



MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON AID-FOR-TRADE ROAD MAP FOR SPECA

The Ministerial Conference on the Aid-for-Trade (Aft) Road Map for SPECA (the United Nations Special Programme for Central Asia, which covers Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) was held in Baku on 1-2 December 2010. The conference, which gathered some 127 delegates, including high level officials from SPECA countries, experts and representatives of donor agencies and other development partners from specialized international development organizations, was the first high-level Aid for Trade (Aft) event organized for transition economies since the launching of the Aid for Trade Initiative in 2005.

One of the key outcomes of the conference was the signing of a Ministerial Declaration that calls for creating dynamic synergies between national and regional trade-related development initiatives and policy measures, and ensuring a greater contribution of trade to equitable growth among the different regions within each country. The Declaration also identified key priority areas that should form the focus of national and regional trade development plans:

- Developing national supply side capacity, including productive capacity and institutional frameworks
- Harnessing cross-border cooperation
- Facilitating the beneficial integration of SPECA countries into the multilateral trading system.

Another key outcome was the launch of a SPECA Regional Aid-for-Trade Implementation and Monitoring Council (SPECA Aft Council). The Council, together with the SPECA Project Working Group on Trade, will bring together beneficiary countries, multi-lateral and bi-lateral donors and UN agencies working on trade issues. The Council will provide a follow-up mechanism for monitoring and supporting implementation of the Aft action matrices that were input to the Conference discussions – including identifying and working to fill gaps in implementation; providing guidance from high-level country representatives to regional initiatives; supporting resource mobilisation efforts; fostering ownership; and ensuring the sustainability of development interventions.

During the event, a 4.6 million euro project for further developing trade in transition economies, particularly of SPECA members, was announced by the Finnish Government. This project will be implemented in cooperation with UNDP. In addition, over 20 Aft for SPECA project concept notes were distributed and the SPECA Aft Council will follow-up on these with donors and implementing agencies during 2011-12.

The organization of the Conference was coordinated by the UNECE and benefited from the financial, organizational and advisory support of a number of UN agencies and specialized institutions, making it an important example of the UN “delivering as one.” □

For further information on the outcome of the conference, please visit:
http://www.unece.org/press/pr2010/10trade_p02e.htm.

The documents of the conference will be available as of 21 December at:
<http://www.unece.org/speca/Welcome.html>.

‘Green and health-friendly investment and jobs in transport’ was the subject of THE PEP 2010 Symposium. The symposium was held under The Pan-European Programme on Transport, Health and Environment and (THE PEP), run jointly by UNECE and the World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe.

THE PEP 2010 SYMPOSIUM

This first ever PEP Symposium featured Mr. René Longet, presently the mayor of the city of Onex in the canton of Geneva and President of Equiterre, an NGO for sustainable development, as key note speaker. Mr. Longet highlighted practical examples of green mobility initiated in some parts of Switzerland, such as encouraging civil servants to walk and cycle to work.

Some conclusions of THE PEP Symposium included:

- New partnerships encompassing the three sectors of transport, health and environment to achieve sustainable mobility are possible and emerging
- Strategic initiatives can be implemented at the local level, including within the tourism industry, an effective entry point for green job creation
- A focus on public and private incentives to invest in green jobs in transport can offer sustainable political benefits
- Given the current economic situation, sound scientific evidence (e.g. on the economic and health benefits of active transport like walking and cycling) is crucial to encourage policymakers to institute change.



THE PEP Symposium was held back-to-back with the 8th session of THE PEP Steering Committee and a meeting of THE PEP Bureau, which considered the results of recent workshops, including a workshop on Safe and Healthy Walking and Cycling in Urban Areas (September 2010, Batumi, Georgia) and one on Sustainable and Healthy Urban Transport Policies (June 2010, Skopje) and the contribution by THE PEP to the Environment for Europe (EfE) Ministerial Conference in September 2011 in Astana. □

For further information on THE PEP please consult:
<http://www.unece.org/thepep/en/welcome.htm>
 or contact Brinda Wachs at: brinda.wachs@unece.org.

OFF THE PRESS

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POPULATION AND HOUSING

The relationship between housing and population change in the UNECE member States is a complex one. On the one hand, it has been estimated that lower fertility rates will have a long-term impact on existing housing stock through reduced housing demand. In the short term, however, the impact of population change in the housing market is hard to estimate. Changes in households depend on the incidence of a number of variables, including international migration, the flexibility of the labour force, the availability of rentals and the timing of family formation – all of which tend to vary for each country.

The present study, the joint product of UNECE's Housing and Land Management unit and Population unit, suggests pragmatic policy solutions for the different challenges population change poses to spatial planning in different national contexts.

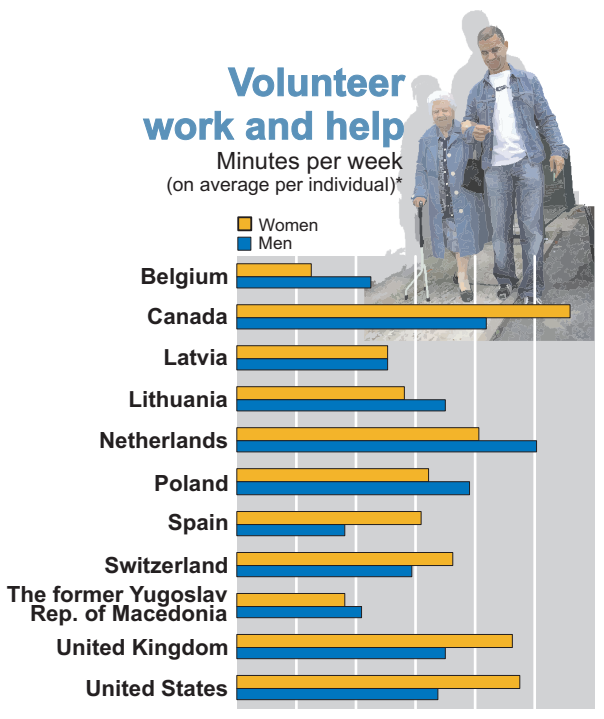
It assumes that consistent housing policies that lead to structural changes in housing supply may in turn alter the economic incentives of households to relocate. It also argues that a positive relationship between housing and demographic change could be fostered by Governments through policies that prevent housing stock oversupply, develop lifetime quality housing, diversify housing tenure (both rental and owner-occupied) and decrease restrictions on the population's mobility. □



The publication is available in English and Russian at:
<http://www.unece.org/hlm/documents/Publications/population.and.housing.e.r.pdf>.

FACTS AND FIGURES

HOW MUCH VOLUNTEERING TAKES PLACE IN THE UNECE REGION?



Source: UNECE Statistical Database (www.unece.org/stats/data).
 Note: 'Volunteer work and help' represents the average time spent by an individual working for/through an organisation and informal help to other households.
 * Data for most recent year available from 2003 onwards. Only UNECE countries with available data are shown.

Volunteering is an important and often overlooked element of the total labour performed in any country. Its impacts, however, are not only economic but also social and cultural since many volunteers work in a variety of caring roles and non-profit capacities. Volunteering also contributes to social integration, especially with regard to older persons. Volunteering for older persons and volunteering by older persons both contribute to the integration of this group into the mainstream of society; on the one hand helping to ensure that older persons receive the care and services they require, while on the other hand providing a channel through which they can share their knowledge, skills and experience with younger generations.

There is a wide range in the time spent on volunteer work across countries, with Canada, the Netherlands, the United States of America and the United Kingdom demonstrating the highest levels. Gender differences in volunteering are apparent in many countries but the direction of the divide is not always the same: in some countries women volunteer more than men, while in others the reverse is true. Only in Latvia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia do we see little or no gender difference in time spent volunteering. UNECE recommends that its Member States recognise and seek to support and strengthen the contribution of volunteers to civil society, both via the legal framework and through projects and programmes. □