UNECE Weekly

United Nations

Economic Commission for Europe

Issue Nº 257 – 18-22 February 2008

Euro-Asian economic boom facing transport risks

The recent unprecedented economic growth of Euro-Asian countries is at risk if the current transport situation is not addressed. Geo-political changes and a surge in global trade have brought about extensive development in countries along the Euro-Asian land bridge. But for landlocked countries and countries with economies in transition the all important access to markets is not guaranteed. Poor or non-existent transport infrastructure, congested ports and hinterland connections, as well as cumbersome border crossing procedures, are all in danger of hampering the development of the region. Transport and border issues urgently need the attention of decision-makers.

The political will and commitment to resolve these issues will be put to the test in the upcoming Meeting of Transport Ministers from Euro-Asian countries on Tuesday 19 February in Conference Room XII of the Palais des Nations, Geneva. The Ministers are expected to reaffirm their support by approving a joint statement on the future development of Euro-Asian transport links.

More than twenty Ministers, Deputy Ministers and high-level officials from Euro-Asian countries will meet, together with senior representatives from two United Nations Regional Commissions, the European Commission, as well as OSCE*, BSEC* and IRU* among others, to tackle issues related to improving Euro-Asian inland transport connections, border crossing and transit.

The Meeting is open to the public.

For more information visit http://www.unece.org/trans and/or contact Eva Molnar (eva.molnar@unece.org) or Michalis P. Adamantiadis (michalis.adamantiadis@unece.org).

* Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), International Road Transport Union (IRU)

Financing energy efficiency investments

The European Clean Energy Fund is a €354 million investment fund established by SwissRe and Conning & Company in 2007 to finance environmentally sound energy projects in Western, Central and Eastern Europe mandated by the Steering Committee of the Energy Efficiency 21 Project in 2004.

The fund provides equity and mezzanine finance for energy efficiency, renewable energy and waste-to-energy projects to generate carbon credits and renewable energy certificates. The TCW Energy and Infrastructure Group are the investment managers and SwissRe serves as the carbon adviser.

Within the framework of the Financing Energy Efficiency Investments for Climate Change Mitigation Project, a one-day seminar will be held to describe how Energy Efficiency 21 Project participants can work with the European Clean Energy Fund. National Coordinators or their designated experts and project developers will have the opportunity to learn about the investment criteria and operating procedures of the Fund as well as present investment project proposals to the fund managers.

For more information visit www.ee-21.net.

Coal mine methane

As part of the 2008 International Mining Forum, UNECE is organizing a workshop on coal mine methane (CMM) capture and use. The workshop will be held in Szczyrk, Poland on 27-28 February, in cooperation with the Central Mining Institute of Poland and the Methane to Markets Partnership, an international partnership of 20 countries, and the European Commission. The event aims to promote recovery and use of methane from coal mines and other sources.

CMM recovery and use produces mine safety and environmental benefits, and is a very important issue for the UNECE region which produces 40% of the world's coal and 38% of global CMM emissions.

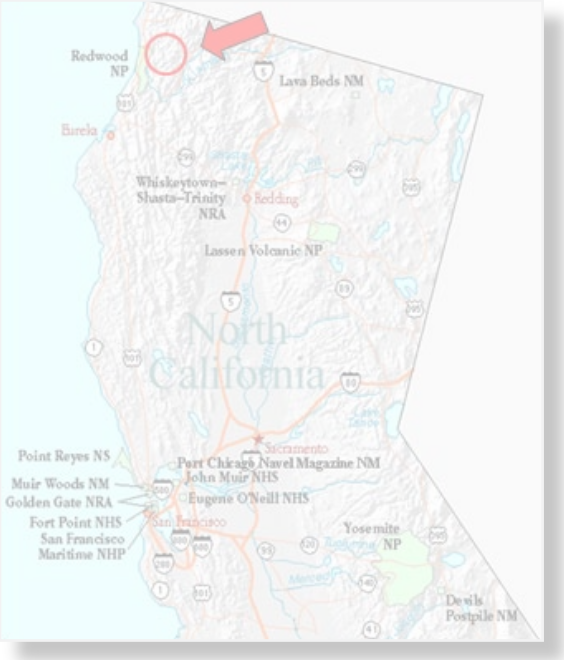
The workshop will address the latest technical and market developments with significant focus placed on financing projects and identification of the remaining barriers to further project development.

For more information see http://www.imf.net.pl/ or contact Clark Talkington (clark.talkingtom@unece.org).

Not an official record - For information only

Did You Know ...

—- that the most diverse coniferous forests in the world are located in a small, remote and rugged region in Northwestern California, where more than 35 species of native coniferous trees are found! These include the coastal redwood and Douglas fir, for which the region is famous, but also seven species of true firs, three species of spruce, eight species of pine, two species of hemlocks, and a wide variety of pacific "cedars", "cypresses", "junipers" and yew.



Coming up...

19(am) February
Ministerial Meeting on Euro-Asian Transport Links

19(pm)-21 February
Inland Transport Committee

19(pm)-21 February
Working Party on Noise

21-22 February
Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency Investments for Climate Change Mitigation

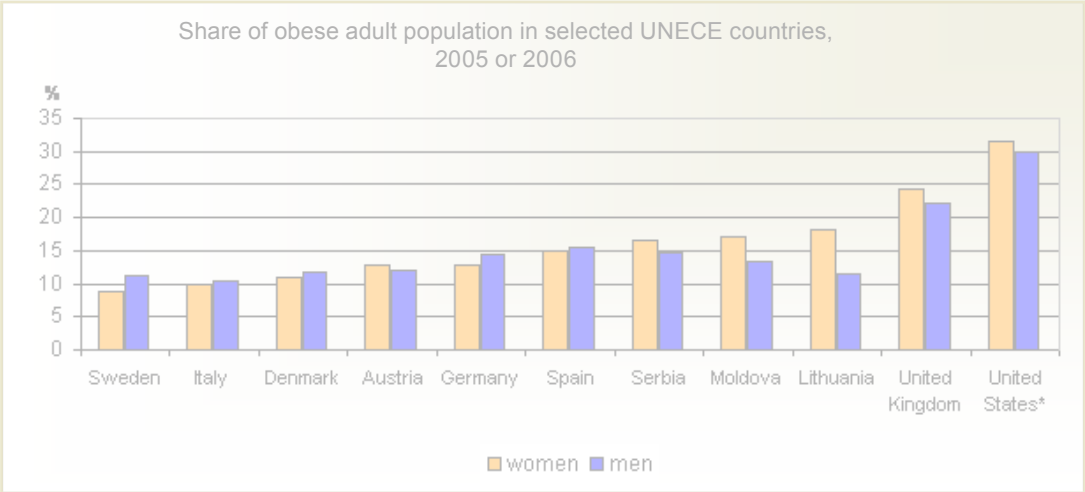
The 3rd meeting of the Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development, scheduled 6-7 March, is postponed to 31 March-1 April (http://www.unece.org/env/esd/SC.Meet.htm).

Facts and Figures

Obesity: can we still talk about 'a continental divide'?

It is generally accepted that a sedentary lifestyle and unbalanced diet, among other things, can lead to more people being affected by obesity. Knowing that obesity puts an individual at an increased risk for many diseases and health problems (including hypertension – high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and others), the pressure to take preventive actions at the individual and public levels is growing.

As the chart attests, the proportion of obese adults remains alarmingly high in some UNECE countries: in the United States, one third of the adult population is considered to be obese, and in the United Kingdom almost a quarter is classified as such. The difference between these countries and western continental Europe remains rather striking.



Two patterns also emerge when considering male and female obesity. In western continental Europe, men are more frequently obese than women, with the exception of Austria, whereas in the United States, the United Kingdom and Eastern Europe the share of obese women is higher than that of obese men. The greatest differences between obesity frequency in men and women are found in Lithuania, Moldova, Sweden and the United Kingdom. In most other countries in the chart, obesity seems to be as frequent among men as among women.

Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database (www.unece.org/stats/data).

Note: Obesity is measured by body mass index (BMI), defined as a person's weight (in kg) divided by height squared (in m): kg/m^2. An adult (aged 15 years and older) is considered obese if BMI exceeds 30kg/m^2.

** Data refer to 2003.*

Information Service
UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
CH - 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Tel: +41(0)22 917 44 44
Fax: +41(0)22 917 05 05

E-mail: info.ece@unece.org
Website: http://www.unece.org

Not an official record - For information only