



UNECE Weekly

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It's just happened ...

President Iliescu of Romania chairs a round table on the Information Society, Geneva, 17 February

The President of Romania, H.E. Ion Iliescu, spoke at a Round-Table organized by the Romanian Government on the new forms of public private and academic partnership for shaping the information society. The Romanian authorities hosted last November the pan-European regional preparatory Conference, organized with the UNECE in preparation for the World Summit on the Information Society. The President indicated that his Government was eager to build on the success of this preparatory event and achieve concrete results from the Summit. Various speakers supported the concept of partnerships and multistakeholder coalitions involving the public and private sectors, in order to build the capacity and human capital for the new information society. Among participants attending the Round-Table were representatives of the ITU, World Bank, UNCTAD, UNECE, UNESCO, OECD and CERN. Representatives also came from the private sector. In Geneva, President Iliescu participated in a high level "visionaries" panel organised at the opening of the meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the WSIS (17-28 February).

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Quality of statistics in focus

Users of official statistics demand more information on free websites, and of higher quality. This is the trend recognised by the Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Systems which took place in Geneva on 17-19 February. The word quality rang throughout the three days in different contexts: from management quality, through quality of collected data, to the quality of final products. Since users are more demanding, but less willing to pay, the measures taken towards quality improvement must also maintain the costs of these operations within strict limits. At the same time, new approaches are needed to efficiently manage the increasing technical complexity. Is it a revolution? The experts say: "No, we are changing and improving our services, while preserving their continuity and stability."

Extraordinary session of the Committee on Environmental Policy

The Committee met on 18 February to discuss its future strategic direction for the environment taking stock of, and reflecting on, the achievements of the UNECE environmental activities over the past decade. It considered the challenge of the principles of sustainable development as well as the strategic options for future cooperation between the Committee and the governing bodies of the UNECE environmental conventions. In addition, the Committee reviewed the Environmental Performance Review (EPR) of Georgia, discussing the major policy issues emerging from it; the Minister of Environment from Georgia participated in the discussions. Countries also shared their experiences of the role of EPRs in the improvement of national environmental policy and management, and discussed problems encountered based on a report on "lessons learned from ten years EPRs" in the countries in transition. The Committee decided to submit this report to the Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" to be held in Kiev in May.

Not an official record - For information only

On 19 February the Committee held a joint session with the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials (WSSO) that is charged with the task of making the preparations for the Kiev Ministerial Conference. Items of common interest were discussed to help the Working Group finalize its preparations for the Conference. The joint session was chaired by both the Chair of the Committee, Mr. Hugo von Meijenfeldt, Netherlands, and by the Chair of the WSSO, H.E. Vasyl Shevchuk, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine.

Coming up soon ...

Gunnar Myrdal Lecture by Professor Douglass C. North, 1993 Nobel Laureate in Economics,
on "The Role of Institutions in Economic Development,
5 March at 4.30 pm in Room XX of the Palais des Nations

UNECE Spring Seminar to focus on sustainable development

Sustainable development is the topic of UNECE's 2003 Spring Seminar to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva on 3 March. The seminar will discuss the environmental dimension of economic growth and the sustainability of and alternatives to current energy policies. The lead speakers are Theodore Panayotou of Harvard University and David Newbery of Cambridge University, United Kingdom.

The seminar is open to the public. For registration go to <http://www.unece.org/ead/registration.htm> or write to: alison.mangin@unece.org

24.25 February	Round Table on Overcoming Obstacles to the Development of an Information Society: A Business Solution
24-25 February	Meeting of NIS National Focal Points on Environmental Monitoring
24-26 February	Joint FAO/ECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics
26-27 February	Intergovernmental Working Group on Civil Liability

Facts and figures:

Real GDP in the CIS Countries since the start of Transition
(Indices, 1989=100)

	1993	1998	2000	2001	2002
Armenia	44.3	58.6	64.1	70.3	79.3
Azerbaijan	52.2	43.6	52.0	57.1	63.1
Belarus	80.8	79.4	86.8	91.0	95.2
Georgia	26.1	30.3	31.8	33.3	35.1
Kazakhstan	75.8	60.9	68.7	78.0	85.4
Kyrgyzstan	70.3	63.9	69.8	73.5	73.2
Republic of Moldova	56.5	34.4	34.0	36.0	38.6
Russian Federation	71.9	55.9	64.2	67.4	70.3
Tajikistan	52.0	32.0	35.9	39.5	43.1
Turkmenistan ^a	83.7	65.0	83.6	90.3	98.4
Ukraine	68.0	39.4	41.6	45.4	47.3
Uzbekistan	85.7	89.9	97.6	102.0	106.3
CIS-12	70.7	54.2	61.3	65.0	68.1
Central and Eastern Europe-15	76.9	92.5	97.5	100.5	103.4
Western Europe-21 ^b	105.6	119.8	127.0	128.5	129.9
North America-2	106.6	128.3	138.8	139.3	142.7

Source: UNECE Statistical Division

Notes: The regional aggregates are computed by summing over countries constant price values converted into US dollars using the GDP purchasing power parity of the year 2000.

^a Figures for Turkmenistan should be treated with caution. In particular, the deflation procedures that are used to compute officially reported growth rates are not well documented and the reliability of these figures is questionable.

^b Includes Turkey, excludes Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino.

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