



UNECE Weekly

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 202 – 11-15 December 2006

Air Pollution Convention meets to build on past successes

At the 24th session of the *Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution* (11-14 December) the Parties to the Convention will make important decisions to determine their future policy developments on air pollution abatement.

The Convention's work towards adding new substances to the 1998 Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) is getting to a stage where Parties will need to decide on a "revision package" for the Protocol. Various options will be before the Executive Body for its consideration and decision on future action.

Work on heavy metals is being focused on completion of the first review of the 1998 Protocol on Heavy Metals; finalization of the review is expected next week. Parties must then decide, as required by the Protocol, on how they might work towards additional steps to reduce emissions of heavy metals into the air.

A major task currently underway is the first review of the 1999 Gothenburg Protocol, which entered into force in 2005. Experts are drawing up the necessary information for the review and will be laying out their plans for completing the review over the next twelve months. The Protocol addresses the problems of acidification, eutrophication and

ground-level ozone effects through emission controls of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, ammonia and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).



Sulphur emissions falling

Already, through the Parties' regular reporting mechanism, the sulphur emissions in Europe are known to have fallen in 2004 by 65% from the 1990 levels; nitrogen oxides emissions had dropped by 30%. This means that the overall European target for sulphur set by the Gothenburg Protocol has already been met, though some Parties have still to meet their national targets. Overall targets for VOCs and ammonia will probably also be reached soon. The review may therefore suggest that additional cuts are now feasible. In addition, Parties are considering

possibilities for controlling the levels of particulate



matter, a major problem to human health globally. Many are also keen to integrate policies for controlling air pollution and greenhouse gases since this may have significant economic and environmental benefits.

Parties will also be thinking of the broader picture of air pollution throughout the world. There has long been encouragement of outreach activities to share the knowledge and experience of the Convention with other regions. This year, the Executive Body will also be considering the possibilities for opening the Convention and its Protocols to countries outside the UNECE region to allow accession by non-UNECE States with the aim of encouraging greater involvement of these countries with the work of the Convention. ♦

For more information contact Keith Bull (keith.bull@unece.org).

Swedish national road becomes European Road "E 45"

Swedish national road 45, linking Göteborg to Karesuando in the north of Sweden, has officially become a part of the European road E 45.

Ms. A. Torstensson, Swedish Minister of Infrastructure, inaugurated in Göteborg the new stretch of road E 45 on 24 November, in the presence of Mr. I. Skogö, Director General of the Swedish Road Administration, Mr. H. Petterson, Mayor of the Municipality of Säffle, other regional and local authorities and José Capel Ferrer, Director of the UNECE Transport Division.



Global energy security

UNECE held high-level discussions on global energy security during the annual session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy, 28-30 November. UNECE Executive Secretary



Marék Belka highlighted that global energy security has without question returned to the top of the economic agenda.

During the keynote presentations the views of Claude Mandil, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency (IEA), Andrey Reus, Deputy Minister of Ministry of Industry and Energy of the Russian Federation and Stanislav Tsygankov, Director of the International Business Department of JSC "Gazprom", were heard. The IEA acts as the energy policy adviser to its 26 member countries in their effort to ensure reliable, affordable and clean energy for their citizens. It is also the author of the annual World

Global energy security (cont.)

Energy Outlook, a publication read with considerable interest by governments and the international energy community alike.

Consumer-producer dialogue

The energy policy of the Russian Federation not only has a determining impact on the energy situation and energy environment within the Russian Federation, but also on the energy trading partners of the Russian Federation, that is, most UNECE member countries. The policies and practices of the Russian Federation can materially affect the energy options available to other UNECE countries since it is a country endowed with very significant reserves and resources of fossil fuels – petroleum, natural gas and coal. A consumer-producer dialogue is essential to the global energy security debate – with Gazprom being a major exporter of natural gas to eastern, central and western Europe, understanding the commercial policy of this company is essential for anyone interested in the energy security of the UNECE region.

During the meeting a series of thematic sessions focussed on key areas of the UNECE energy work programme and how they each facilitate sustainable energy development and hence increased energy security. ♦

For more information contact Charlotte Griffiths (charlotte.griffiths@unece.org) and/or visit <http://www.unece.org/ie/>.



cont.

“I was very pleased with the great importance the Swedish Government and the Swedish people have attached to the new road E 45”, said Mr. Capel Ferrer. “This is a great encouragement to our endeavour to develop coherent and efficient transport corridors and networks in Europe, as a key pre-requisite for economic development of countries and regions and better living conditions of their people”.

The extension makes road E 45 one of the longest E roads, going up into the Arctic Circle from Gela in Sicily through cities such as: Naples, Rome, Bologna and Verona in Italy; Innsbruck in Austria; München, Nürnberg, Hannover and Hamburg in Germany; Aarhus in Denmark; and Göteborg, Trollhättan, Grums, Mora, Östersund, and Karesuando, in Sweden.

The extension of road E 45 required an amendment to the European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR). The amendment entered into force on 23 November 2006.

The AGR, concluded under UNECE auspices in 1975, defines the E road network, the technical conditions to which E roads should conform and a numbering system. In accordance with the Agreement, E roads are identified through a green rectangular sign containing the letter E followed by the number attributed to the road in the Agreement. The AGR is constantly kept up to date to reflect roads of international importance. In 2000 it was revised to incorporate main international roads in the Caucasus and Central Asia. 36 States are currently Parties to the AGR Agreement. ♦

For more information contact José Capel Ferrer (jose.capel.ferrer@unece.org) or Marie-Nöelle Poirier (marie-noelle.poirier@unece.org).

Coming up ...

4-12 December

ECOSOC Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

12-14 December

ECOSOC Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

15 December

ECOSOC Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

11-14 December

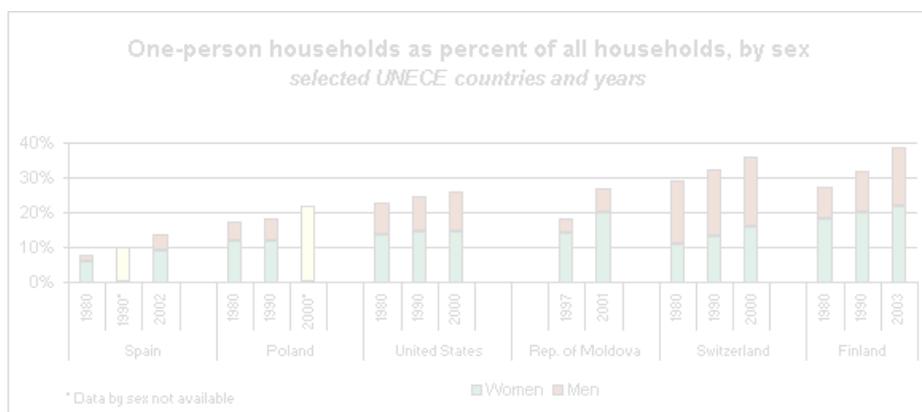
Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution

12-15 December

Working Party on Passive Safety

Facts and figures

More and more people live alone in UNECE member countries



Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database.

Over the last 25 years, the share of one-person households has increased significantly in virtually all UNECE countries. Currently, more than a third of households in Northern Europe consist of one person; in Finland they account for nearly 40%. One-person households are somewhat less frequent (between 10 and 20% of all households) in countries with a tradition of large households, like Spain in our sample. In most countries, women are in the majority among persons living alone, accounting generally for between 55 to 75% of one-person households. Switzerland, however, is an exception: there men dominate, but their share among one-person households has decreased markedly over the years.

The higher propensity to live alone (in particular among young people), increasing divorce rates and growing number of the elderly contribute to this phenomenon.