www.unece.org/index.php?id=29606

On 17 April EXCOM met and welcomed the new UNECE Executive Secretary Sven Alkalaj.

In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Ugljesa Ugi Zvekic, Chair of the Commission and of the Executive Committee of UNECE, presented the main passages of Mr Alkalaj's long diplomatic career, emphasizing his personal participation in the peace settlements in Bosnia Herzegovina, especially the Dayton Peace Accords, the numerous national and international recognitions received for his work on human rights and civil behaviour, as well as his career as a senior manager in the industrial sector dealing with many of the issues covered by UNECE activities.

Mr. Alkalaj thanked EXCOM member States for their warm welcome and their commitment, dedication and support to UNECE. He said that he will use his "experience, knowledge and personal contacts to push for the strengthening of economic cooperation and integration of the ECE region." Mr. Alkalaj shared with the EXCOM his intention to steer "this organization in line with the Secretary-General's priorities for the next five years" and to "focus on building consensus and partnerships among various actors and stakeholders at all levels in order to achieve the goals of UNECE." He further emphasized the importance of ensuring that the review of 2005 reform process is completed in an effective manner and to the satisfaction of our member States. He assured that "in the secretariat we will spare no effort or time to work closely with member States in order to achieve our goals." (click here for full text of his statement)

The delegations of EU, Germany, Turkey, United Kingdom, Russian Federation, and Switzerland took the floor to congratulate the newly appointed Executive Secretary and assure him of the full support of their countries.

During his first 10 days in office, Mr. Alkalaj received several Permanent Representatives in Geneva: Ms. L. Mirachian, Italy; Mr. M. Tileuberdi, Kazakhstan; Mr. M. Maimeskul, Ukraine; Mr. A. Borodavkin, the Russian Federation; Mr. E. Aydogdyev, Turkmenistan; Mr. C. Strohal, Austria.

In these meetings, the discussions called for strengthening cooperation between the secretariat and the member States in areas of mutual interest. Among the issues discussed, were transport, energy, water and the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia.

Executive Secretary Alkalaj looks forward to collaborating closely with the UNECE Ambassadors and he confirmed his intention to improve communication both within ECE and with the member States.