



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
19 April 2011

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Trade

Fourth session

Geneva, 14-15 June 2011

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

UNECE Trade overview

UNECE Trade overview*

Summary

This document contains an overview of trade-related activities undertaken by UNECE subprogrammes other than the Trade subprogramme. The document is meant to assist those Ministries responsible for trade development in UNECE region in identifying activities outside the Trade subprogramme that may be of interest to them.

As this is the first time that such a review is prepared, the Bureau of the Committee on Trade and the secretariat would appreciate feedback from delegates as to the usefulness of the review and how it might be improved.

* This document was submitted late due to delayed inputs.

I. Transport

1. The UNECE subprogramme on Transport seeks to facilitate the international movement of persons and goods by inland transport modes, and also to increase safety, environmental protection, energy efficiency and security in the transport sector to levels that contribute effectively to sustainable development. The sub-programme also provides the secretariat to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Global Classification and Labelling of Chemicals as well as to the Administrative Committees of a number of UNECE legal instruments on transport. The Division also contributes to the implementation of the Pan-European Programme on Transport, Environment and Health (THE PEP).

Below is a brief description of activities that may be of interest to the Committee on Trade:

A. Euro-Asian Transport Links

2. Working closely with Governments of the Euro-Asian region, the subprogramme has been actively engaged in developing Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL). The EATL Expert Group, created in 2008 to assist in developing efficient, safe and secure intercontinental connections carried out SWOT studies (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) on key Euro-Asian transport issues. Work has also been carried out in 2010 focusing on:

- Identifying infrastructure road, rail and inland waterway routes.
- Prioritizing infrastructure investment.
- Estimating transport volumes along the EATL routes.
- Studying the economic viability of intercontinental maritime and inland transport options.
- Describing and analysing non-physical obstacles to international transport.
- Developing a geographic information system (GIS) Internet application to present the collected transport data.

3. Upon the completion of these studies, a unique EATL research database will be produced containing internationally agreed EATL routes, a list of priority infrastructure investments, data on obstacles to transport and the GIS Internet application to display this database. In addition, the work of the EATL Expert Group made it possible to develop and pursue a “North–South demonstration block train proposal (Mumbai-Bandar Abbas-St. Petersburg)” which will aim at promoting regular and commercially viable inter-modal transport operations along that route.

4. At present, the Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links is further developing the EATL Project Phase II, which aims at: coordinating infrastructure planning. Evaluating and prioritizing infrastructure projects; studying and analysing economically viable inland transport options; examining non-physical obstacles; and collecting data on transport flows in the EATL region; strengthening national capacities; sharing experience and best practices along the Euro-Asian transport routes; and further developing the GIS database.

B. Border-crossing facilitation and the TIR Convention

5. The secretariat has continued its efforts to monitor the implementation of the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 (Harmonization Convention). It conducted a survey of the Contracting Parties with regard to the application, at the national level, of the new Annex 8 on road transport. This Annex covers a wide range of measures to facilitate road transport operations, including facilitation of visa procedures for professional drivers, standardized weighing operations and vehicle weight certificates, minimum infrastructure requirements for efficient border-crossing points, and provisions to monitor border-crossing performance.

6. The Administrative Committee of the Harmonization Convention adopted an amendment that introduces a new Annex 9 on rail border-crossing to the Harmonization Convention, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his capacity as depositary, issued a Depositary Notification to inform the Contracting Parties of the adoption of the new Annex 9 in August 2010. The new Annex will enter into force on 30 November 2011 unless objections are transmitted by Contracting Parties to the Secretary-General before 31 August 2011.

7. Other issues of relevance to the Committee include the extensive package of amendment proposals brought for adoption to the TIR Administrative Committee. These amendments define the responsibilities of major players in the TIR system (Customs, operators and guarantors). Meanwhile, the secretariat has prepared and published a new edition of the TIR Handbook in all United Nations official languages. The Handbook includes not only the full text of the TIR Convention, but also comments, recommendations and numerous examples of best practices.

C. Harmonization of vehicle regulations

8. During 2010, the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) adopted new regulations aimed at improving vehicles' safety and their environmental performance, and continued to update existing regulations. More than 110 amendments were adopted in 2010, bringing existing vehicle regulations up-to-date and in line with technical progress. Among these changes are provisions to prevent fire risks on buses and coaches, the introduction of new provisions for the rolling resistance of tyres, which could reduce CO₂ emissions by 5 per cent, and lower noise limit values for tyres.

9. Furthermore, the World Forum agreed to globally harmonize the test procedures for measuring the emissions of heavy duty vehicles and to insert in the existing regulations the new Euro 5/6 emission requirements reducing further the emissions of gaseous pollutants and particulates for passenger cars and light duty vehicles that entered into force in December 2010.

10. Ongoing activities with direct contribution to reducing CO₂ emissions include: Worldwide harmonized Light vehicles emissions Test Procedure, Mobile Air Conditioner Test Procedure, Heavy Duty Hybrids, Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Vehicles, Electric Vehicles Safety, Market Fuel Quality and Environmentally Friendly Vehicles.

D. Transport of dangerous goods

11. UNECE published revised editions of the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR 2011) and European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (AND 2011) which entered into force as of 1 January 2011. These publications incorporate the

amendments adopted by the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15) and its joint meetings with the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (WP.15/AC.1) and the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (WP.15/AC.2)..

12. In addition, and as part of its services to ECOSOC bodies, UNECE prepared amendments to the 16th revised edition of the United Nations Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, Model Regulations; the 5th revised edition of the United Nations Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, Manual of Tests and Criteria; and the 3rd revised edition of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS).

13. The UNECE also achieved significant progress in promoting the implementation of the ECOSOC Globally Harmonized of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals. One key achievement was the publication of Commission Regulation (EC) 790/2009, amending the European Regulation implementing the GHS in all EU and European Economic Area member countries in order to align its provisions with those of the second revised edition of the GHS).

E. Road Transport

14. UNECE continued to promote the implementation of the European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles engaged in International Road Transport (AETR), which stipulates the use of the digital tachograph device to monitor the driving and rest periods of professional drivers. In April 2010, the secretariat convened an extraordinary session for the Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1), to explore possible avenues for assisting EU member states and non-EU-AETR Contracting parties to implement the digital tachograph. The session ended with an agreement over a tolerance period of six-months, ending on 31 December 2010. The Contracting Parties also set out a “tolerance package” defining the conditions under which drivers of vehicles registered in countries that failed to observe the deadline are allowed access to complying States.

15. The year 2010 also witnessed the approval of important amendments to the European Agreement on Main International Arteries (AGR): the Contracting Parties will soon endeavour to establish and implement procedures relating to road safety impact assessments, road safety audits, the management of road network safety and safety inspections for the roads of the international E-road network. The Working Party started negotiations on a new, promising proposal for a global multilateral agreement on the international regular transport of passengers by coach and bus (OmniBUS).

F. Rail Transport

16. The Working Party on Rail Transport prepared a road map and strategy towards unification of railway law in the pan-European region and along Euro-Asian transport corridors with the objective of allowing direct carriage of cargo by rail under a single regime from the Atlantic to the Pacific. This new railway strategy foresees a gradual step-by-step approach starting with the preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding that provides the necessary Governmental framework and support for the application of general terms and conditions for Euro-Asian rail transport contracts prepared in parallel by the industry.

G. Inland Water Transport

17. The Working Party on Inland Water Transport has finalized the UNECE White Paper on Efficient and Sustainable Inland Water Transport in Europe. The White Paper provides a pan-European vision on the future development of inland navigation in the UNECE region, 15 years after the issuance of the first UNECE White Paper on this subject.

II. Sustainable Energy

18. The subprogramme on Sustainable Energy promotes international cooperation in the field of energy. It assists member States in:

- Elaborating energy strategies and policies to facilitate the societal transition to more sustainable forms of energy development.
- Harmonizing legislation, regulatory systems and policies.
- Developing and implementing norms, standards, and labelling and classification systems in the field of energy

19. The subprogramme, through the Committee on Sustainable Energy, also provides member States with a forum for exchanging information, views and experiences on general energy issues, such as industry restructuring, market liberalization, and energy pricing. Below is a brief description of activities that may be of interest to the Committee on Trade.

A. Technical assistance to countries with economies in transition

20. The Committee on Sustainable Energy provides technical assistance and support to countries with economies in transition to help them implement market-oriented energy policies and market-based energy reforms, and promote the development of the energy sector. Among major current activities in this area are the “Gas Centre” initiative and the “Energy Efficiency 21” project, described below:

Gas Centre

21. UNECE launched the Gas Centre in 1994 as a technical cooperation programme to help Governments and gas companies in Central and Eastern Europe create more decentralized and market-based gas industries. The programme focuses on:

- Exchange of information, views and data between the member companies on the gas markets and gas industry; and between the gas industry, the UNECE and Governments.
- Enhancing the network of gas companies in the UNECE region.
- Promoting the interests of the gas industry in the region and cooperating in the interest of the gas industry with other agencies/international organizations.
- Institutional capacity development and training.

22. The Centre provides the following services:

- Programme of meetings on gas-industry policy issues, reform and restructuring, legal and regulatory measures, tariff systems, contracting, financial aspects and investments in countries with economies in transition.
- Publication of proceedings, presentations and reports on the restructuring, reforms, and other key issues in the gas industry in transition countries.

- On-line database on major gas markets in the UNECE region.
- Technical missions dedicated to specific issues in economies in transition

23. The Gas Centre Bureau is currently exploring with member companies a new orientation for the Work Programme for 2011, which would involve widening the scope of membership to include gas companies located in Central Asia and North Africa.

The Energy Efficiency 21 project

24. A region-wide project, the Energy Efficiency 21 project (EE21) project seeks to close the energy efficiency gap between actual practice and best technologies and between developed countries and economies in transition in the UNECE region. The project works on:

- Enhancing the dissemination and exchange of information, analyses and experiences on energy efficient, environmentally-sound technologies.
- Improving the networking of institutions, organizations and individuals working in the area of energy efficiency.
- Providing institutional capacity development and training in business planning, financial engineering and project development.
- Promoting the implementation of energy efficiency legislation.
- Identifying energy efficiency investment projects and potential sources of financing.

25. Through its EE21 Programme, UNECE promotes the formation of an energy efficiency market in Eastern Europe so that cost-effective investments can provide a self-financing method of reducing global greenhouse gas emissions. Dedicated financial instruments have been promoted, such as the European Clean Energy Fund raised by SwissRe/Conning Asset Management under a mandate of the EE21 Programme. By the end of 2010, over 90 per cent of that Fund had been committed to clean energy investment projects in Europe.

26. In addition, significant progress was achieved under the Programme on Financing energy efficiency and renewable energy investments for climate change mitigation (FEEI), supported by the United Nations Foundation (UNF), the United Nations Environment Programme/Global Environment Facility (UNEP/GEF), Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial and the European Business Congress.

27. Other EE21 activities include developing carbon emissions trading standards, promoting energy policy reforms, encouraging sound business practices and, in particular, the release publications, including four CD-ROMs on issues related to the financing, investment and development of energy efficiency in the region.

B. Labelling and classification systems and the related legal and policy frameworks

28. The Sustainable Energy subprogramme develops and implements common classification systems and guidelines for energy reserves/resources and commodities. The activities include supporting regional implementation of the United Nations Framework Classification for Reserves and Resources, which seeks to increase the compatibility of national energy reserves/resources classification systems. The work of this subprogramme could feed into the Committee on Trade's work on the harmonization of technical standards, including the impact of energy efficiency standards and labels for major household appliances and industrial equipment and the role of EU standards and labels and

voluntary agreements in improving the energy efficiency of these appliances and equipment.

III. Economic cooperation and integration

29. The subprogramme on Economic Cooperation and Integration promotes a policy, financial and regulatory environment that supports economic growth, innovative development and higher competitiveness of enterprises and economic activities in the region. The work involves developing synergies between the different thematic areas that form the focus of the subprogramme (including innovation and competitiveness policies, entrepreneurship and enterprise development, financing for innovative development, intellectual property rights and public-private partnerships) to ensure the best possible policy advice. Activities are designed along three directions:

- *Policy learning and knowledge sharing* on the basis of the international experience.
- *Capacity-building* to raise awareness and understanding of critical issues and increase technical competences.
- *Networking*, which facilitates contacts between stakeholders and creates communities of practice through which experience and opportunities circulate.

Below is a brief description of activities of particular interest to the Committee on Trade:

A. Training materials

30. The subprogramme is developing the second phase of the Private Public Partnerships toolkit, and next year will be launching multimedia training software in the area of Financing for Innovative Development. This tool, which can be used for self-learning or in a class environment, builds on previous publications on financing of innovative companies, thus continuing the existing approach that seeks to transform the work on identifying good practices into practical products that support the wide dissemination of these useful experiences and increase technical skills.

B. Innovation Performance Review

31. The national Innovation Performance Review are policy-oriented documents aiming to provide advice to policymakers and other stakeholders in the respective country on possible policy actions to stimulate innovation and improve the overall efficiency of the national innovation system. A pilot review focused on Belarus and was prepared by a team of international and national experts with the support of the Government of Belarus, and with the wide involvement of other innovation stakeholders in the country.

C. Public-Private Partnerships

32. The activities of the Economic Cooperation and Integration Division and the UNECE Team of Specialists on Public Private Partnerships (PPP) seek to overcome the skills gap that prevents a wider use of PPP, by facilitating increased awareness and understanding of this form of financing. Policy aspects are emphasized, including the legal and institutional requirements for successful PPP, drawing lessons from international

experience. Training workshops targeting participants from countries with economies in transition have been organised in a number of countries, including Uzbekistan (July 2010) and Austria (October 2010).

D. Development of sustainable biomass trade and export opportunities for selected regions of the Russian Federation

33. Implementation of the “Project on Development of Sustainable Biomass Trade and Export Opportunities for Selected Regions of the Russian Federation” saw the development of the first Regional Biomass Action Plan (RBAP) for the regions of the Russian Federation. The action plans coordinate the development of the regional biomass sector and integrate the interests of the forestry and woodworking, agricultural, electricity and municipal heating, waste and recycling sectors.

IV. Environment

34. The subprogramme on environment aims at safeguarding the environment and human health, improving environmental management throughout the UNECE region, and promoting further integration of environmental policy into sectoral policies. Activities involve:

- Strengthening national capacity for environmental monitoring and assessment systems in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe.
- Fostering the implementation of ECE regional environmental commitments by member States.
- Improving environmental performance in countries with economies in transition

Below is a brief description of activities that may be of interest to the Committee on Trade:

A. The “Environment for Europe” process

35. The “Environment for Europe” process is a unique partnership for a better integration of environmental concerns in the formulation of policies at the national, regional and local levels as well as in the cross-border dimension. The process brings together member States within the UNECE region, relevant United Nations system organizations, other intergovernmental organizations, regional environment centres, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other major groups. It also provides a high-level platform on environmental issues through its ministerial conferences. During these conferences, stakeholders discuss, decide and join efforts in addressing environmental priorities across the 56 countries of the UNECE region.

36. At the same time, the process focuses on helping countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe to raise their environmental standards and consolidate a common regional standard. The UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy, which has been closely associated with the “Environment for Europe” process since the beginning, serves as secretariat. At present, the Committee is preparing for the Seventh Ministerial Conference to take place in Astana, Kazakhstan on 21-23 September 2011. The Conference will discuss two thematic policy issues, namely: Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems; and **Greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development.**

37. Actions will be taken to implement the results of the Seventh Ministerial Conference and further integrate environment into other sectoral policies through intersectoral programmes and projects, including education for sustainable development, transport, health and environment as well as water and health.

B. Environmental performance review programme

38. The environmental performance review (EPRs) assess a country's efforts to reduce its pollution burden and manage its natural resources; to integrate environmental and socio-economic policies; to strengthen cooperation with the international community; to harmonize environmental conditions and policies throughout Europe and North America; and to contribute to sustainable development in the UNECE region. The reviews are also a useful tool for helping these countries upgrade their environment in line with the pan-European objectives of the Environment for Europe process.

39. The EPR programme, now pursuing its second cycle of reviews, is now focusing on member countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus. In spring 2010, Azerbaijan was reviewed for the second time; subsequent to the peer review, the final report will be officially published in 2011 in three languages (English, Russian and Azeri). A review on Bosnia and Herzegovina was also produced and peer-reviewed in 2010. The final report, available in four languages (English and the three official languages of Bosnia and Herzegovina), will be officially launched in 2011. Tajikistan will be the next country under review. In addition, a preparatory mission to Turkmenistan was carried out in November 2010.

V. Statistics

40. The subprogramme on Statistics supports the implementation of internationally agreed upon statistical standards and methods to improve the quality of statistics and their international comparability. The subprogramme also coordinates statistical activities across the UNECE region. A key aspect of this coordinating role is the maintenance of a database of international statistical activities (<http://unece.unog.ch/disa>), which features an inventory of statistical activities carried out by around 30 international organizations. Activities of particular interest to the Committee and Trade include:

A. Impact of Globalization on National Accounts Guide

41. This Guide (<http://www.unece.org/stats/groups/wggna.e.htm>) is meant to assist national-accounts statisticians in addressing the challenges posed by globalization. Most notable are the challenges related to international trade: recording of goods for processing, merchandising, international trade in Intellectual property products and global manufacturing, to name a few. The Guide will be published by the end of the year, after its endorsement by the Conference of European Statisticians.

B. Sustainable development and environmental statistics

42. Working closely with Eurostat and OECD, UNECE launched pioneering work on developing a conceptual framework to measuring sustainable development. A final report of the Task Force may be presented to the plenary session of the Conference in June 2012.

43. UNECE is also conducting a survey among member countries and beyond to assess the involvement of National Statistical Offices in producing emission inventories and other

climate-change-related statistics. The survey comes in response to increased demand for high quality environmental statistics, and seeks to improve the quality of environmental statistics and their comparability across countries.

C. Technical cooperation activities

44. In a demand-driven approach, activities focus on key national priorities in areas where United Nations standards exist, such as population censuses, indicators related to the Millennium Development Goals, short-term economic statistics, implementation of the new 2008 System of National Accounts and of new statistical classifications, gender disaggregated statistics and statistical data dissemination.

VI. Women's empowerment

45. UNECE launched two assessments of the business environment for female and male entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan in cooperation with the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Development Programme, with financial support from the Governments of Finland and Sweden. In addition, an update of the assessment of the business environment for female and male entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan has been initiated under the same framework.

46. The assessments will enable a better understanding of gender-specific factors and constraints to entrepreneurship development, and inform policy recommendations for improving and further developing entrepreneurial opportunities for women in the region. A subregional forum planned for the summer of 2011 will take stock of the findings of the assessments and disseminate lessons learnt from the evidence to a broad range of stakeholders in Central Asia.

47. In addition, and as part of the project "Strengthening national mechanisms for gender equality and women's empowerment" implemented in collaboration with the regional commissions of the United Nations, UNECE carried out research work on the diversity of types, mandates, roles and functions of national mechanisms for gender equality and women's empowerment in the European Union and in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The project seeks to strengthen the collaboration and synergies between the different mechanisms at national level towards achieving the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women. In the second phase of the project, to be completed in 2011, training manuals will be developed to address the key challenges identified in the regional studies.
