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It's just happened ...

Increase of Internet Piracy Undermines Enterprise Competitiveness in the UNECE Region



The use by criminals of the Internet is creating significant economic problems for enterprises in the UNECE region as well as putting at risk the benefits that can come from the new Information Society. This was one of the main issues that emerged from a two-day

conference on Intellectual Property Exploitation in the Internet Era, organized by the Polish Ministry of Culture and the UNECE Intellectual Property Advisory Group in Warsaw, Poland, on 1-2 April 2004. Among the results are the loss of jobs from downsizing of enterprises, and reduced revenues from taxation. Europe's music and media industries are suffering from illegal downloading made much

easier by new technologies. At the same time, solutions are not easy to find. Delegations emphasized the need for tighter regulations and better enforcement of old and new regulations, but pointed out the extra costs that would have to be borne for this to be done effectively. Special mention was made of the new EU Enforcement Directive on Intellectual Property Rights, which for the first time combines copyright related rights and industrial property rights. The Conference also concluded that national and international policy makers as well as industry and consumers need to be better informed of the importance of intellectual property for the Information Society; and cooperation between the public and private sector needs to be improved.

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Monitoring of Radiation Contaminated Scrap Metal

Discussions at the first meeting of experts in this field, 5-7 April, focused on ways and means to facilitate and secure international trade and transport of scrap metals. Recycled scrap metal is increasingly used in steel production. Worldwide consumption of metal scrap in 2001 was about 370 Mio. tonnes. In 2001 alone there were nearly 4,000 reported incidents in North America involving detection of various types of radioactive materials in scrap metal. Some of these sources have gone undetected, have been melted down accidentally and may have entered the metal stream. The origin of such radioactive sources is very often unknown and there seems to have been a significant increase in the number of uncontrolled (orphan) radioactive sources in a number of countries. While the potential health risk of such incidents is probably not very high due to relatively low radiation levels, the economic and financial consequences for the steel industry of contaminated scrap metal and metal



products are extremely high as their detection results in the closure and clean-up of steel facilities. With the use of ever sophisticated systems, the detection of radioactive sources in the scrap metal industry is on a constant rise.

The meeting considered remedial measures with the aim of detecting radioactive sources in scrap metal already at the place of origin applying the polluter-pays principle and improved contractual arrangements. To this effect it considered (a) the preparation of an international voluntary Protocol facilitating a consistent and harmonized approach to monitoring, interception and response measures in case of incidences, (b) the preparation of training modules for affected personnel and (c) the establishment of an Internet based information exchange mechanism.

For more information, see <http://www.unece.org/trans/radiation/radiation>.

Not an official record - For information only

The Press ...

5 April UNECE Seminar on Aggressive Driving

Le directeur de la division des transports de la CEE, José Capel Ferrer, souligne que 90 % des accidents ont pour origine une attitude incorrecte des conducteurs. Les conducteurs agressifs ne respectent pas les règles du code de la route, comme la distance réglementaire entre les véhicules, les limites de vitesse, les règles de priorité et de dépassement. Les causes sont multiples. Par exemple, être derrière un volant peut amener certains conducteurs à avoir un sentiment de puissance, pour compenser leur vie familiale ou l'insatisfaction au travail. Le stress, la pression du temps ou encore l'instinct de compétition jouent aussi un rôle. De même, les routes encombrées et les embouteillages sont souvent source d'énervement et d'irritabilité amenant les conducteurs à transgresser les règles du code de la route. La consommation d'alcool ou de drogues est en outre à bannir. Le coût des accidents de la route varie entre 1 à 2 % du Produit national brut de chaque pays, selon M. Capel Ferrer. (2 avril, Agence téléphonique suisse)



Speeding, overtaking at the wrong place and other forms of aggressive driving are among the main causes of road accidents, the UNECE said on the occasion of the European Road Safety Week, which will start in the UNECE region on Monday and will end on April 11. Campaigns will be running across UNECE member countries slamming aggressive driving and calling for mutual respect on the road. According to UNECE, anyone can fall victim to aggressive behaviour on the road and anyone can be the culprit. (3 April, Agenzia Nazionale Stampa – ANSA)

About 1.2 million people are killed and 50 million injured in road accidents worldwide every year, according to 2001 figures, with just over one-tenth of the victims in Europe, the former Soviet states and North America, according to the United Nations. (4 April, Agence France Presse)

Regardless of the symptoms, road safety experts from more than 30 countries who met in Geneva on Monday and Tuesday fear that aggressive driving is making a substantial contribution to the global annual road accident death toll of 1.2 million. Ex-Soviet states are suffering from some of the highest road accident death rates, seven times those of west European countries in 2001, according to the UN. "The main factor causing traffic accidents is aggressive behaviour on the roads," Viktor Kiryanov of Russia's transport ministry told the UN meeting. Based on accident statistics, young men and high mileages are universally rated by insurers as the most volatile mix behind the wheel. But a study carried out in Britain, the Netherlands and Finland found that intentional aggression or deliberate violation of road rules, rather than a propensity to make mistakes due to inexperience or misjudgement, were a more useful way of judging risk. (7 April, Agence France Presse)

Facts and figures:

Short-term interest rates, deposits

selected UNECE economies

	2000	2001	2002	2003			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Eastern Europe							
Albania	8.3	7.7	8.5	9.2	8.7	7.8	7.7
Bulgaria	3.2	3.2	3.0	3.2	3.1	2.9	2.8
Croatia	3.7	3.2	1.9	1.6	1.4	1.6	1.6
Czech Republic	3.4	3.0	2.2	1.7	1.5	1.3	1.2
Estonia	3.8	4.0	2.7	2.9	2.5	2.1	2.1
Hungary	9.6	9.3	7.5	4.8	5.8	8.2	8.7
Latvia	4.4	5.2	3.2	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.3
Lithuania	6.7	4.6	2.7	2.1	1.8	2.0	1.9
Poland	13.9	10.2	6.1	4.4	3.7	2.9	2.9
Romania	32.9	26.6	19.1	12.0	10.3	10.5	11.4
Slovakia	7.2	5.2	4.6	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.2
Slovenia	10.1	9.8	8.2	7.0	6.2	5.6	5.0
The FYR Macedonia	11.2	10.0	9.6	9.1	8.4	7.4	7.1
CIS							
Armenia	18.1	14.9	9.6	7.9	7.1	6.2	6.2
Azerbaijan	12.9	8.6	8.7	11.5	8.7	9.2	8.8
Belarus	37.6	34.2	27.2	21.2	19.0	15.6	13.7
Georgia	10.2	7.8	9.8	8.9	8.5	8.7	10.4
Kazakhstan	16.5	14.7	11.4	12.4	..	..	..
Kyrgyzstan	23.9	13.7	7.9	6.0	5.8	5.1	5.8
Rep. of Moldova	24.9	20.9	14.2	12.3	11.9	12.2	13.8
Russian Federation	6.5	4.9	5.0	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.4
Tajikistan	..	..	9.2	8.8	11.2	7.4	8.9
Ukraine	13.7	11.0	7.9	7.0	6.7	6.6	7.6

Source: IMF, *International Financial Statistics*, National statistics and direct communications from national statistical offices to the UNECE secretariat.

Notes: Rates refer generally to weighted averages of deposit rates with different maturities of less than one year. The rates are averages of the monthly rates for the respective time period.

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