

Executive Secretary



Executive Secretary visits Albania

The Executive Secretary was on official visit to Albania from 18-19 February to discuss further strengthening cooperation between UNECE and Albania in areas of common interest. During his visit he held a series of bilateral meetings with government officials including Environment Minister Lefter Koka, Transport and Infrastructure Minister Edmond Haxhinasto, Industry and Energy Minister Damian Gjijnuri, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ditmir Bushati and Speaker of the Parliament Ilir Meta.

Minister Bushati explained that Albania is in the final steps of the ratification of the amendments to the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention). This contribution to the entry into force of these amendments will enable the opening of this Convention to all UN member States.

The Executive Secretary recalled that UNECE supported the development of transboundary water cooperation on the Drin River, which led to the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by the five Drin River Riparians (Albania, Greece, Montenegro, Kosovo (U.N. administered region, S.C. Res. 1244) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) in November 2011. A major project funded by the Global Environmental Facility will be initiated in 2014 to support the development of transboundary water cooperation among the five countries.

He thanked Albania for its very active support of UNECE's Committee on Housing and Land Management, which was chaired by Doris Andoni, now Director General of the National Housing Agency, from 2006-2009. He also invited Albania to ratify a number of UNECE legal instruments, in particular key border crossing facilitation agreements.

The two sides agreed on concrete actions for cooperation in the fields of environment, transport, energy and other subprogrammes. □

Transport



Jordan calls for global opening of the European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles engaged in International Road Transport

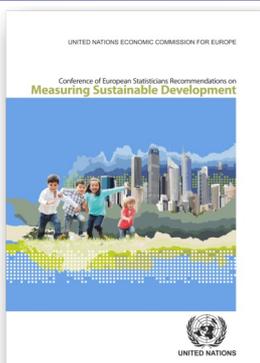
The Minister of Transport of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Lina Shbeeb, called today for the global opening of the European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles engaged in International Road Transport (AETR).

She made this call in a meeting with UNECE Executive Secretary Sven Alkalaj and at the tribune of the Inland Transport Committee, stressing that Jordan and other Mediterranean countries are willing to join the agreement. "Opening up the AETR Agreement to countries outside the UNECE region will enhance the development of transport, facilitate cross border trade and improve road safety," said Ms Shbeeb. "This would definitely be the case for Jordan."

Sven Alkalaj confirmed that UNECE stands ready to provide an international platform for all United Nations Members to work towards achieving seamless, efficient and safe international road transport. "I trust the current AETR Contracting Parties will seriously consider amending Article 14 of the Agreement to make it possible for countries outside the UNECE region to accede", he said.

Jordan is a Contracting Party to nine UNECE-administered international transport conventions and agreements. The AETR Agreement provides for the implementation of the digital tachograph – the world's most sophisticated device used in the UNECE region to control and verify driving times and rest periods of professional drivers in trucks and buses. □

Statistics



Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations on Measuring Sustainable Development will be an important input to measuring SDGs

The 45th session of the UN Statistical Commission, the global governing body on statistics, will be held in New York from 4 to 7 March 2014. Among other topics, it will discuss the measurement of progress and sustainable development. In order to ensure that a robust statistical measurement approach is incorporated in the post-2015 development agenda, the Commission has set up a Friends of the Chair Group on broader measures of progress as a "statistical adviser" to the UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Group prepared a [report](#), to be discussed at the forthcoming session, which refers strongly to the Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations on Measuring Sustainable Development, result of a joint effort of UNECE, Eurostat and OECD. The

recommendations were endorsed by over 60 Chief Statisticians from the UNECE region and beyond in June 2013. The Friends of the Chair report emphasizes that the CES Recommendations take into account all research and initiatives in this area, contribute to the clarification of the notion of well-being, social progress and sustainable development, and link the conceptual aspects related to the human well-being 'here and now', 'elsewhere' and 'later'. The 20 sustainable development themes and 3 sets of indicators identified in the recommendations can be easily linked to the proposals for SDGs and targets. The Group recommends to the international statistical community to take into account the framework presented in the CES Recommendations when choosing the indicators to measure the SDGs and related targets.

The CES Recommendations are the result of several years of joint work involving a number of countries, European Commission (Eurostat), OECD, UN Commission for Sustainable Development and the World Bank. The Recommendations synthesize into a common framework the different approaches developed by countries and international organizations and take into account the various international initiatives in this area. The framework is based on three distinct conceptual dimensions of human well-being: the well-being of the present generation in one particular country ('here and now'), the well-being of future generations ('later') and the well-being of people living in other countries ('elsewhere'). The strength of this measurement system is that it links the policy oriented and conceptual approaches and presents a flexible framework that can be adapted to the specific needs of countries. □

The CES recommendations were just printed. The electronic version is available at: <http://www.unece.org/stats/sustainable-development.html>.

Transport

UNECE endorses new global code of practice for packing of containers (CTU Code)

Today the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) moved to protect the lives and safety of both workers and the general public by endorsing a new global code of practice for the handling and packing of shipping containers for transportation by sea and land.

According to the transport insurance industry as many as two-thirds of accidents involving the loss of or damage to containerized cargo are thought to be caused by improper packing and securing of cargo inside the container. Similarly, up to 25 per cent of all accidents involving trucks may be attributable to inadequate securing of cargo.

The loss of such accidents to society and to the industry is substantial, resulting in direct expenses, operational disruption and management distraction, not to mention litigation or insurance costs. As containers are increasingly moved on rail and by road to reach their final destination, bodily injury to rail operators and road users may be occurring more frequently. It is therefore not a surprise that the correct packing and proper stowage of containers is high on the agenda of not only the transport and container industry, but also of transport safety regulators and cargo insurance companies. Increasing the level of training to further improve the expertise of those employed by shippers, consolidators, warehouses and depots to properly load containers is therefore essential.

For these reasons, the UNECE has teamed up with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) to update, enlarge and concretize the existing international guidelines for the safe packing of containers dating back to 1996.

Following more than two years of intensive efforts under the guidance of the UNECE Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24), the new Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units (CTU Code) has been finalized with the assistance of many experts from the transport and container shipping industry. The new CTU Code is a non-mandatory, inter-modal guidance document based on best practices and internationally agreed technical provisions. It provides detailed, consistent and comprehensive information and references on all aspects of loading and securing of cargo in containers and other intermodal transport taking account of the requirements of all sea and land transport modes.

The CTU Code is intended to assist the industry, employers' and workers' organizations, as well as Governments, in training their staff on the safe stowage of cargo in containers and to provide a global reference base for cargo insurance contracts. If necessary, the CTU Code could also be used as a reference base for national regulations and could become a model for internationally harmonized legislation in this field, should such requirements arise.

UNECE's Inland Transport Committee endorsed and welcomed the finalization of the CTU Code and expressed the hope that the CTU Code would soon be extensively used and referred to by Governments and the transport industry and might become an important element in transport and cargo insurance contracts.

It is expected that the competent bodies within IMO and ILO will also endorse the CTU Code during the course of 2014.

The CTU Code, currently available in electronic format and in English only, will soon be available also in French, German and Russian. □

For more information, please visit:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/doc/2014/itc/id_07_CTU_Code_January_2014.pdf.

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