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Economic Commission for Europe

Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Second session

26 – 27 May 2016

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I am writing to you from the Institute of International Business and Law (IMBIP), St. Petersburg, Russia, to express our satisfaction with the current fruitful cooperation with the groups of experts (working parties) under your Committee, UNECE secretariat and in particular its Economic Cooperation and Trade Division and suggest new areas which we think could be of interest to our Institute and to other educational institutions.

We actively participate in the “education on standardization” project initiated by the UNECE Working Party on regulatory cooperation and standardization policies (WP.6), under which a model programme on standardization was prepared and attention of UNECE governments was attracted to the importance of teaching standards (UNECE Recommendation “I”). As the result of these efforts, a number of institutions including ours started teaching standards as special courses or as separate modules under existing teaching programmes.

In this context I would like to recall that the group of representatives of the educational universities from Western and Eastern Europe met with the UNECE Executive Secretary Mr. C.F. Bach on 24 November 2014 and he expressed UNECE interest in further cooperation on education issues.

We are also pleased that we introduced a practice of study tours of our students to UNECE a few years ago with our students attending the plenary sessions and workshops of Working Party 6. Special seminars with presentations on the specific trade (and other) related activities are also made for our students during these tours and our students also attend other international organizations in Geneva, which gives them first-hand access to the latest information and understanding on how intergovernmental work is done in practice.

The current project which IMBIP is discussing under the “Education on Standardization” project (under Working Party 6) includes the development of a set of knowledge, skills and competencies (and of training materials) for cross sectoral experts and specialists.

Thus, one such area where the IMBIP (through its contacts in the region) believes that there exists an interest in multi-discipline educational specialists such as “international trade and business” (tentative name) which could include issues from areas such as customs, transport logistics, innovation, intellectual property rights, etc. which currently constitute separate areas of education of specialists/experts. The IMBIP suggests initiating a debate at the UNECE STARTE-ED Group with a view to identifying educational institutions interested in elaborating a model programme along the lines of the UNCE “model educational

programme on standardization” and to include in it approaches, learning and training materials that exist under the relevant UNECE programmes.

In our opinion, this project might be of interest to other groups of experts not only from trade, but also from economic integration, transport, environmental and other UNECE programmes.

We also look for new opportunities and possible areas of future cooperation with the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards that could include:

1) Possibilities of developing an internship programme at UNECE for students of master programmes and for students in PhD programmes (and which could be part of such educational programmes of IMBIP);

2) Preparation of professional cross-national education standards. We think that national educational institutions should contact UNECE with such requests and in case of interest from other countries in such work, relevant ministries or other state agency could be invited to the work;

3) We are very interested in receiving regularly UNECE publications and studies (and would like to ask IMBIP to be included in the relevant UNECE mailing lists);

4) We are ready to provide expert assistance from our educational institutions in the research work (innovation) done by UNECE. To do this, we would need to be informed in advance of UNECE’s future studies;

5) We are very interested in having direct access to UNECE expertise. One such way could be to have on-line transmission of the UNECE meetings for students at educational institutions;

6) It would also be useful if the UNECE secretariat could introduce a new practice whereby UNECE staff would inform the education network of the availability of studies, documents, agreements on the issues received from educational institutions. It would be important because UNECE (and its information dissemination) is currently oriented at narrow experts who know what UNECE is doing. For an expert from the outside (such as university staff), it is almost impossible to understand what UNECE is doing and where information can be found. Additionally, almost all information is available in English only.

7) Suggestion for further discussion at UNECE and its Committees: educational institutions could be included as partners (stakeholders and clients) in the UNECE capacity-building and information sharing activities for all UNECE programmes

To conclude we suggest for the Committee to initiate concrete activities on education issues. As the first step in this direction we the Committee could consider the idea on preparing a set of knowledge, skills and competencies for a new multi-discipline educational specialization “international trade and business” which would include issues, activities and learning tools from various UNECE programmes (trade, innovations, intellectual property rights, customs, etc.). If there is interest from countries present at the Steering Committee session in May 2016, the IMBIP will be ready to prepare an outline of an educational programme/course with a view to initiating a concrete debate on this project.

We look forward to your hearing the Steering Committee delegations’ views on our proposals and to further cooperation with the Committee and UNECE secretariat,

Your sincerely,

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Prof. Dr.

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