

Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation

UNECE Activity Report

CEFTA Week 2010 – Session VI: Overcoming Barriers to Trade: Market Surveillance



The transition economies of South-East Europe (SEE) are confronted with a massive inflow of low-quality, substandard and/or counterfeit consumer goods, professional equipment and medicines. This situation poses a threat to the countries' consumers and workers and to the natural environment. It also undermines the local industry which cannot compete against producers that do not respect the regulations in place, and prevents the full integration of SEE in the system of international trade. Market surveillance, product certification and inspection authorities are the main regulatory response to ensure that products placed on the market, whether produced locally or imported, conform to the relevant technical

regulations and are not counterfeit or pirated. In many of the countries of SEE, these institutions are still non-existent. Where they do exist, they are underfunded and lack the human and technical expertise required.

To highlight the political importance of market surveillance, and present the best practice developed by the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS Group), the UNECE, together with the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development of the Republic of Serbia (the current Chair in the Office of CEFTA), and in cooperation with the IPA 2008 Regional Quality Infrastructure project and the CEFTA Secretariat, co-organized a session on “Overcoming Barriers to Trade: Market Surveillance and Quality Infrastructure”, as part of the CEFTA Week 2010 (Belgrade, 9-11 November 2010). The session was attended by market surveillance authorities, representatives of the Ministries of Trade, Ministries of Economy, other related agencies, the business communities of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro Republic of Moldova, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the European Commission, the OECD, the Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), the World Bank, the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB), the Product Safety Enforcement Forum of Europe (PROSAFE) and the UN local office. Representatives of the local diplomatic community included Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden.



The UNECE experts highlighted the challenges that confront market surveillance authorities, and explained the role of market surveillance for the domestic economy and the international trade system. They presented the tools developed by the MARS Group of the UNECE to tackle these issues. They invited the participation of the countries of the subregion to take part in the ongoing activities. As a result of the session, the market surveillance authorities have a better understanding of available sources of information and the best practice that is relevant to their day-to-day operations. The donor community has been made aware of the importance of market surveillance for the integration of the countries of the subregion and of the outstanding challenges that need to be met for the further integration of the countries of SEE in the international trade system.

Thematic focus	Venue	Date	Total participants
Regulatory cooperation	Belgrade, Serbia	11 November 2010	About 70