

Executive Secretary



From left to right: Sven Alkalaj-UNECE Executive Secretary, Vesna Pusić - First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia and UNDP Administrator, Helen Clark.

Meeting of UNDP Resident Representatives for Europe and CIS

The Executive Secretary participated in the annual Regional Bureau for Europe and Central Asia (RBEC) meeting with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representatives in Zagreb from 21–22 January.

Discussions focused on the contribution that the region can bring to the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and consultations on the post-2015 development agenda in the context of inclusive and sustainable development. UNECE and UNDP have been working on an inter-agency report that will provide a pan-European perspective for these discussions and inform the global consultative process, in particular the high-level meeting of the General Assembly in September 2013.

The Executive Secretary also held a bilateral meeting with UNDP Administrator Helen Clark. He stressed the excellent cooperation between the two organizations and invited UNDP to contribute to the work of the United Nations Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). This could take the form of a subregional discussion about the post-2015 development agenda at the 2013 SPECA Economic Forum and joint technical cooperation projects under relevant Project Working Groups. Cooperation among UNECE and UNDP Regional Advisers could also be reinforced so as to strengthen synergies and coherence in the delivery of regional advisory services in Europe and Central Asia by the United Nations. □

Town Hall Meeting



Executive Secretary holds town hall meeting

On 25 January 2013, Executive Secretary Sven Alkalaj held his third town hall meeting. The Executive Secretary opened the meeting by paying tribute to the memory of Rainer Enderlein, who passed away on 11 January. He recalled his contribution to the UNECE Water Convention and its Protocol, and invited staff to observe a minute of silence.

In his opening address, the Executive Secretary addressed two main issues.

Further budget reductions requested by the General Assembly

In General Assembly resolution 67/248, United Nations Member States requested that the Secretary-General's budget proposal for 2014–2015 be reduced by approximately US\$ 100 million. Subsequently, the Secretary-General requested UNECE to reduce the proposed budget for its core programme, Economic development of Europe, by 2.6 per cent and its Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation by 2.8 per cent. The Executive Secretary stressed that some departments were requested to make much bigger cuts.

In the light of the above, Mr. Alkalaj was considering the reduction of seven posts, including three professionals and four General Service staff, without prejudice to the outcome of the review of the 2005 UNECE reform. He was consulting with senior managers, staff representatives and member States on the reductions. The Executive Secretary assured staff that no one would lose their job as a consequence of the cuts, since all these posts were either currently vacant or would be vacant in 2013 or early 2014 due to retirement. The proposed reductions aimed, to the extent possible, to minimize the impact on programme delivery and on the entry level professionals (P–2).

Recalling the words of the Secretary-General at the town hall meeting with staff on 10 January and to heads of departments on 14 January, the Executive Secretary reminded staff that they were privileged to serve the member States and that there was a need for everyone to tighten their belts in these difficult times. "The Secretary-General counts on our understanding and full support", he said.

Preparations for the sixty-fifth Commission session

The Executive Secretary recalled that the next Commission session would take place from 9 to 11 April 2013.

The high level segment (9–10 April) would be composed of three panel discussions:

- The future of sustainability: from transition to transformation
- Regional implications and perspectives for the post-Rio+20 institutional set-up;
- The role of innovation in creating a dynamic and competitive economy.

As for the general segment, the main item would be the outcome of the review of the 2005 UNECE reform. The Executive Secretary stressed that UNECE member States were working hard to reach a consensus, and he was confident that the process would be completed in time for the review outcome document to be adopted by the Commission.

Finally, the Executive Secretary encouraged staff to read carefully the Secretary-General's address to the General Assembly on 22 January 2013, in which he detailed the major achievements of the organization in 2012 and set its priorities for 2013. He called on all staff "to be wise, responsible and forward-looking" and urged them to "work as one to deliver for all". □

Water



Third Week of the Thematic Consultation on Water discusses "Water for Nature, Nature for Water"

What role does nature play in water resources management? Entering week three of the five-week Thematic Consultation on Water for the "World We Want" Post-2015 Development Agenda, nature and water resources management takes centre stage on the website <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/water/waterresources>. If you have an opinion you would like to share or a question you would like answered by those frequenting the website, get online and join the discussion.

- How does water resources management benefit from ecosystem services?
- What value do you put on nature?
- How do we convince investors that natural infrastructure can produce positive returns on investments?

You can find these topics and many more on the Thematic Consultation on Water website.

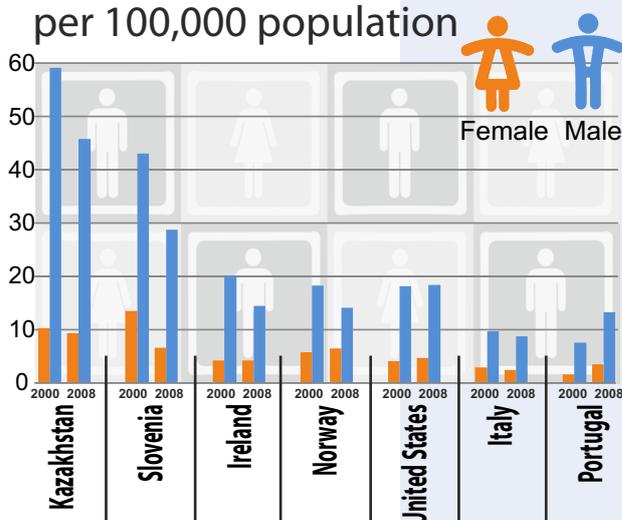
The week-three discussion will also focus on water, sanitation, hygiene and governance and wastewater reuse and development innovations.

Join in the discussion on Twitter (#waterpost2015) or on Facebook (WaterPost2015)!!! □

Facts and Figures

Suicide rates declining in most UNECE countries

Suicide rates in 2000 and 2008, per 100,000 population



In most UNECE member countries, the suicide rate has fallen since the millennium, with larger decreases occurring in countries that had higher rates. This is illustrated by the chart, which depicts suicide rates from 2000 to 2008, for selected countries. Kazakhstan, with a high suicide rate, has seen a large decrease in its rate. However Italy, which has a lower suicide rate, has seen only a small decrease.

The large gender difference has persisted, with suicide rates for men higher than those for women, although the male-female ratio varies between countries and time periods, as can be seen by comparing Kazakhstan with Slovenia in the year 2000.

There are, however, a number of exceptions to the decreasing trend in the suicide rate. For example, whereas Ireland saw a decrease for males, the rate for females remained unchanged. In Norway, an increased female suicide rate accompanied a decrease for males. The United States and Portugal saw increases for both males and females – although in the United States these were slight – and from a relatively low level in 2000 in the case of Portugal. □

Source: UNECE Statistical Database, compiled from national and international (WHO European health for all and EUROSTAT database) official sources. The suicide rate is a standardized rate of death by suicide, which is a weighted average of age-specific suicide mortality rates using as weighting factor the age distribution of a standard reference population.

Not an official record - For information only