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Executive Secretary speaks at the 15th OSCE Ministerial Council

Mr. Marek Belka, UNECE Executive Secretary, delivered a statement on behalf of Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, at the 15th Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Ministerial Council, which met in Madrid on 29-30 November.

The annual Ministerial Council provides the 56 OSCE participating States with the opportunity to assess the organization's activities during the past year as well as to approve a series of decisions for action. The meeting brings together representatives from the OSCE's 11 Asian and Mediterranean Partners and international organizations such as the United Nations, Council of Europe, NATO and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

In the speech Mr. Ban Ki-moon stressed that "ties between the United Nations and the OSCE have always been strong, but today, they are stronger than ever. Whether in the security sector or in the human rights and economic fields, cooperation between our two institutions continues to set the standard that others aspire towards." This is also true in the area of economic and environmental cooperation where "the partnership between the OSCE and UN Economic Commission for Europe, in particular, has become a model for linking conflict prevention to the underlying socio-economic drivers of unrest."

Speaking to ministers of foreign affairs, ambassadors and other high-level representatives of OSCE participating States, Mr. Belka also elaborated on the OSCE-UNECE partnership. "The OSCE-

UNECE partnership is successful", Mr. Belka said, "because it links issues of security, which is what the OSCE is about, to the economic, environmental and social factors which impact so directly on stability and security. The UNECE is about those economic, environmental and social factors."

At the meeting, Mr. Belka met with Mr. Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, OSCE Secretary-General, to discuss the ongoing and future cooperative initiatives between the two organizations. There was consensus that the natural complementarity and effective cooperation achieved so far are a good basis for more successes in the future. The Executive Secretary was also pleased with the recognition of the UNECE environmental work in the Ministerial Decision on the "Follow-up to the Fifteenth Economic and Environmental Forum: Water Management".

For more information contact Robert Nowak (robert.nowak@unece.org) or visit www.unece.org/trans/ead_sec.htm for copies of the UN statements, or http://www.osce.org/conferences/mc_2007.html?page=documents&session_id=203 for copies of Ministerial Decisions.



Mini-conference on Agenda 21 and the Information Society - Geneva, 13 December

UNECE will host a mini-conference entitled "*Agenda 21 and the Information Society: Assessing Progress on Closing the Digital Divide, Access to Environmental Information and ICT for Sustainable Development in the UNECE Region*", on 13 December, in Geneva.

The event marks the 15th anniversary of the adoption of Agenda 21 and principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development by the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. These agreements prefigured the development of the Aarhus Convention.

This one-day conference will open with a session examining the growth of the Information Society in the UNECE region and initiatives to build the region's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capacity. A second session will be devoted to Web-based information clearinghouses. The closing session will preview European and national perspectives on the Directive establishing Infrastructure for Spatial

Information in the European Community (INSPIRE) and the complementary development of a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS).

Members of the Task Force on Electronic Information Tools and other experts will discuss how recent developments in Information Society are changing public access and use of environmental information, and the impact these changes will make in the areas of e-environment, e-commerce, e-democracy in Europe.

The mini-conference is being co-organized by the UNECE informal ICT Group for Development. It will take place from *10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. in Conference room IX, Palais des Nations, Geneva.*

Not an official record - For information only

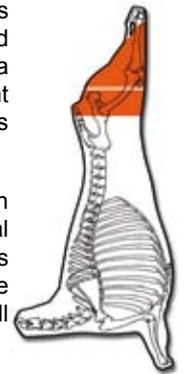
Off the Press



The purpose of UNECE standards for meat products is to facilitate trade by recommending an international language for use between buyer and seller. The language describes meat items commonly traded internationally and defines a coding system for communication and electronic trade.

The UNECE Standard for Ovine Meat - Carcasses and Cuts recommends an international language for raw (unprocessed) sheep (ovine) carcasses and cuts marketed as fit for human consumption. It provides purchasers with a variety of options for meat handling, packing and conformity assessment that conform to good commercial practice for meat and meat products intended to be sold in international trade.

It offers for the first time internationally agreed specifications written in a consistent, detailed and accurate manner using anatomical names to identify cutting lines. Comprehensive colour photographs and diagrams are included to facilitate practical application of the standard. The standard also defines a product code allowing all relevant information to be combined in a 20-digit string.



Standardization of the trading language is the foundation which allows the meat industry to adopt modern data transfer methods and streamline the flow of information and produce throughout the supply chain.

Sales No. E.03.II.E.59. Available from the UN Publications, Sales and Marketing Section (unogbookshop@unog.ch).

Coming up...

10(pm)-13 December

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

11(pm)-14 December

Working Party on Passive Safety

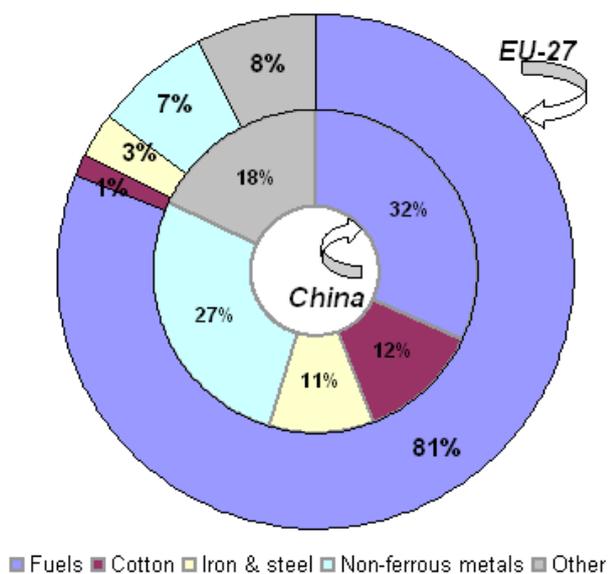
12(pm)-14 December

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

Facts and Figures

Primary products dominate trade of Central Asia and the Caucasus

Composition of China's and EU's imports from Central Asia and the Caucasus, 2006



Over the last several years, exports from countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus have expanded rapidly (see UNECE Weekly N° 243). Growth was particularly strong in trade with the European Union (EU-27) and developing countries: the region's exports to China, for instance, have risen about 30% a year in dollar value since 2003.

Currently, about 40% of the region's exports are destined for the EU market; some 7% goes to China, and another 10% to countries in the Middle East and Turkey. Primary products, especially fuels, dominate this trade: as the chart illustrates, the bulk of the EU-27 reported imports from Central Asia and the Caucasus region is related to energy (crude oil, petroleum products, and gas). Non-ferrous metals, iron and steel, and cotton follow with respective shares of 7%, 3% and 1% of the total EU-27 imports from the region. The same four commodity groups also account for nearly four fifths of China's imports from these countries. China's import composition, however, is less skewed towards energy: in 2006, fuels accounted for a third, while non-ferrous metals made up more than a quarter of total imports. The group "other goods" in China's imports was also dominated by primary and intermediate products (ores, inorganic chemicals, raw hides, etc.).

Source: UN Comtrade.

Note: Central Asia and the Caucasus region include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.