



# UNECE Weekly

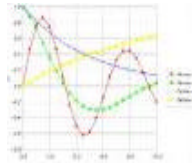
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 73 – 21-25 June 2004

## *It's just happened ...*

### **Conference of European Statisticians 52nd plenary session**

The 52<sup>nd</sup> plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) was held on 8-10 June in Paris, attended by 55 countries and 15 international organizations. The CES is composed of the Heads of National Statistical Offices of the UNECE member countries and international statistical organizations. It is one of the oldest and most important international statistical assemblies and has a significant influence on international statistical work. The Conference reviewed the statistical activities of the international organizations, made an in-depth review of environment statistics,



and took note of the progress made in the projects on confidentiality and microdata and on measuring the activities of multinational enterprises. Two seminars were held during the Conference: the first, focusing on foundational issues of official statistics, dealt

with the organization of national statistical systems; the second, focusing on new emerging issues, discussed measuring prices and volume of the services sector.

For more information see <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2004.06.ces.htm> or contact Lidia Bratanova ([lidia.bratanova@unece.org](mailto:lidia.bratanova@unece.org)).

### **Albania accedes to the UNECE European Agreement on Road Markings**

Albania has acceded to the European Agreement on Road Markings, which is administered by the UNECE. This follows closely its accession in February 2004 to the 1968 Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals. The Agreement and Convention provide common rules for the safe organization of road traffic, both with regard to infrastructure, vehicles and the behaviour of drivers. These legally binding instruments are basic tools to

reduce the number of fatalities and injuries from road crashes. A large number of UNECE and non-UNECE countries apply the provisions of these instruments.



For more information contact Marie-Noelle Poirier ([marie-noelle.Poirier@unece.org](mailto:marie-noelle.Poirier@unece.org))

### **Involving the public in international processes: Aarhus body explores possibility of guidelines**

An expert group established under the auspices of the Aarhus Convention (UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters) met on 3-4 June to explore the possibilities for developing guidelines on involving the public (including NGOs and other stakeholders) in international environment-related bodies and processes. The process stems from a small but significant provision in the Convention requiring its Parties to promote the application of the principles of the Convention in "international environmental decision-making processes and within the framework of international organizations in matters relating to the environment" (art. 3, para. 7). The obligation is on individual Parties rather than on the international bodies or processes themselves. Nonetheless the implications could be far-reaching, potentially having an indirect impact, in the view of the expert group, extending beyond

environmental bodies and processes in any narrow sense. The purpose of guidelines would not be to create additional legal obligations on Parties but to assist them in fulfilling an obligation that they already have.

The expert group was composed of academics and experts designated by governments, international, intergovernmental and regional organizations, including MEA secretariats, and NGOs. Its interim results will be reviewed by the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention at its meeting next month, which will decide upon further steps, including whether to convene a second meeting of the expert group with a view to having a draft of guidelines ready for adoption at the 2nd meeting of the Parties to the Convention (Almaty, Kazakhstan, May 2005).

For more information see <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/ppif.htm>

**Not an official record - For information only**

## Gas Centre focuses attention on implementation of the EU Gas Directive



The UNECE Gas Centre organized its 8<sup>th</sup> Task Force Meeting (Bazna, Romania, 2-4 June) on the "Implementation of the EU Gas Directive". Amongst the key issues debated was the experience of new EU Member States and Accession Countries on the liberalization of their energy markets and the status of European legislation on natural gas. Delegates concluded that considerable progress had been made in liberalizing gas markets in both the EU accession countries and a number of countries located close to the EU, and although market opening provided end users with the

possibility of changing suppliers, it had not led to price reductions (as was expected by many involved in the market). It was highlighted that in some countries whilst cost reduction might result from reorganizing the gas industry via unbundling, this could also lead to increase of costs due to reduced economies of scale/synergies. New taxes on gas would also increase the end consumer price in a number of countries. Finally, it was noted that there would be a need to have a balanced regulatory system that did not significantly increase the costs of market transactions.

For more information contact Tans van Kleef ([tans.van-kleef@unece.org](mailto:tans.van-kleef@unece.org)).

## UNECE's EE21 Project included in International Action Programme of Renewables 2004

UNECE participated in both the Ministerial segment and side events of the International Conference for Renewable Energies "Renewables 2004", which took place in Bonn, 1-4 June. Ministers and government representatives adopted Policy Recommendations, an International Action Programme, and a Political Declaration. A summary of the second phase of the UNECE's EE21 Project was included in the International Action Programme

of the Conference. These actions and commitments for developing renewable energy will represent measurable steps to be reported to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and that progress will be reviewed as foreseen in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. An appropriate arrangement for follow-up will be identified in a future meeting in preparation for the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> sessions of CSD.

For more information contact Gianluca Sambucini ([gianluca.sambucini@unece.org](mailto:gianluca.sambucini@unece.org)).

## Facts and figures:

<b>Millennium Development Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament in 2003</b>			
<b>Countries with available data</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Countries with available data</b>	<b>%</b>
Sweden	45	Israel	15
Denmark	38	Andorra	14
Finland	37	United States	14
Netherlands	37	Ireland	13
Norway	36	Republic of Moldova	13
Iceland	35	Tajikistan	13
Austria	34	France	12
Germany	32	Italy	12
Spain	28	Liechtenstein	12
Bulgaria	26	Slovenia	12
Turkmenistan	26	Azerbaijan	11
Belgium	23	Cyprus	11
Switzerland	23	Lithuania	11
Monaco	22	Romania	11
Canada	21	Belarus	10
Croatia	21	Hungary	10
Latvia	21	Kazakhstan	10
Poland	20	Kyrgyzstan	10
Portugal	19	Greece	9
Slovakia	19	Malta	9
Estonia	18	Russian Federation	8
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	18	Georgia	7
United Kingdom	18	Serbia and Montenegro	7
Bosnia and Herzegovina	17	Uzbekistan	7
Czech Republic	17	Albania	6
Luxembourg	17	Ukraine	5
San Marino	17	Turkey	4
		Armenia	3

Source: United Nations Statistics Division, Millennium Development Indicators Database (based on data from Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU))

## Coming up soon ...

21-22 June

Seminar on Flood Prevention, Protection and Mitigation (Berlin, Germany)

22-25 June

World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29)

**For further information please contact:**

**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](mailto:info.ece@unece.org)  
Web site:  
<http://www.unece.org>**