

Transport



Turkmenistan hosts international conference on the role of transport and transit corridors

The role of transport and transit corridors in ensuring international cooperation, stability and sustainable development will be discussed at a high-level international conference in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, from 3 to 4 September 2014. The event is organized by the Government of Turkmenistan, in collaboration with UNECE, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the International Road Transport Union.

UNECE Executive Secretary Christian Friis Bach will deliver one of the opening addresses, highlighting some of the key contributions UNECE is making to develop sustainable transport and transit corridors in the region. These include, among others: the Euro-Asian Transport Links project, which identified 9 rail and 9 road routes that could offer quicker and cheaper alternatives to sea fare between Europe and Asia, once proper infrastructures and border crossing procedures are in place; international legal instruments to facilitate the transit of goods across borders, such as the 1982 Harmonization Convention or the 1975 TIR Convention; on-going efforts to develop a unified railway regulatory framework to expedite rail border crossings between regions and to improve the competitiveness of international rail freight services; or United Nations Road safety Conventions developed and administered by UNECE. While in Ashgabat, the Executive Secretary will host a series of bilateral meetings with high-level officials, including, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan responsible for Transport and Communications Satlyk Satlykov, OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier and Deputy Executive Secretary of UNESCAP Shun-ichi Murata.

High-level participants, Ministers, Deputies and other high ranking representatives of international organizations and participating countries will discuss the role of transport and transit corridors in fostering economic development and strengthening international cooperation. Financing mechanisms, policy and technical obstacles to closer integration as well as facilitation measures which could promote faster integration of national economies and transport systems in the global economy will also be addressed. The conference will also consider how transport transit corridors contribute to economic, social and environmentally sustainable development, as well as strategies and policy coordination needed to maximize the benefits of seamless transport services. □

For further information, please visit:

<http://www.turkmenistan-conference.com/>

EaP GREEN



National round-table in Azerbaijan discussed implementation of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment

UNECE, the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan and the Regional Environmental Centre's Caucasus Branch Office in Azerbaijan organized a national round-table on the legal implementation of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to the Espoo Convention on 29 August in Baku.

This event was organised in the framework of the **EU programme "Greening Economies in the Eastern Neighbourhood" (EaP GREEN)**, aimed at:

- discussing the draft Review of national legislative and institutional structures vis-à-vis the Protocol on SEA in Azerbaijan, and
- developing recommendations to further support Azerbaijan in its efforts to strengthen its national legislative framework and capacities for the application of SEA.

Representatives of relevant Ministries, local authorities, members of Parliament and

other stakeholders, such as NGOs, consultants and private sector were invited to take part in the event. They got familiar with the requirements of the Protocol on SEA and relevant EU Directives as well as with the existing European practice in developing SEA legislation.

The UNECE experts presented the results of the gap analysis of the national legislation vis-à-vis the Protocol on SEA. Participants were further invited to provide inputs to the gap analysis and comments on the findings and recommendations of the draft Review. The Ministry and UNECE presented an assessment of the national capacity building needs on SEA and informed participants about the next steps in the implementation of the EaP GREEN programme in the country. These included:

- drafting of relevant legislation in 2015, followed by the finalisation of the Review, and
- a pilot application of a SEA procedure to a draft Government plan or programme, scheduled to take place from September 2014 to April 2015.

Written comments to the Review can be sent to the following e-mail address: andriy.andrusevych@rac.org.ua by 8 September 20. □

Trade

UNECE training on Trade Facilitation in Ukraine

On 27 August, UNECE delivered a training seminar on how to use its Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide (<http://tfig.unece.org/>) in Kiev. Organized in cooperation with the ministries of economy and transport and the Interagency Working Group on trade facilitation in Ukraine, the seminar gathered thirty-four representatives from the ministries of trade, transport, agriculture, customs and other trade control agencies, the business community, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting.

Participants were provided with guidance on how the UNECE Guide can be used for the development of mechanisms for public-private cooperation for trade facilitation, reducing delays at border crossings, streamlining, simplifying and automating customs clearance, transit, export and import procedures, and establishing a Single Window system. This is crucial to foster Ukraine's trade and economic development, and its inclusion in global supply chains.

At the request of the Ukrainian authorities, UNECE will consider the possibility to provide technical assistance to Ukraine to assess the level of implementation of its commitments towards the World Trade Organization as regards trade facilitation and of related WTO notifications.

Participants were very positive about the possibility to use the Guide and the skills acquired during the seminar in their daily work. The participation of the private sector in the training contributed to its success, as trade facilitation is essentially a partnership between the business community and public authorities. □

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Off the Press

Reference to Standards

This bilingual (English/Russian) publication presents the results of the international conference on "standards and Regulatory Systems" organized by UNECE on 19 November 2013 in Geneva in cooperation with the Russian Union of Industrialist and Entrepreneurs.

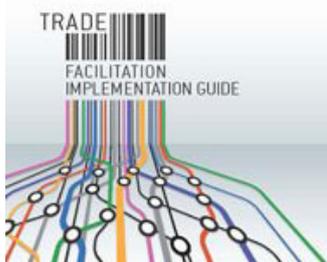
Legislators and authorities have long acknowledged that making use of standards is often more cost efficient and expedient than classical legislative tools. In fact, to regulate economic and productive activities without making use of standards is now the exception, rather than the rule and, in a number of fields, it is simply unimaginable. Thus, the question is no longer whether to use standards in regulations but "how" best to use them?

To provide some answers, regulators, representatives of standards-setting bodies, business executives and representatives from civil society discussed the following issues: the difference between exclusive and indicative reference to standards in regulations; how access to standards referenced in regulations needs to be granted to the general public; and the impact on the standards setting bodies and on the intellectual property embodied in the standard. □

The publication is available at:

<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=36308>

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