



# UNECE Weekly

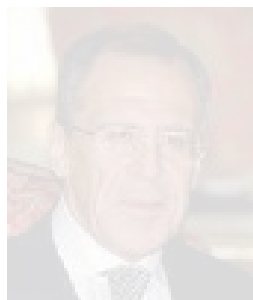
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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## Working visit to Moscow

On 11-16 October 2006 Mr. Marek Belka, Executive Secretary of the UNECE, undertook a working visit to Moscow at the invitation of the Russian Government. The visit included a large number of meetings with high-ranking officials in the Russian Government, as well as with representatives of the business and academic communities.

With Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Mr. Belka discussed the state of implementation of the UNECE reform in the context of the broader on-going reform of the United Nations. Support was expressed to UNECE as an important forum both for addressing some key strategic



Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov



Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Zhukov

issues of wider-European cooperation and integration, and for tackling more technical issues in a number of important sectoral areas. One of the other main topics discussed with Foreign Minister Lavrov was the 2007 session of the Commission, which would coincide with the 60th anniversary of the UNECE.

Before meeting with line Ministries Mr. Belka had a detailed discussion with Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Zhukov, which focussed on all key substantive aspects of cooperation between Russia and the UNECE in various sectors.

Mr. Belka met with Mr. Igor Levitin, Minister of Transport, and Mr. Andrei Belianinov, the Head of the Russian Federal Customs Service. Among the major points raised in the discussions were the current developments of the TIR Convention.

Mr. Belka also met Mr. Andrei Dementiev,

Deputy Minister of Industry and Energy, Mr. Vladimir Fridliyanov, Deputy Minister of Education and Science, as well as high-level representatives at the Ministry of Natural Resources and of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. During these meetings, all the aspects of cooperation between Russia and UNECE were subject to in-depth discussions.

Meetings with Government officials were frank and extremely valuable for sharing views, better understanding the approaches and identifying areas and activities where cooperation can be moved forward.

Meetings were also held with the representatives of the business community, including the President of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs Mr. A. Shokhin and the Vice-President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mr. G. Petrov. The discussions focussed on the new programme of the UNECE on Economic Cooperation and Integration, UNECE work in trade facilitation, technical standardization and harmonisation, and other areas that are of interest to the Russian business community.

Among the academic institutions visited by Mr. Belka were the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, the High School



Mr Belka giving a lecture at MGIMO

of Economics and the Academy of National Economy. A meeting was also held with the Development of Information Society Group,

## New Chairman of the Commission

Ambassador Alex Van Meeuwen is the new Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations Office at Geneva. He has replaced Ambassador François Roux as Chairman of the Commission.

This is his second appointment to Geneva – between 1990 and 1994 Mr. Van Meeuwen was First Secretary and then Counsellor with the Permanent Mission.

Prior to becoming Ambassador in Geneva, Mr. Van Meeuwen was, from 2001, Director-General of Policy at the Foreign Ministry of Belgium. From 1999 to 2001, he was Deputy Chef de Cabinet of the Vice-Prime Minister, prior to which, from 1997, he was Counsellor with the Permanent Mission of Belgium to the European Union in Brussels.

From 1994 to 1997, Mr. Van Meeuwen was Head of Transatlantic, Ex-Yugoslavia, OSCE and Council of Europe Relations Services in the Central Administration of Belgium. From 1987 to 1990, he was Secretary, then First Secretary with the Permanent Mission to the European Economic Community in Brussels.

Between 1984 and 1987, Mr. Van Meeuwen was Secretary of European Coordination in the Central Administration. In addition to other assignments with the Central Administration, his foreign assignments include postings to Yaoundé, Rotterdam and Madrid.

Mr. Van Meeuwen holds a law degree, and a Masters degree in international relations.

which involves a number of prominent economists, business leaders and officials.

On the last day of his visit, Mr. Belka opened the UNECE-EurAsEC-UNESCAP International Conference on Trade Facilitation, and met with the Secretary-General of EurAsEC Mr. G. Rapota. ❖

## Off the press ...

UNECE Recommendations on Harmonized Europe-Wide Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation Vessels (Resolution No. 61)

The Recommendations establish a Pan-European regime of technical requirements for inland navigation vessels. The unified regulations contained therein are to facilitate the recognition of Ship's Certificates issued on their basis, thus avoiding the need for vessels to undergo a double inspection.

The Recommendations contain, in particular, strict regulations on limitation of air and water pollution by vessels

and on abatement on noise as well as the international standards for minimum manning requirements and working and rest hours of crews.

Recommandations de la CEE-ONU relatives à des prescriptions techniques harmonisées à l'échelle européenne applicables aux bateaux de navigation intérieure (Résolution No. 61)

Les Recommandations établissent un régime paneuropéen de prescriptions techniques applicables aux bateaux de navigation intérieure. Les règlements unifiés qu'elles contiennent doivent faciliter la reconnaissance des certificats de visite émis sur la base de ces règlements, évitant ainsi aux bateaux d'être soumis à

de doubles contrôles.

Les Recommandations contiennent, en particulier, une réglementation stricte relative au contrôle de la pollution des eaux et de l'air par les bateaux, à la limitation des bruits, ainsi que les normes internationales concernant l'équipage minimal obligatoire, les heures de travail et le repos de l'équipage.

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## Coming up ...

30-31 October TIR Executive Committee

31 October - 1 Nov. Joint UNCTAD/UNECE Workshop "Strengthening National and Regional Trade Facilitation Organizations"

2-3 October 32nd Session of the UN/CEFACT International Trade Procedures Working Group

## Facts and figures

### Contribution of private consumption to real GDP growth in selected UNECE economies, 2005

(Percentage points)



Source: UNECE Statistical database.

Note: Contribution of final consumption expenditure of households and non-profit institutions serving households to the growth rate of real GDP measured at 2000 prices.

In most ECE countries, economic activity grew at a brisk pace in 2005, driven by domestic demand. Private consumption was the mainstay of economic activity in countries like Bulgaria, Lithuania, the Russian Federation as well as in Canada, France and the United States. In Kyrgyzstan, the growth of private consumption expenditure largely offset the drop of the net exports, limiting the real GDP contraction to 0.6 per cent. In fact, only in a handful of ECE countries was economic activity in 2005 driven by external demand. In our sample, this to some extent was the case in Germany, where the contribution of net exports was higher than that of total domestic demand, which in turn was boosted by investment outlays rather than private consumption.

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)  
Website: <http://www.unece.org>