Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation

UNECE Activity Report

Seminar on the Exchange of Know-How between UNECE and RCC

After UNECE became a member of the Regional Cooperation Council for Southeast Europe in February 2008, the RCC Secretary General Hido Biscevic and the UNECE Executive Secretary Marek Belka agreed to organize a seminar on exchange of know-how, at which a number of areas could be established for developing projects based on the UNECE expertise, norms, standards, and best practice recommendations and guidelines. As the focal point for Southeast Europe in UNECE, the Regional Adviser in Trade was asked to organize the "exchange of know-how" seminar. The seminar and future projects build on the experience of UNECE, which had played a key role in the post-conflict regional cooperation in Southeast Europe, providing substantive support to the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) since 1996 and to the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe since 1999. RCC is a very new organization, and most of its experts still do not have experience and background in running international cooperation projects. UNECE can offer specific expertise in this respect.

UNECE co-organized this seminar with the RCC. The staff-to-staff meeting between UNECE and RCC was proposed by the RCC management in late 2007. They were looking for an "exchange of know-how", in order to establish several areas in which RCC and UNECE can collaborate and UNECE can lead projects, notably in areas where UNECE has established norms, standards and recommendations, which are implemented, or should be implemented in Southeast Europe. Working with sub-regional groups and organizations is a priority in UNECE's strategy for the implementation of its norms, standards, recommendations and tools, and the rising collaboration with RCC is an element of this strategy. Obviously, the countries of RCC are very much interested in projects that would speed up their process of integration with the European Union. Mr. Goran Svilanovic, former Foreign Minister of Serbia, also participated in the seminar. Presentations were made at the meeting from UNECE on Energy, the Environment, Gender, Trade, Transport and Statistics; from RCC on Gender and Statistics, Trade and Social Issues, Energy, Transport and Environment. The seminar was attended by diplomats from Bulgaria and accredited to Bulgaria, delegates to the opening seminar of RCC, NGOs, researchers, and journalists.

It was decided that RCC would prepare a letter to Mr. Belka outlining a list of areas in which UNECE and RCC can build joint projects. UNECE responded with an edited version of the list of projects. Finally, three projects led by UNECE were established in energy, statistics and PPPs for implementation in the short run. ECE was invited to participate on a high level in selected senior officials meetings of the SEE Cooperation Process (for which the RCC acts as a secretariat) during the Moldovan chairmanship of SEECP. On the basis of this seminar and earlier meetings, UNECE and RCC re-established their good cooperation from the time of SECI, and three concrete projects were the first expression of this cooperation.

Thematic focus	Venue	Date	Total participants
Regional cooperation in SEE	Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	2 Jun. 2008	70