

UNECE

Acting Director-General of UNOG Michael Møller takes on functions of Acting Executive Secretary of UNECE

UNECE Executive Secretary Sven Alkalaj left his position upon expiry of his contract on 8 April 2014.

The Secretary-General has thanked Mr. Alkalaj for his service to the United Nations and for his accomplishments, leadership and commitment towards the goals of the Economic Commission for Europe.

The Secretary-General has asked Mr. Michael Møller, Acting Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, to take on the functions of Acting Executive Secretary of the UNECE as of Wednesday, 9 April 2014, pending the arrival of a new Executive Secretary. □



THE PEP

European Ministers of Transport, Health and Environment gather in Paris to agree common actions for healthy and sustainable mobility

The Fourth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment (4HLM) will be held in Paris from 14 to 16 April, hosted by the Government of France, under the auspices of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP). Run jointly by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in Geneva and the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) in Copenhagen, THE PEP is a unique policy platform which seeks to encourage transport policymakers and urban planners to consider the health and environmental impacts of transport and address these through shared policy approaches.

The slogan developed for the Meeting "City in Motion: People First!" underlines the importance of placing citizens at the centre of decisions on transport and mobility: emphasis is on people-centred policies making safe, healthy and green transport choices accessible and affordable to all. Taking stock of the benefits of physical activity for health and well-being, the Meeting calls on national governments, municipal authorities and city planners to develop safe and healthy infrastructure for walking and cycling as viable means of urban mobility.

Adoption of the Paris Declaration expected

The 4HLM is expected to adopt the Paris Declaration which carries forth the four priority goals from the 2009 Amsterdam Declaration, including:

- To contribute to sustainable economic development and stimulate job creation through investment in environment and health-friendly transport
- To manage sustainable mobility and promote a more efficient transport system
- To reduce emissions of transport-related greenhouse gases, air pollutants and noise
- To promote policies and actions conducive to healthy and safe modes of transport

It will add a new fifth goal:

- To integrate transport, health and environmental objectives into urban and spatial planning policies.

At the Meeting, four new publications will be launched addressing transport, health and environment issues in Europe. □

For further information, please visit: <http://www.THEPEP.org>.

UNECE develops cooperation on information management with Ministers of Environment in Central Asia

On 3 April in Dushanbe, Tajikistan the Inter-State Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD) composed of Ministers of the Environment of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan adopted a decision inviting UNECE to provide assistance to the institutional and legal strengthening of the Commission. ICSD is part of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS). UNECE, on the basis of a mandate provided by the 2009 Summit of IFAS, has been actively engaged in the institutional and legal strengthening of IFAS in recent years.

UNECE will, among others, assist in improving donor coordination and fundraising by ICSD and the development of a unified information space for Central Asia that will improve information management in the field of environment protection, water resources management and hydro-meteorology.

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Water



The support from UNECE will be organized in the framework of the "Regional Dialogue and Cooperation on Water Resources Management in Central Asia" programme (Phase II), financed by the Government of Germany through the German Agency for International Cooperation under the Berlin Water Process. □

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Energy

UNFC can be used for renewable energy



UNFC can be used for renewable energy. This was one of the key findings of the Workshop on Application of UNFC to Renewable Energy held in Washington DC, from 24–25 March. The United Nations Framework Classification for Fossil Energy and Mineral Reserves and Resources (UNFC) is already unique in its ability to classify projects across the extractive industries sector. If work underway to test application of the system to renewables is successful, UNFC will evolve into a one-of-a-kind classification system

for most, if not all, energy resources, allowing stakeholders to compare projects and project portfolios across the entire energy sector.

The work to be done is not without challenges since UNFC emerged from the significant amount of classification work that has been undertaken for decades on the risks and uncertainties of developing resources in a geological context. Renewables do not have that history of an elaborate system of classification and reporting, and it is also, with the exception of geothermal resources, not burdened by geological uncertainty. Participants broached the challenges and made first steps in identifying the kinds of risks and uncertainties that would allow renewables projects to be classified according to UNFC. While much more remains to be done to develop renewable technology specific rules and guidelines, it would appear that in the future UNFC will become the United Nations Framework Classification for Energy and Mineral Reserves and Resources.

Hosted by the World Bank and sponsored by BP, DuPont, Shell and Total, the Workshop assembled more than 40 participants, including from Bloomberg New Energy Finance, International Geothermal Association, International Hydropower Association, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), National Renewable Energy Laboratory and the United States Department of Energy. The network of experts worldwide interested in this initiative has also grown significantly as a result of the event. □

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Environment

Third environmental performance review of Serbia assesses progress in sustainable development and conditions for green economy development



From 25 March to 2 April 2014, experts from UNECE member States and the secretariat visited Serbia for a field mission in the framework of the third environmental performance review. The team met governmental officials, NGOs, business, academia and international organizations active in Serbia to assess progress in environmental protection and sustainable development made by the country since the second review carried out in 2007 and develop recommendations for future action. Three plenary meetings and over 100 smaller meetings and field visits took place to collect information and data. The review mission was organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Energy, Development and Environmental Protection and UNDP-Serbia.

Located in South-Eastern Europe in the heart of the Balkan Peninsula, Serbia has a diverse landscape ranging from plains to mountains, vast agricultural lands and rich mineral resources. The Danube River, which runs through Serbia for 588 km, provides shipping access to inland Europe and the Black Sea. The specific focus of the third review of Serbia is on the management of surface and ground waters, efforts to reduce and recycle waste, as well as impacts of and measures to address climate change. The review will suggest how to strengthen efforts for a comprehensive and systemic response to sustainable development challenges and how to ensure favorable conditions for green economy development.

The outcomes of the third review of Serbia, including draft recommendations to the country, will be discussed by the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy at its meeting in Geneva in October 2014, with the participation of high-level officials from the Government of Serbia.

Since 1993, the UNECE Environmental Performance Review Programme assesses progress made by individual countries in reconciling their environmental and economic targets and in meeting international environmental commitments. The reviews assist countries to improve their management of the environment by making concrete recommendations for better policy design and implementation. The current third cycle of reviews focuses on the economic instruments promoting green production and consumption, as well as behavioural changes and investments in environmental protection and green projects. Serbia is the third country reviewed in this cycle following the Republic of Moldova and Montenegro. □

For more information, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/env/epr/welcome.html> or contact: info.epr@unece.org.

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