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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Technical Harmonization and
Standardization Policies

Thirteenth session (10-12 November 2003)

REPORT OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION

Terms of Reference of the Working Party and its Ad Hoc Groups of Experts

Highlights

This document contains the terms of reference of the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies (Working Party 6) and of the following groups of experts: "MARS" Group (Advisory Group on Market Surveillance) and the "Telecom Task Force". These terms of reference were considered and adopted by the Working Party at its thirteenth session.

The report of the session is contained in document TRADE/WP.6/2003/16.

The report of the session and other related documents (including background papers and presentations made at the International Seminar) can be found on the Working Party's website <http://www.unece.org/trade/stdpol>

Annex 1

**Revised Terms of Reference for
the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies**

The Working Party:

- (a) Serves as a forum for the exchange of information on developments and experiences in the areas of technical regulations, standardization, conformity assessment and related activities at the national, regional and international levels, with the goal of contributing to the establishment of an open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading and financial system;
- (b) Determines priorities for international standardization activities with a view to:
 - promoting a global policy based on sustainable development principles in selected domains such as public health and safety, environmental protection, energy efficiency, consumer protection and new technologies;
 - preventing, reducing or eliminating technical barriers to trade;
- (c) Analyzes problems of an international and regional nature and experiences in solving them. Prepares recommendations aimed at facilitating international trade through the harmonization of national policies and the promotion of best practices based on good governance principles with respect to technical regulations, standardization, conformity assessment and related activities such as quality and environment management, consumer protection and market surveillance;
- (d) Acts as a Forum for reflection on such topics as may be referred to it by the Economic Commission for Europe, the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development, member Governments and/or concerned international and regional organizations. Cooperates with the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society in general on issues contributing to the realization of its goals and programmes;
- (e) Maintains, when appropriate through special coordinators, liaison with governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with technical regulations, standardization and related activities. Cooperates with other UNECE subsidiary bodies on cross-sectoral matters;
- (f) Organizes seminars and workshops at the international, regional and national levels on the implementation of internationally agreed principles of technical regulation, standardization and related activities. Provides advice and assistance to countries with economies in transition to facilitate their market reforms and integration into the world economy;
- (g) Arranges, upon request, for the provision of technical assistance to member Governments with a view to implementing agreed UNECE recommendations on regulatory cooperation and standardization policies;

Creates projects and establishes, when necessary, ad hoc groups of experts to address specific problems and concerns identified by the Working Party. Supervises, together with the secretariat, trust funds established for the implementation of concrete projects and undertakes other activities as requested and mandated by member States.

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Annex 2

Terms of Reference for the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (“MARS” Group) (Adopted by the Working Party at its thirteenth session, 10-12 November 2003)

Establishment of the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance

At the UNECE International Forum on Market Surveillance in October 2002, a proposal was made to establish a group of experts on market surveillance, and the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies (WP.6) formally endorsed this recommendation at its 2002 session. The recommendation was further approved by the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development at its seventh session in May 2003. On 9 September 2003, the Group held its inaugural meeting in Piestany, Slovakia. It adopted as its title, “Advisory Group on Market Surveillance” (“MARS” Group).

Objectives

General

- To contribute to the activities of the Working Party, which are designed to create conditions conducive to developing and promoting global trade and economic cooperation.

Specific

- To provide for interaction on a national/regional/international level between all players - including public authorities, manufacturers, retailers, importers, consumers and users - in support of their efforts to prevent goods not in conformity with legislation from being placed on the market;
- To increase transparency and attract attention to the role and responsibilities of public authorities and their staff in the chain of control for market surveillance;
- To identify good practices and methods ensuring the fulfilment of legitimate regulatory objectives (e.g. protection of human health, and safety; protection of animal or plant life and health; protection of the environment; and ensuring fair competition);
- To promote and, when necessary, initiate coherent good practices and draw up recommendations on market surveillance in the UNECE region.

Composition of the Group: membership and participation in its meetings

Participation is open to representatives of both UNECE and other UN member States.

It is also open to experts from international organizations, and to representatives of the private sector and non-governmental organizations as observers in their personal capacity.

The Group may establish teams of experts to prepare projects requiring specific expertise. Such projects are expected to become part of the Group's general activities. The Group may work with interested Governments and organizations on financing and implementing these projects.

The UNECE secretariat will provide the Group and its teams with the necessary support within available resources.

Reporting

The Group works under the guidance of the intergovernmental Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies (WP.6), to whom it also reports. It works on the understanding that its final proposals or recommendations must be endorsed by the Working Party. The Advisory Group's terms of reference and duration of work will be reviewed regularly by the Working Party in accordance with UNECE rules and procedures.

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Annex 3

Terms of Reference for The UNECE “Telecom Task Force”

(Adopted by the Working Party at its thirteenth session, 10-12 November 2003)

Establishment of the Telecom Task Force

The establishment of a Task Force to implement the UNECE “Telecom Initiative” project was proposed at the telecom meeting with public authorities held in Geneva on 24 and 25 May 2003. The “Telecom Initiative” project had been prepared under the auspices of the Team of Specialists on Standardization And Regulatory Techniques (“START” Team). It was presented to the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies (WP.6) at its twelfth session (October 2003). The Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization (WP.6) expressed general support for the initiative. It was subsequently presented to the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprises Development at its seventh session (May 2003). The Committee endorsed continued work on it.

Objectives of the Telecom Task Force

The Telecom Task Force, established within the activities of the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization (WP.6), aims to create conditions conducive to the development and promotion of global trade and economic cooperation

The specific purpose of the Task Force is to develop common regulatory objectives (CROs) for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) products that will constitute agreements between interested countries on regulatory convergence in support of legitimate requirements and resulting in greater open market access.

The Task Force will handle questions related to Telecommunications, Broadcasting and Information Technology, in particular on equipment and associated services, including such questions when they are complementary to regulatory project initiatives that might be initiated in other sectors under the UNECE Recommendation “L”.

The Task Force will work closely with the “START” Team to implement the “Telecom Initiative”, launched by the “START” Team. The “START” Team will provide to the Task Force, when required, assistance and guidance on policy matters for its work according to the “International Model for technical harmonization based on good regulatory practice for the preparation, adoption and application of technical regulations via the use of international standards”.

Composition of the Telecom Task Force: membership and participation in its meetings

The Task Force comprises experts with the collective expertise to address the specific task defined for it.

It is formed by members who are experts and representatives from national authorities of countries wishing to collaborate actively in the measures and agreements under study. It may include experts and representatives not only from countries in the UNECE region but also from other interested UN Member States. It may work with international organizations, as well as representatives of the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as observers.

The Task Force can establish teams of experts to prepare sub-projects requiring specific expertise.

The Task Force will agree on its own working procedures.

The UNECE secretariat will provide the necessary support and guidance to the Task Force and its teams within available resources.

Reporting

The Task Force shall report to the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies (WP.6) and regularly inform the "START" Team of its work.

The Task Force's terms of reference and duration of work will be reviewed regularly by the Working Party in accordance with UNECE rules and procedures

The Task Force works on the understanding that final recommendations and proposals from the Task Force will be submitted for decision to WP.6.

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