Energy and water resources management.

These challenges put governments in an awkward position to pursue development efforts, especially since access to external finance is often hampered by negative credit ratings. At the global level, high food prices pose an

imminent threat, especially to net food importers. In addition,, the slow recovery of the region's main trading partners from the global financial and economic crisis means that exports are unlikely to pick up steam in the near future.

Against this background, a key message delivered at the conference was that the United Nations is committed to assisting PAM governments in implementing their reform and development plans. "This conference marks the beginning of a new phase in UNECE partnership with PAM", said Andrey Vasilyev, Deputy Executive Secretary.

Senator Marwan Alhמוד of Jordan, Vice President of PAM's 2nd Standing Committee, emphasized that PAM "wants to further strengthen its already deep rooted relations with the United Nations system, following its acquisition of Observer Status at the United Nations General Assembly."

The conclusions of the conference, delivered by Senator Alhמוד, will be submitted to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EUROMED) Ministerial Meeting on Industry, which will take place on 11-12 May in Malta. They will also be used for future work undertaken by the PAM Panel on External Trade and Investments in the Mediterranean, which will be discussed at PAM's Standing Committees' meeting in Dubrovnik on 20 June 2011

PAM will circulate the conference conclusions to all National Parliaments and these conclusions will form the basis of future collaboration between PAM and the United Nations Trade and Productive Capacity Cluster for trade assistance to the Mediterranean countries at the national, regional and sub-regional levels. □

The key note speeches and presentations delivered at the Conference are available at:
http://www.unece.org/trade/OtherMeetings/2011_PAMMeeting/welcome.html.

PARTICIPATION OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO THE 4TH ASTANA ECONOMIC FORUM

Ján Kubiš, UNECE Executive Secretary, participated in the 4th Astana Economic Forum, held in the capital of Kazakhstan on 3-4 May 2011.

Ján Kubiš was one of the speakers at the opening session on the design of the international monetary system, speaking immediately after the opening address by Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, alongside the Nobel prize winners in economics Robert A. Mundell and John F. Nash, Jr. He delivered a message of the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to the participants of the forum.



economic importance of the US and Europe is declining while China and some of the other emerging economies are growing rapidly but appear hesitant to assume the responsibilities of global leadership. It is therefore critically important during this period that the international monetary system be designed rationally and cooperatively."

During his stay in Astana, Ján Kubiš had a series of bilateral meetings with different Ministers. He met in particular with Kazakh Minister of Foreign Affairs Yerzhan Kazykhanov to discuss issues relating to regional development and the cooperation between UNECE and Kazakhstan in areas such as energy, economic development, innovation and trade. □

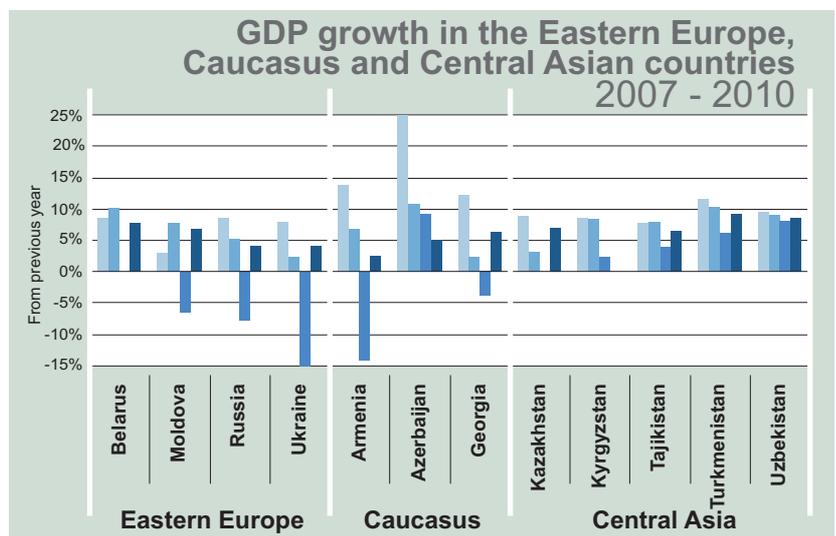
In his address, after recalling the problems with the current international monetary system, he stressed that "we are in a transition period today. The relative

EECCA COUNTRIES' PRODUCTION GREW IN 2010

After a bleak 2009, gross domestic product (GDP) grew throughout Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) in 2010.

Kyrgyzstan was the only country with shrinking GDP, with coal production (-9 per cent) and agriculture (-3 per cent) leading the decrease. However, the global economic crisis was more prominent in other EECCA countries.

In 2009, the economic downturn hit hardest in Ukraine, Armenia, Russia and Moldova. Based figures for 2010, these countries have pulled through the worst for now. Industrial output grew about 10 per cent in both Ukraine and Armenia, while Russia and Moldova reached growth rates of 8 and 7 per cent respectively. Agricultural output still diminished in Armenia and Russia at a pace of more than 10 per cent compared to 2009. □



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

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