

### Forestry



## Wood must be at the heart of the green economy, say scientists

A green economy must be based on natural, environmentally sound and sustainable materials and goods. For this, wood is surely the ideal candidate. It's a renewable material, and products made from it store carbon. Through forest products, forests, as well as sequestering carbon, also play a crucial role in replacing fossil fuel, concrete and steel, which have higher carbon emissions and a significantly larger ecological footprint.

The general public, most policymakers and even the construction industry often see wood as a "traditional" material, with little or no relevance to modern technologies and current environmental concerns. UNECE wants to change this perception and has therefore turned to science.

Over 100 experts and scientists gathered in Geneva on 15 October to discuss Life Cycle Analysis (LCA), and how this methodology can highlight wood and its qualities as a sustainable material with an increasing number of innovative uses. LCA can be applied to evaluate the total environmental impacts of a material or a product throughout its life.

The experts and scientists drew up a set of recommendations for action by governments, the private sector and UNECE. When discussed and approved by the UNECE Timber Committee, which is meeting this week, the recommendations will help better communicate the benefits of LCA to a larger public so that consumers can make the right choices when selecting materials and products.

Paola Deda, Chief of the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, said that "as consumers, we need to be sure we're not basing our choices on erroneous beliefs and perceptions. LCA provides us with a scientific method to assess the ecological footprint of a material or product from cradle to grave so that we can make informed choices".

LCA can compare the efficiency and sustainability of wood with that of other materials for use in different products and purposes. It thus helps to identify in which instances wood use is the best choice. The sustainability of using wood for energy, for instance, depends very much on the life cycle and related impact of the woody material that is used, as well as on the scale of its use.

The "cascaded" use of wood helps to make the best use of wood and its ability to store carbon and replace other, less ecologically friendly materials. "Cascaded" means where wood is used in one product and then, at the end of that product's life recycled into another. And this process is repeated many times before the "final" wood product is used for energy. □

For more information, please refer to: <http://www.unece.org/forests/lca-workshop.html>  
or contact: [elina.warsta@unece.org](mailto:elina.warsta@unece.org).

### Expert Opinion

## UNECE gives the floor to experts

UNECE has launched an Expert Opinion section on its website. Every week, an expert, usually associated with one of our activities, will share his or her views on a select topic.

This week, Richard Gowland, Technical Director of the European Process Safety Centre, asks: **Can we expect the unexpected?** □

Find out for yourself! <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=31180>.



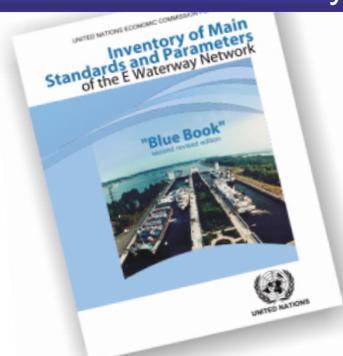
### E Waterways

## Inland waterways as an environmentally friendly alternative to road and rail transport

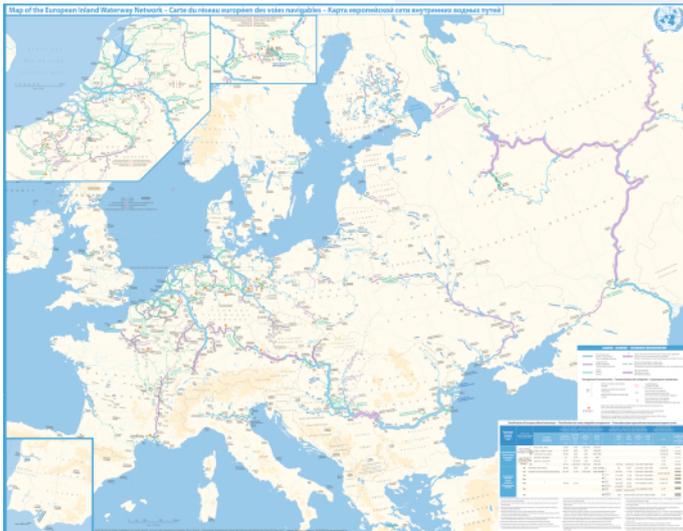
To relieve Europe's congested road and rail networks, UNECE urges Governments and the transport industry to step up their efforts to switch goods traffic from roads and rail to inland waterways. In the European Union today, 78% of goods are transported by road and 15% by rail, whereas only 7% are transported on inland waterways.

According to Eva Molnar, who heads UNECE's Transport Division, given the current growth of freight traffic in Europe, all modes of transport should be fully used to avoid congestion and environmental damage. "European inland waterways have a considerable untapped transport capacity. It is believed, in particular, that transport capacity on the river Rhine could be increased by 50% and on the Danube by more than 80% without major investments."

*Not an official record - For information only*



Meeting for its annual session in Geneva from 10 to 12 October, the UNECE Working Party on Inland Water Transport discussed some of the obstacles to the further exploitation of Europe's waterways. These included insufficient inland-water network development, inadequate maintenance of infrastructure and fleet renovation, as well as a shortage of skilled personnel.



European inland waterways of international importance (E Waterways) span more than 22,000 km, including over 400 important ports and terminals. Some 14,700 km can be used for containerized transport--the fastest-growing market segment in inland navigation.

At the meeting, the Working Party also launched its latest Inventory of Main Standards and Parameters of the pan-European Inland Waterway Network, the "Blue Book", and the Map of European Inland Waterways.

The E Waterway network covers all European navigable rivers, canals, coastal routes and ports and constitutes a plan for the coordinated development and construction of inland waterways, similar to the well-known E Road network.

The Map of European Inland Waterways allows to view the integrity of European navigable inland waterways (including also E waterways) and their transport capacity on a single sheet of paper, a truly unique realization.

Like the E Road network, the E Waterway network is based on a multilateral treaty, the European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance (AGN), which was negotiated by UNECE in 1996 and is administered and monitored by the UNECE Transport Division. □

The "Blue Book" is available at: <http://www.unece.org/trans/main/sc3/sc3res.html>.

The European inland waterway map is available at: [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/main/sc3/European\\_inland\\_waterways\\_-\\_2012.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/main/sc3/European_inland_waterways_-_2012.pdf).

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## Housing

## Why improvements in land registration can stimulate the economy

Good land administration, which is fundamental to a prosperous society, can also form a key element in addressing the current crisis. This was the focus of a workshop on "Supporting Global Economic Recovery: The Role of Land Registration Authorities", held in London, United Kingdom, from 10 to 13 October.

Virginia Cram-Martos, head of UNECE's Trade and Sustainable Land Management Division, informed participants that one of the main challenges UNECE is addressing in the region are the consequences of the mass privatization of land and often substandard housing in the 1990s. Large volumes of poorly insulated housing also need retrofitting, and institutions must be set up to protect property rights in countries where such rights never existed.

"Secure land tenure and property rights" she said "encourage people to invest in improved homes and livelihoods, they also create incentives for good environmental management, and they provide economic opportunities for groups that have traditionally been discriminated against".

The workshop marked the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Her Majesty's Land Registry. In his keynote speech, Malcolm Dawson OBE, Chief Executive of the Land Registry, focused on how the work of the Registry has evolved over time and, in particular, how it has responded to the crisis of the last five years by becoming more efficient and at the same time increasing customer satisfaction. He also said that the Land Registry is looking forward to playing a greater role in sharing its experiences internationally.

The workshop focused on modern challenges, including those to property markets resulting from the recent crash in asset prices and the financial crisis. According to Damir Pahić, Chair of the UNECE Working Party on Land Administration, now that we have new challenges "we need a new way of thinking".

Speakers discussed how to rebuild confidence in the lending market and the role of better, more accessible land-registry data in stimulating real estate investment. They also discussed the technology needed to support efficient lending and how land-registration authorities can meet changing market needs.

The workshop was hosted by the Registry and the Working Party on Land Administration. It formed one of a series of workshops organized by the Working Party in cooperation with national partners. The next workshop, "Informal Development, Property and Housing", will take place in Athens, Greece, from 10 to 14 December. □

For information, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/hlm/welcome.html> or contact: [michael.milligan@unece.org](mailto:michael.milligan@unece.org).

