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**COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT**

Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and
Standardization Policies
(Fifteenth session, 24-26 October 2005)

REPORT OF THE FIFTEEN SESSION

Highlights

The Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) celebrated thirty-five years of UNECE work in the standardization policy area. The Working Party's annual session included a second UNECE International Forum on Market Surveillance and Consumer Protection.

Participants in the Forum noted the importance of market surveillance activities for UNECE member States, particularly for countries in transition and developing economies. They agreed on a practical follow-up to issues of concern raised by delegations. A report on the Forum can be found in addendum to this report (TRADE/WP.6/2005/15/Add.1).

The Working Party discussed the first results of the strategic review of its activities, as initiated in 2003, and decided to continue this restructuring process.

In conjunction with the next session of the Working Party and the tenth session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (CTIED), a joint forum on "Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization in a Globalizing World - Challenges and Future Directions" will be held during the "International Trade Week" on 19-23 June 2006.

This document as well as the documentation for the June 2006 events can be found at:
<http://www.unece.org/trade/ctied/wp6/documents/wp6-06-list.htm>

I. Introduction

1. The Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) held its thirty-fifth jubilee meeting from 24 to 26 October 2005 in Geneva. The event included the Working Party's fifteenth session (24-26 October 2005) and a second UNECE International Forum on Market Surveillance and Consumer Protection (on 24 p.m. and 25 a.m. October 2005).

2. Participants in the meetings included representatives of the following countries: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom and Uzbekistan.

3. The meetings were also attended by a representative of the European Community.

4. The following United Nations organizations and specialized agencies participated: the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.

5. The following intergovernmental organizations also attended: Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Interstate Council on Standardization, Certification and Metrology, International Organization of Legal Metrology (BIML), Standardization Organization for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC-GSO), Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers (NORDEN) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

6. The following non-governmental organizations participated: the European Committee for Standardization (CEN), the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC), International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), International Accreditation Forum (IAF), International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

7. Representatives of the following countries participated under Article 11 of the terms of reference of the Economic Commission for Europe: Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, Japan and Jordan.

8. Observers present at the invitation of the secretariat included representatives of private-sector companies and consumer associations from western, central and eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and North America.

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

9. The provisional agenda, as contained in document TRADE/WP.6/2005/1, was adopted.
10. The Director of the Trade Development and Timber Division, Ms. Virginia Cram-Martos, opened the session. She highlighted the achievements of the Working Party during the past year and provided a general overview of the UNECE technical harmonization and standardization policies programme, which celebrates its 35th anniversary this year.

III. Election of officers (agenda item 2)

11. Mr. Christer Arvius (Sweden) was elected Chairman, and Mr. V. Koreshkov (Belarus) and Mr. A. Gonda (Slovakia) were elected vice-chairpersons.
12. The Working Party expressed its gratitude to the former vice-chairperson, Mr. D. Podhorsky (Slovakia), for his active contribution to the Working Party activities.

IV. Matters arising from the sixtieth session of the Economic Commission for Europe, the ninth session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development, and the external evaluation of the UNECE (agenda item 3)

Documentation: ECE/TRADE/360

13. Ms. Cram-Martos highlighted the importance of the Working Party's work to reducing technical barriers to trade and the interrelationship of the work with that of other subsidiary bodies under the Committee.
14. Among the areas consistently highlighted during the Committee's discussions related to the Working Party were:
 - (a) The importance of regulatory and standards convergence to trade;
 - (b) The need to improve market access and competitiveness, especially in transition economies;
 - (c) The importance of standards;
 - (d) The assistance to member States in managing change;
 - (e) The need for a much greater emphasis on implementation.
15. The secretariat also drew the attention of the Working Party to the decision by the Committee to entrust the Working Party with organizing a Forum on regulatory cooperation in June 2006, during the Committee's annual session.

16. The secretariat also noted the work done by the Committee to promote the Working Party's events through a network of national promotion organizations ("multiplier points") and a CD-ROM on outputs "Norms, Standards and Practices for Trade Facilitation and International Business".

17. The Working Party:

(a) Noted the information from the Director of the Trade Development and Timber Division, on the decisions adopted by the Commission at its sixtieth session and of the Committee at its ninth session;

(b) Took note of the presentation on the process for the strategic review of UNECE activities, and of the structure of its principal subsidiary bodies (PSBs) and subsidiary bodies (SBs) initiated by UNECE member States in 2005;

(c) Agreed to look further into issues related to UNECE reform while reviewing its programme of work (agenda item 11).

V. Second UNECE International Forum on Market Surveillance and Consumer Protection (agenda item 4)

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2005/2
TRADE/WP.6/2005/2/Add.1
TRADE/WP.6/2005/2/Add.2
Background notes and presentations available on web site
http://www.unece.org/trade/ctied/wp6/other_events/fora.htm

18. The Forum was opened by the Director of the Trade Development and Timber Division and by the Chairman of the Working Party, who recalled that the market surveillance segment of the Working Party's work was initiated in response to requests from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and as an outcome of the first Forum on this topic held in 2002. They also recalled that the programme of the Working Party is complementary to the United Nations work on consumer protection (which the General Assembly in 1999 had adopted United Nations Guidelines on Consumer Protection (GA Decision 54/449)).

19. The Forum was organized to present national approaches to and experiences with market surveillance systems and practices, in general, and also to share practical means of addressing common problems in the area of market controls for consumer protection.

20. Discussions at the Forum covered the following groups of issues: the variety of regional and national approaches to market surveillance (legal framework, institutional structure, etc.) and good practices, protection of consumers against fraud and misleading information; traceability of imported products; intellectual property rights and fights against counterfeit good, information exchange systems on dangerous goods, etc. (the report of the Forum can be found in document TRADE/WP.6/2005/15/Add.1).

21. At the conclusion of the Forum, the Working Party:
- (a) Thanked all speakers at the second UNECE International Forum on Market Surveillance and Consumer Protection for their excellent contributions;
 - (b) Noted documents on market surveillance issues circulated by Croatia, Israel, Romania, Slovakia, the European Consumer Voice for Standardization (ANEC) and the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC);
 - (c) Requested the secretariat to upload all the presentations on the UNECE WP.6 website: http://www.unece.org/trade/ctied/wp6/other_events/archive.htm;
 - (d) Welcomed the “Guidelines on Good Practices in Nordic Countries” being prepared by the Nordic Council of Ministers and entrusted the WP.6 Office Bearers and the Chair of the “MARS” Group to consider modalities for possible joint actions;
 - (e) Requested the secretariat, in cooperation with the Chair of the “MARS” Group, to compile a list of items brought forward during the Forum to be included in the Group’s work programme;
 - (f) Noted the discussion on the proposal (document TRADE/WP.6/2005/10/Add.1) for a new recommendation on the use of market surveillance as a means of protecting consumers against counterfeit goods;
 - (g) Invited delegations, international and regional organizations to send their comments on the proposal for such a recommendation to the secretariat by the end of February 2006;
 - (h) Called on the Chairman of the “MARS” Group to consider comments received at the forthcoming meeting of the Group by the end of March 2006, with the view to elaborating a revised proposal for the recommendation to be circulated through the secretariat in advance of the next WP.6 session in June 2006;
 - (i) Invited the rapporteurs and the “MARS” Group to develop a common vocabulary of terms related to market surveillance in order to foster a coherent understanding of policies and practices in the area.

VI. Review of developments in standardization activities and in the field of regulatory cooperation at international, regional and national levels (agenda item 5)

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2005/3

22. The Working Party was presented with information on developments in countries, in regional groupings and in international and regional organizations. A submission was made by Croatia on the latest changes in legal and institutional framework in the country, namely, on the

establishment and functioning of the Croatian Standards Institute (HZN), the Croatian Office for Metrology (DZM) and the State Office for Standardization and Metrology (DZNM), which is in the process of being established (document TRADE/WP.6/2005/3).

23. The representative of Belarus spoke about the process of regulatory development under the law on technical regulations adopted in his country.

24. The representative of the Czech Republic provided information on the technical assistance granted to Albania by her country in the area of technical harmonization, aiming at enhancing business opportunities and investments in Albania.

25. The representative of the Russian Federation provided insight into the current pace of elaboration of technical regulations in accordance with the priority list agreed upon by the Government. The new technical regulations foresee different ways of presenting technical requirements (which can be done either through putting factual figures and technical data in a regulation or through reference to relevant standards in a regulation). The first regulation on the exhaust emission of automobile engines was adopted in the Russian Federation in mid-October 2005. For example, it makes reference to relevant UNECE regulations on the construction of vehicles drawn up by the UNECE Working Party on the Construction of Vehicles (WP.29).

26. The delegation of Ukraine informed the meeting about the progress of reform in regulatory areas. Seven new technical regulations are to be drawn up in 2005. Thus, all EU "New and Modular Approach" directives will be transposed into relevant technical regulations. The Government has also prepared a timetable for implementations of the directives and related standards with the first three directives to be implemented in 2006.

27. Information from the CIS Bureau of Standards highlighted the different stages of economic integration between CIS member States in general and those which are members of CIS Subgroupings, such as "Common Economic Space" and Eurasian Economic Commonwealth (EurAzES).

28. The European Commission (EC) recalled that in 2005 the EU celebrates the twentieth anniversary of the "New Approach" concept. With a view to further improving the directives according to these techniques, the EU was currently reviewing issues related to conformity assessment, accreditation, EC marking and "notified bodies". She also provided information on EU technical assistance to developing and transition economies.

29. During the discussions, the CIS delegates pointed to the importance for their countries of being aware of any changes in "New Approach" regimes as in the majority of CIS countries regulatory authorities were planning to use (or were already using) the "New Approach" directives as a basis for their national technical regulations.

30. The representative of the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) reported on discussions and decisions taken at the latest IEC General Assembly which had taken place in South Africa from 17 to 21 October 2005.

31. The representative of the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC) spoke about the link between international and regional standardization and about the good contacts that existed between IEC and CENELEC. Seventy five per cent of CENELEC standards were based on IEC standards.

32. The CENELEC works closely with European industry, about 30 per cent of its standards (5 100) were developed to support European Union legislation and 70 per cent were prepared at the request of and in collaboration with industry.

33. The presentation by the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) was devoted to new challenges faced by this organization, namely, the starting of work in sectors such as services, food and environment, with the objective of completing all new standards within three years. The representative also informed the meeting about the technical assistance programmes managed by the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) (in the Mediterranean and Balkan regions, and with the Association of southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)). He explained that the portfolio of CEN included 11 000 documents, the majority of which constituted European Standards (ENs) which have to be adopted by 28 national members. About 30 per cent of these ENs are identical to ISO standards.

34. The Working Party:

(a) Took note of the submission from Croatia on institutional changes in its national quality infrastructure and on harmonization of Croatian legislation with EU legislation;

(b) Noted the presentations by the delegations of Belarus, Russian Federation and Ukraine on the latest national developments in the standardization and regulatory areas as well as the presentation by the Czech Republic of its technical assistance project enhancing business opportunities and investments in Albania;

(c) Noted the information from the EC Commission highlighting work on the review of the “New Approach/Modular Approach” techniques and the technical assistance activities in relation to third countries; and invited the European Commission to provide further information on the process and results of the “New Approach/Modular Approach” review;

(d) Noted updates provided by international and regional standards-setting bodies IEC, CEN and CENELEC concerning achievements and future directions of their standardization activities;

(e) Welcomed the progress in concluding regional technical harmonization agreements in the CIS region (based on information from the CIS Interstate Council on Standardization, Certification and Metrology).

VII. Coordination (agenda item 6)

UNECE Standardization and Regulatory List (new name)

Documentation: ECE/STAND/20/Rev.5
TRADE/WP.6/2005/4

35. It was recalled that at its fourteenth session, the Working Party decided that the revision of the UNECE Standardization List should also include regulatory areas and product sectors where member countries see the need for a transnational dialogue on regulatory convergence matters.

36. The Rapporteur on Coordination (Ms. O. Manafova) presented a proposal for a new format for the List (document TRADE/WP.6/2005/4).

37. Delegations provided information on regulatory priorities in a number of countries, as well as in the CIS and ASEAN regions.

38. A discussion took place as to whether the UNECE Standardization and Regulatory List could also be used as a priority-setting instrument (on a regional level) among countries in transition and developing countries, thus providing a practical step towards obtaining the wider involvement of developing countries in “international standards-setting” work.

39. The work on the revision of the UNECE Standardization and Regulatory List had been presented at the General Assembly of the African Regional Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO) (Accra, Ghana, February 2005), at the interactive workshop of the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC) (Geneva, June 2005) and at the meeting of the ISO Committee on Developing Country Policies (ISO DEVCO) held in conjunction with the General Assembly of ISO (Singapore, September 2005).

40. The Working Party:

(a) Welcomed the report from the Rapporteur (Ms. O. Manafova), which she prepared following discussions at the fourteenth session, on the proposal to revise the UNECE Regulatory and Standardization List to include regulatory areas and products sectors where member countries see the need for a transnational dialogue on regulatory convergence matters;

(b) Agreed on the new format for the UNECE List;

(c) Took note of the information on contacts between UNECE and ARSO and other interested countries outside the UNECE region on the possible use of the List as a means of enhancing standardization cooperation among developing countries in setting regulatory and standardization priorities;

- (d) Requested the secretariat to contact the other United Nations regional commissions to explore their interest in contributing to the List, and to follow up on information on the regulatory and standardization priorities of the CIS and ASEAN regions;
- (e) Invited delegations and international and regional organizations to submit their proposals by the end of February 2006 on standardization and regulatory priorities to be included in a new draft, which would be discussed at the next session of the Working Party;
- (f) Invited the rapporteurs to revise Recommendations “D” on “Reference to Standards” and “J” on “Definitions”, as contained in the UNECE publication “Recommendations on Standardization Policies”.

VIII. Harmonization/Regulatory Cooperation (agenda item 7)

A. 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” – General (agenda item 7 (a))

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2005/5

- 41. The Working Party was informed about the presentations made on its regional and sectoral projects at the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) dialogue on standardization and conformity assessment (Tokyo, Japan, February 2005), at the General Assembly of ARSO (Accra, Ghana, February 2005), and at the General Assembly of ISO in conjunction with the meeting of the Committee on Developing Country Matters (DEVCO) (Singapore, September 2005).
- 42. ARSO had expressed an interest in holding a number of subregional meetings in Africa to promote the use of the “International Model” as one of the possible regulatory convergence tools. Consultations with ARSO are currently under way to see how countries could cooperate and obtain the necessary financing.
- 43. At the ISO-DEVCO meeting it was pointed out that the UNECE “International Model” constituted a “good regulatory practice” to be used by national regulators.
- 44. The UNECE regulatory approaches were also presented by the Chairman of WP.6 at the Workshop on “International Cooperation in Standardization” organized by the European Commission in Brussels on 14 October 2005 on the occasion of World Standards Day.
- 45. The Working Party:
 - (a) Noted the information on the regulatory cooperation activities taking place under the auspices of the “International Model”, as presented by the secretariat (TRADE/WP.6/2005/5).

B. Regional projects (agenda item 7 (b))

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2005/5

46. The Working Party considered the status of its regional projects in the CIS and South-East Europe. In the CIS region, it was recalled that the CIS Interstate Council for Standardization, Certification and Metrology (also called the Euro-Asian Council for Standardization, Metrology and Certification - EACS) has used the approach of the "International Model" to prepare an agreement on harmonizing technical regulations in that region.

47. The agreement was approved by the secretariat of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and is expected to be submitted for consideration at the summit of the Heads of the CIS States to be held at the end of 2005.

48. The Working Party was also informed about similar arrangements (agreements for the preparation of uniform technical regulations based on the International Model) being prepared by subgroupings of the CIS countries.

49. In the Balkan region, it was recalled that at its fourteenth session, the Working Party considered the results of the "South-East Europe Regulatory Project" implemented in 2003-2004 by UNECE with financial assistance from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

50. As a result of consultations and meetings organized within the framework of that project, delegations agreed on the need for enhancing regulatory cooperation. Among the areas requiring further dialogue and assistance were: governmental mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) to be concluded within the bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) between the western Balkan countries; regulatory reform in areas where regulations of the former Yugoslavia (with mandatory standards and third party's certification) are still applied; and implementation of the World Trade Organization Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (WTO/TBT).

51. The secretariat is in contact with the SIDA about financing a second stage of the project.

52. The Working Party:

(a) Took note of information from the CIS Bureau for Standards (Belarus and Russian Federation) on the work;

(b) Invited the CIS Bureau for Standards to provide updated information on the CIS work on agreements and regulatory and standardization priorities;

(c) Requested the secretariat to liaise with SIDA about financing a second stage of the second phase of the "South-East Europe Regulatory" Project.

C. Sectoral projects (agenda item 7 (c))

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2005/5/Add.1

53. The Working Party considered the status of its “sectoral initiatives”. At its fourteenth session, the Working Party had requested the CIS Bureau of Standards to consider including the sectoral projects in the CIS list of regulatory priorities.

54. This proposal had been presented at the annual meeting of the CIS Interstate Council for Standardization, Certification and Metrology (Republic of Moldova, June 2005). The participating CIS standards bodies were invited to consider this request in drawing up their proposals for the CIS list of priorities in intergovernmental standardization for 2006-2010 which is being prepared.

55. The Working Party:

(a) Welcomed the decision taken, in principle, at the CIS meeting in June 2005, to add UNECE sectoral projects (Telecom and Earth-moving Machinery (EMM)) to the list of CIS priorities on technical regulations which is currently being revised;

(b) Requested the secretariat to continue to inform countries about the sectoral projects and to invite interested countries from other United Nations regions to join these projects.

UNECE Telecom Initiative

56. The Working Party received a status report from the Chairman of the Telecom Task Force, Mr. Nuño Encarnação, on the latest Telecom activities (for information on the project, please visit the WP.6 webpage at: http://www.unece.org/trade/ctied/wp6/sectoral/telecom/tele_cros.htm).

57. The Working Party:

(a) Took note of the status report on the activities of the Telecom initiative from the Chairman of the Telecom Task Force;

(b) Requested the secretariat to continue the work on involving interested countries from other regions in the project;

(c) Entrusted the WP.6 office bearers to select a new chairperson for the Telecom Task Force to replace Mr. Nuño Encarnação who was unable to continue owing to a change of responsibilities in his office;

(d) Thanked Mr. Encarnação for his active contribution to the Telecom Task Force.

UNECE Earth-Moving Machinery (EMM) Initiative

58. The Working Party received a report on standardization activities in the earth-moving machinery (EMM) area by Mr. D. Roley. It was recalled that, at its fourteenth session, the Working Party had considered and endorsed a proposal from industry representatives for draft Common Regulatory Objectives (CROs), which they had prepared following the principles of the “International Model”, (http://www.unece.org/trade/ctied/wp6/sectoral/earth-moving/earth_bkgrd.htm).

59. This project was presented at the ISO TC 127 meeting in Beijing in May 2005. Furthermore contacts had been established with an open-ended group of experts in Russia comprising the regulatory and private sector, which had started preparing a national technical regulation for this sector.

60. At the proposal from the WP.6 Bureau, the initiative has been presented at the CIS June 2005 standardization meeting in the Republic of Moldova, where the participating CIS representatives had been invited to inform their national regulators about this project with a view to joining it, bearing in mind the idea of possible work on a regional regulation for this sector.

61. The Working Party:

- (a) Took note of the status report from Mr. Roley on the EMM initiative, including the proposal for Common Regulatory Objectives (CROs);
- (b) Welcomed the interest expressed by Belarus to participate in the EMM project and the information on the work on technical regulation in this sector in the Russian Federation;
- (c) Decided to elect Mr. Roley as Chair of an EMM Task Force and to entrust him, in cooperation with the secretariat, to take the necessary steps to establish the Task Force to monitor this project.

Pipeline safety

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2005/5/Add.1

62. The Chairman recalled that at the meeting of the WP.6 Team of Specialists on STandardization And Regulatory Techniques (“START” Team) in June 2005 the Russian Oil and Gas Union pipeline constructors had presented a proposal for the development of a new Russian technical regulation for pipeline safety requirements. The “START” Team invited the Union to draw up a written proposal for further discussions in the Working Party.

63. The Working Party considered this proposal, as contained in document TRADE/WP.6/2005/Add.1, and a number of delegates stressed that such a project could contribute to regional trade and integration. Discussions disclosed that there had been contacts between industry representatives from CIS and western European countries which favoured the need for harmonized approaches to the pipeline safety.

64. It was recalled that such a new project would complement the activities that UNECE was already carrying out on good practices and the treatment of pipeline safety within the framework of the UNECE Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.

65. The Working Party:

(a) Took note of the project proposal presented by the Russian industry and of the support expressed, in principle, by Ukraine and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, for developing technical regulations on the safety of pipelines;

(b) Invited interested UNECE countries and industries to inform the secretariat by the end of December 2005 about their interests in participating in drawing up a regulatory framework on pipeline safety;

(c) Entrusted the "START" Team, should the above-mentioned request receive a positive response, to take the necessary organizational steps to establish an ad hoc group of experts to study this project.

Other proposals

66. The German delegate spoke about an IEC mechanism (IECEX Scheme) which deals with the certification of products that are specially designed and manufactured to avoid ignition hazards in the chemical and petroleum industry as required in many countries. The object of the IECEX Scheme is to create worldwide free trade in explosion protected electrical equipment which would have a benefit for all participating parties. He made the proposal to integrate the IECEX Scheme under the scope of UNECE "International Model."

67. The Working Party:

(a) Welcomed the proposal from Germany to consider an additional sectoral project in the area of equipment for use in an explosive atmosphere, and invited the German delegation to further develop this proposal and forward it in written form.

IX. Conformity assessment (agenda item 8)

A. Review of developments in conformity assessment at the international, regional and national levels (agenda item 8 (a))

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2005/6

68. In document TRADE/WP.6/2005/6, Romania reported on changes in national technical regulations to ensure consistency with European legislation (i.e. the implementation status of the EU "New and Global Approach" directives). The report dealt with the national conformity

assessment infrastructure (including the activities of the Romanian Accreditation Association), also providing information on negotiations with the EU for signing a Protocol to the Europe Agreements on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products (PECA).

69. On behalf of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Ms. B. Fliess presented the preliminary results of a survey on conformity assessment (CA) procedures: implications for trade. The survey produced responses from 428 conformity assessment bodies and 110 exporters. It covered a wide range of issues, including the use of suppliers' declaration of conformity, the usefulness of certifications and other CA tools to exporters. Information was also provided on the upcoming OECD workshop on "Standards and Conformity Assessment: Minimising Barriers and Maximising Benefits" (Berlin, November, 2005). In this context, the EU conformity assessment approaches were also recalled.

70. The Working Party:

- (a) Took note of document TRADE/WP.6/2005/3 and thanked the delegation of Romania for information on their legal and institutional infrastructure in the area of conformity assessment;
- (b) Thanked the delegations of OIML, OECD and EC for their presentations;
- (c) Took note of an information paper distributed at the meeting, highlighting the latest activities of ISO Committee on Conformity Assessment (CASCO).

B. Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) (agenda item 8 (b))

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2005/7

71. The Chairman recalled that at its fourteenth session, the Working Party had invited delegations to provide the secretariat with information on government mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) in which their countries were engaged (according to a template agreed at the session - document TRADE/WP.6/2004/8). The Rapporteur on MRAs had been requested to collect and analyse this information, and present the outcome.

72. The Rapporteur on MRAs (Ms. M.-C. Poncin) had compiled information and proposed a methodology for future work on an inventory (document TRADE//WP.6/2005/7).

73. As an example of MRAs in the context of an international organization, a presentation was made on an MRA project of OIML.

74. The Working Party:

- (a) Thanked the Rapporteur on MRAs for her proposals on an inventory of MRAs;
- (b) Agreed on the format for submitting information on MRAs as presented by the Rapporteur;

(c) Invited delegations to provide or update information on government MRAs in which their countries were engaged, according to the format provided, by the end of February 2006;

(d) Requested the Rapporteur to compile the information and prepare a new version for further discussion at the sixteenth annual session of the Working Party;

(e) Invited countries to share their experiences and policy on MRAs. The experiences of Poland, Switzerland, Russian Federation, United States of America and Canada, which were noted in the proposal from the Rapporteur, were welcomed in this regard.

C. Accreditation (agenda item 8 (c))

75. The Working Party received presentations on accreditation activities from representatives of ILAC, IAF and the European Cooperation for Accreditation (EA), the European Commission and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

76. The Working Party:

(a) Noted the information provided by Mr. D. Pierre, Comité français d'accréditation (COFRAC) on on-going activities in ILAC, IAF and EA, by Mrs. N. Chevallier (European Commission) on EU accreditation policy and by Mr. O. Loesener, UNIDO, on technical assistance cooperation between his organization and ILAC/IAF.

D. Other issues (environmental standards, forest certification, organic agriculture, etc.) (agenda item 8 (d))

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2005/8

77. The Working Party had received document TRADE/WP.6/2005/8 highlighting the status of cooperation on matters related to forest certification and organic agriculture.

Forest Certification

78. The Chairman recalled that at its fourteenth session, the Working Party had decided to contribute to the activities on forest certification being carried out under the UNECE Timber Committee.

79. On 29 September 2005, the UNECE Timber Committee had held a policy Forum on "Forest Certification - what role for Governments?". The secretary of the Timber Committee provided information on the discussions held at this event. The secretary of the Working Party summarized his presentation, which stressed the need for non-involvement of Governments in

voluntary certification schemes. At the same time, he warned of the possible proliferation of such schemes and the need to start a dialogue with a view to identifying possibilities for the convergence of certification requirements in the context of market needs.

80. The Working Party:

- (a) Took note of information from the secretary of the Timber Committee on the outcome of the Policy Forum “Forest Certification – Do Governments have a Role?” and the follow-up to this event.

Organic agriculture

81. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) provided information about the latest developments under the International Task Force (ITF) on harmonization and equivalence in organic agriculture and about the forthcoming meeting in December 2005 in Tunisia where discussions would be held on regulatory objectives, equivalence and recognition, requirements for certification bodies, etc. in organic agriculture.

82. The Working Party:

- (a) Took note of the update of the activities of ITF on harmonization and equivalence in organic agriculture and its forthcoming meeting, 5-7 December 2005 (Hammamet, Tunisia).

E. Policy issues related to quality assurance (agenda item 8 (e))

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2005/9
TRADE/WP.6/2005/9/Add.1

83. As an example of using quality management systems in public institutions, delegations were informed about the use of Common Assessment Framework (CAF) schemes at the Czech Trade Inspection and at the Slovak Office for Standards, Metrology and Testing.

84. The representative of UNIDO presented information on the use of ISO 9001 standards in public governance (documents TRADE/WP.6/2005/ 9 and Add.1).

85. A representative of a Russian consulting company presented results of the use of ISO 9001 standards in companies working in the services sector in Russia.

86. A presentation from a representative of the Russian Quality Association suggested another approach, namely, improving quality through benchmarking, and he provided information on an international framework for work on quality benchmarking.

87. The Working Party:

- (a) Noted the presentation by a Russian company on the use of ISO/IEC 9001:2000 in service companies and the presentation by the Czech delegation on the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in market surveillance agencies;
- (b) Invited UNIDO to consider modalities for possible joint actions;
- (c) Expressed its interest to focus more on how quality management schemes could contribute to better governance and invited delegations and organizations to continue to exchange information in this area.

X. Market Surveillance (agenda item 9)

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2005/10
 TRADE/WP.6/2005/10/Add.1
 TRADE/WP.6/2005/11

88. The Working Party considered information on the work of the “MARS” Group in 2004-2005 and the group of facilitators established under the Group (document TRADE/WP.6/2005/10).

89. A representative of the CIS Bureau for Standards provided information on the meeting of the CIS market surveillance authorities held in Belarus in June 2005 and in October 2005 in Russia. The usefulness of the work by the “MARS” Group for the CIS countries had been noted at these events.

90. The Working Party considered the results of discussions held at the Forum on issues to be further explored in the framework of the “MARS” Group.

91. The Working considered the draft of a new UNECE recommendation on the use of market surveillance as a means of protecting consumers against counterfeit goods (document TRADE/WP.6/2005/10/Add.1).

92. The Working Party considered the guidelines on market surveillance prepared by the Nordic Council and modalities of future cooperation with the Nordic Council on this issue.

93. The conclusions of the Working Party on the International Forum on Market Surveillance and Consumer Protection and additional questions discussed on market surveillance are contained in paragraph 21 above and in document TRADE/WP.6/2005/15/Add.1.

XI. Metrology (agenda item 10)

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2005/12

94. The representative of the Bureau of Metrology of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia presented a document (TRADE/WP.6/2005/12) containing information on the latest developments in the area of metrology and on tasks and challenges faced by his institution.

95. The representative of OIML provided information on the work of his Organization, which celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2005. He also provided information on assistance to the developing countries and on the OIML website, from which the International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML) documents can be downloaded.

96. He referred to the OIML document “Elements for a Law Metrology”, which can be used by any country or regional organization establishing or developing a national or regional law in metrology.

97. The Working Party:

(a) Noted the presentation by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on its Bureau for Metrology and its related activities (document TRADE/WP.6/2005/12);

(b) Noted the presentation on the recent activities of OIML.

XII. Programme of work (agenda item 11)

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2005/13

98. The Working Party considered the WP.6 Bureau paper on “WP.6 Vision, Strategic Directions for 2006-2010, and work plan for 2006-2007” (document TRADE/WP.6/2005/13). It was recalled that the Working Party had started the strategic review process at the thirteenth session, with the change of its name and terms of reference.

99. The secretariat reported on the in-depth review with member States of UNECE principal subsidiary bodies (PSBs) and subsidiary bodies (SBs), their work and priorities.

100. The Working Party considered the activities of its ad hoc group on market surveillance (“MARS” Group), its teams on Quality and on Metrology.

101. Delegates from the Czech Republic, France, the Russian Federation and Ukraine made comments on document TRADE/WP.6/2005/13.

102. The Working Party:

- (a) Welcomed Office Bearers' initiative in launching a strategic restructuring of WP.6 activities which had started at the thirteenth session (see paragraph 98 above);
- (b) Discussed the proposal for "WP.6 Vision, Strategic Directions for 2006-2010, and work plan for 2006-2007" (document TRADE/WP.6/2005/13);
- (c) Invited further comments on the document from delegations by the end of February 2006;
- (d) Requested Office Bearers to take account of comments received and to monitor from the WP.6 perspective the restructuring exercise of UNECE in order to prepare a revised proposal for adoption at the next WP.6 session in June 2006;
- (e) Approved renewing the mandate and activities of the "MARS" Group to 2007;
- (f) Disbanded the Team of Experts on Metrology and the Team of Specialists on Quality Management Systems.

XIII. Other business (agenda item 12)

103. The Working Party considered the work of its rapporteurs and coordinators.

104. The next session of the Working Party is tentatively scheduled for 19-21 June 2006 back-to-back with the CTIED session. At this occasion, a joint WP.6/CTIED Forum on regulatory matters will be organized (a draft outline of the forum programme is available in document TRADE/2005/21).

105. The Working Party:

- (a) Thanked the rapporteurs and coordinators for their work and entrusted the Working Party Office Bearers with taking the necessary action to fill the existing vacancies for rapporteurs and coordinators;
- (b) Invited delegations to inform their stakeholders interested in regulatory matters about the forthcoming Forum in June 2006 and to encourage them to take part in this event;

(c) Confirmed the following appointments of rapporteurs and coordinators:

Rapporteurs:	Coordination	Ms. M. Saunders	United States of America
		Ms. O. Manafova	Bulgaria
	Harmonization	Mr. C. Arvius	Sweden
		Ms. L. Romanovska	Czech Republic
	Metrology	Mr. V. Gedrovics	Latvia
		Mr. E. de Leer	Netherlands
	Quality	Mr. P. Kalyta	Ukraine
Mr. A. Hussein		Canada	
Accreditation	Mr. D. Pierre	France	
Mutual Recognition	Ms. M.-C. Poncin	France	

Coordinators :	Liaison with the CIS Inter-State Council on Standardization, Metrology and Certification	Mr. V. Koreshkov	Belarus
	Market Surveillance	To be nominated	
	Telecom Initiative	To be nominated	

XIV. Adoption of the report (agenda item 13)

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2005/15

106. According to the procedures established at its thirteenth session, the Working Party approved a “List of Decisions” at the fifteenth session. The secretariat was requested, in consultation with the Office Bearers, to complete the descriptive part of the report, taking into account the contributions made and the discussions held during the session.

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