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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND  
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation  
and Standardization Policies

Fourteenth session, 22-24 November 2004

Items 4 and 8 (c) of the provisional agenda

**REGULATORY COOPERATION ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS OF THE WORKING PARTY**

Note by the secretariat

This note contains information on the regulatory activities of the Working Party since its last session and on the status of its ongoing and new projects.

It is presented for information to delegates.

## INTRODUCTION

1. The regulatory activities of the Working Party are linked to the recommendations of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) on standardization policies drawn up by the Working Party and its predecessor bodies and, in particular, to the implementation of the latest UNECE Recommendation "L"- "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" ("International model for technical harmonization"), which was adopted by the Working Party as a new UNECE "Recommendation on Standardization Policies" in October 2001<sup>1</sup>.

2. Following the positive response to the "International Model" from a number of UNECE Member States, including the EU, the Working Party has embarked on a number of pilot projects aimed at the practical implementation of the mechanisms found in the "International Model". The Working Party has established a Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START Team) to assist regional and sectoral initiatives based on the "International Model".

## REGULATORY COOPERATION PROJECTS - REGIONAL AND SECTORAL

### Regional

#### (a) Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

3. On the basis of the International Model, the CIS countries have prepared a draft agreement on harmonizing technical regulations in their region. It was prepared in cooperation with the CIS Interstate Council for Standardization, Certification and Metrology (also called the Euro-Asian Council for Standardization, Metrology and Certification - EACS), which unites the standardization agencies of the 12 countries of the former Soviet Union. The draft agreement was approved in May 2003 and has been sent for comment to each of the 12 Governments.

4. The Working Party discussed this at its session in November 2003 (document TRADE/WP.6/2003/3) and agreed that implementing such an agreement would not only contribute to the development of trade between the CIS countries but also provide a useful and practical showcase for regional cooperation that would serve as an example for regulatory cooperation in other UNECE subregions.

5. At the May 2004 meeting of the CIS Interstate Council participants confirmed their interest in harmonizing the regulatory regimes of their countries. They intend to prepare uniform intergovernmental technical regulations which would be implemented on the basis of the agreement. Their priority areas for cooperation are those sectors/areas covered by 13 EU "New Approach" Directives and by some EU "Old Approach" Directives (for these priorities, see document TRADE/WP.6/2004/4).

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<sup>1</sup> The latest edition of UNECE Recommendations on Standardization Policies was published in 2002 as document ECE/STAND/17/Rev.4

6. In May 2004, the Working Party, in cooperation with Russian authorities and the Government of the Russian region Tatarstan organized an "International Conference on Technical Regulations: National Interests and International Experience" in the city Kazan in the Russian Federation. More than 200 participants representing policy makers, regulators, standardizers, members of parliament at both federal and regional level, as well as foreign experts and private companies exchanged views on the pace of regulatory and administrative reforms in the Russian Federation.

7. Participants supported change in the general regulatory framework in the country, pointing out a number of unresolved policy and practical matters and suggesting that dialogue should be continued with all stakeholders from Russia, the CIS States and other interested international organizations/experts. A proposal was made to hold a follow-up conference in Moscow at the end of 2004.

**(b) South-East Europe**

8. In 2003, with assistance from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the UNECE started a project in the Balkan region to (a) identify regulatory problems in trade and (b) explore the feasibility of conducting a regulatory convergence dialogue among countries in the region. In this region, discussions on regulatory cooperation take into consideration the Stability Pact activities and are held in cooperation with its relevant bodies.

9. Regional experiences (including those of the Balkans) in good governance for regulatory practices were discussed at the November 2003 International Seminar that the Working Party organized in conjunction with its thirteenth session. The Working Party agreed on the necessity of continuing this dialogue and exchange of information on regulatory approaches. The objective is to (a) improve mutual understanding and confidence-building between regulatory authorities; and (b) encourage regulators to implement, whenever possible, the least trade-restrictive means of meeting legitimate objectives and, when feasible, cooperate to establish regulatory convergence in order to facilitate trade

10. On 8 June 2004, a meeting of regulators from nine South-East European countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) was held in Ljubljana at the invitation of the Government of Slovenia. At the meeting, participants agreed on the importance of information exchange and close dialogue through the network established under this project and on areas where further actions will be required (see annex).

11. The Bureau of the Working Party, noting the importance of regulatory development in the Balkan region, decided to continue discussions at a round table to be held in Geneva on 22 November 2004, in conjunction with the fourteenth session of the Working Party. National and sub-regional regulatory cooperation priorities within the UNECE region are to be presented at the round table.

**Sectoral projects**

**(a) START Team**

12. At its meeting in March 2004 the UNECE Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START Team) discussed the pace at which implementation of its regional (CIS and south-east Europe) and sectoral (Telecom and Earth-moving Machinery) projects was progressing. The Team recommended including aspects of regulatory cooperation in the next revision of the ECE Standardization List (see document TRADE/WP.6/2004/5 for the proposal). It meets again on 13 and 14 September 2004.

**(b) Telecom sector**

13. Telecommunications was the first sector to show interest in the application of "Recommendation L". The initial steps toward implementation are being taken to harmonize technical regulations on certain telecom products. In the telecoms community, this effort is known as the "UNECE Telecom Initiative".

14. The Initiative had been proposed by private-sector companies which had identified areas in the telecommunication sector where the lack of regulatory convergence was making it difficult for private operators to access markets.

15. In 2002, representatives of telecommunication companies agreed on draft proposals for administrative and technical requirements for "Common Regulatory Objectives" - as proposed in the "International Model" - for a number of the most popular portable products (GSM, IMT-2000, Wireless LAN, Bluetooth, Personal Computers, Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) Modem). These draft Common Regulatory Objectives can be found on the Working Party's web site at: [http://www.unece.org/trade/tips/wp6/wp6\\_tele\\_cros.htm](http://www.unece.org/trade/tips/wp6/wp6_tele_cros.htm)

16. In 2003, the discussions were joined by representatives of public authorities and it was proposed to establish a task force to implement this project. In November 2003, the Working Party formally established a "Telecom Task Force". Its terms of reference were endorsed by the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development at its May 2004 session (see document TRADE/WP.6/16/Add.2, annex 3. This document will soon be available on the "Telecom Initiative" web page under "Documents").

17. In May 2004, the office bearers of the Telecom Task Force met informally and prepared a plan of action, including a special web page for this project ([http://www.unece.org/trade/tips/wp6/wp6\\_tele\\_h.htm](http://www.unece.org/trade/tips/wp6/wp6_tele_h.htm))

18. The first European Commission report on the Radio and Telecom Terminals Regulation (report on the R&TTE Directive, see [http://www.unece.org/trade/tips/wp6/wp6\\_tele\\_doc.htm](http://www.unece.org/trade/tips/wp6/wp6_tele_doc.htm)) refers to the UNECE Telecom Initiative as being compatible with the New Approach.

19. The Telecom Task Force will meet again on 25 November 2004.

(c) **Earth-moving machinery**

20. A second project initiated in 2003 was the ‘Earth-Moving Machinery Initiative’. The idea for this project was submitted to the Committee at its May 2003 session. The Committee gave the project its support. In November 2003, the Working Party endorsed the Initiative, calling on interested UNECE member States to inform the secretariat about their interest in taking part.

21. The START Team discussed the preparation of a Common Regulatory Objective on the basis of an ISO standard at its meeting in March 2004. The draft is expected to be further reviewed at the next meeting of the Team in September 2004 and after being finalized will be submitted to the Working Party for consideration at its fourteenth session.

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ANNEX

**Meeting of regulators from South-East European Countries  
(under the UNECE/SIDA “South-East Europe Regulatory Project”)  
Ljubljana, 8 June 2004**

Information on this meeting is available at the WP.6 web page [http://www.unece.org/trade/tips/wp6/wp6\\_h.htm](http://www.unece.org/trade/tips/wp6/wp6_h.htm) under “Other events” - “2004” - “workshops”

**Conclusions**

Participants agreed that the following areas should constitute subjects for further work under this project (not in order of priority):

1. Experiences in drafting and implementing horizontal national legislation on technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures;
2. Measures and mechanisms for coordinating activities on a national level and for informing and involving all stakeholders in the process of preparation/application of trade regulations;
3. Sharing experiences on how to include all stakeholders in the revision of the technical legal framework, and on the best ways to inform industry of new requirements;
4. Aspects related to the approximation to EU legislation by non-EU countries;
5. A regional exchange of information regarding requirements for placing goods on markets (information on future regulatory work);
6. How sectoral mutual recognition projects could contribute to enhancing trade (taking into account the commitments of each country with respect to its relations with the EU);
7. Market surveillance issues in general, and in particular, for example, in the area of motor vehicles; or in establishing regional (EU-related and/or compatible) information systems on dangerous goods.

It was agreed that the UNECE secretariat should prepare a draft work programme including future activities to be dealt with under the UNECE/SIDA project.

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