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Twenty-third session

Geneva, 18 (p.m.)-20 November 2013

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Matters arising from recent meetings and areas of priority action for the Working Party

Report of the annual planning meeting of UNECE WP. 6 activities

I. Adoption of the agenda

1. The annual planning meeting of UNECE WP. 6 activities was hosted by the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB) at its premises in Berlin. The Chair of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP. 6) opened the meeting. The agenda was adopted.

II. Follow-up to the 2012 WP. 6 annual session and report on ongoing activities

2. The secretary of WP.6 introduced the report of the 2012 session (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2012/2).

3. She informed the delegations about the results of the Review of the UNECE Reform by the Executive Committee (Excom) and about changes in the allocation of secretariat resources resulting from the recent budget cuts made by the General Assembly.

4. The Chair expressed her disappointment at the fact that whereas in its Review Excom had asked for increased resources for standardization activities, there had instead been a contraction of over 50% in those resources. She reported that both she and Vice-Chair Minister Koreshkov had written to the UNECE Executive Secretary to express their concern about this situation but had not received satisfactory replies. Participants agreed that because the Excom Review asked for the allocation of one post to “standardization activities”, there was no need to cut any ongoing or planned activities, but instead there was

a need to implement the Excom recommendations. The situation would be discussed at the forthcoming WP. 6 session.

5. The secretariat and the Chair informed participants about activities in the different areas of work:

- **The meeting of the Network on Metrology, Accreditation and Standardization for Developing Countries (DCMAS network)** (April 2013) hosted and chaired by UNECE. At the meeting, participating organizations (International Telecommunication Union (ITU), International Accreditation Forum (IAF), International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), International Trade Center (ITC), International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), International Organisation for Legal Metrology (OIML), Bureau International de Poids et Mesures (BIPM), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) had shared information on ongoing activities including on education and training and discussed the UNECE model programme on standardization. Participating organizations expressed their willingness to continue to support the UNECE project on “Education on standards-related issues”.
- **Work under the Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM):** GRM had held three webinars since the annual session, in January, March and June. The secretariat had represented the Group at the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction, where a featured event had been co-organized by UNECE, United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) and International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI). The publication on *Risk Management in Regulatory systems* had been selected to be a United Nations sales publication and would be promoted by the publications office.
- **Work under the Market Surveillance Group:** The Chair had made arrangements for the 2013 meeting of the MARS Group to be held in Prague, in cooperation with the Czech authorities. The 2014 meeting would take place in Belgrade.
- **Work on Regulatory Cooperation,** in cooperation with the Task Force on Technical Regulations of the EU-Russia Industrialists’ Round Table (IRT). The secretariat reported that it had attended three meetings of the Task Force, in Kazan, Russian Federation, from 21 to 25 September 2012; in Berlin on 22 January 2013 and in Moscow on 20 March 2013.
- **Work under the sectoral initiatives:** An International Conference on Equipment and Services in Explosive Atmospheres was planned for 18 September 2013 in Fortaleza, Brazil.

III. Preparation of the 2013 session

6. Participants discussed the preparation of the 2013 session and the draft agenda.

7. The Bureau endorsed the proposed agenda, with minor changes. It asked the secretariat to organize as part of the session:

- A Conference on Standards and Regulatory Frameworks
- The revision of the Recommendation D on “Reference to Standards”.
- The discussion of a new strategy for the UNECE work on Market Surveillance

8. Delegates offered suggestions about possible speakers and topics for the Conference, and for the organization of the session.
9. Delegations were informed of the opportunity to attend a Workshop on Conformity Assessment organized by the World Standards Cooperation back to back with the session.
10. To enable as many delegates as possible to attend both events, delegations recommended that the session should be curtailed to two and a half days.

IV. Report on progress made by the sectoral initiatives

11. In the absence of the Coordinator of the Sectoral Initiative on Earthmoving Machinery, the secretariat reported on progress since the last session and ongoing work. Training activities on the Common Regulatory Objectives and associated standards had been conducted in several countries, including India, China and Viet Nam.
12. In the absence of the Coordinator of the Sectoral Initiative on Telecom, the secretariat reported that little progress was being made.
13. The secretariat and the Coordinator of the Sectoral Initiative on Equipment for Explosive Environment reviewed recent achievements. The Initiative had participated in the First Petroleum and Chemical Industry Committee (PCIC)-Middle-East conference in Abu Dhabi, on 12 and 13 November 2012; and was revising the questionnaire on regulations in the sector of Equipment for Explosive Environments.
14. The Initiative has started organizing the Conference in Fortaleza, Brazil, to promote the Initiative among regulatory authorities of the Latin American region and the “BRIC countries” (Brazil, Russian Federation, India and China).
15. The Conference aimed at: (a) identifying the regulatory authorities in the Latin American region responsible for this sector, (b) learning about regulatory practice in the region, (c) presenting the Initiative, together with global regulatory best practice, (d) offering regulators an opportunity to learn about the IECEx system and (e) providing regulators in this sector with a global platform for discussion.
16. The secretariat and the Coordinator discussed the next steps to be taken for organizing the conference.

V. Market surveillance (MARS) group: recent activities and work plan

17. The Coordinator of the General Market Surveillance Procedure Initiative updated delegations on the project. He reminded them that the aim of the project was to give market surveillance authorities a “believable and sustainable” basis for their activities. This meant conducting inspection activities on a scale consistent with an agreed rate of non-conformity for products on the market.
18. In practice, this entailed: (a) defining classes of risks for products on the market, (b) defining an acceptable non-conformity rate for the different classes of risk, and (c) determining a sampling procedure that would allow the agreed objectives to be attained. The problem was that, for this, the sampling would have to be large. A number of solutions could be studied, with the support of modern statistical models. The Coordinator continued to work on this issue, together with academics and market surveillance authorities, and at the next Group meeting would report on developments.

19. The delegation of the Czech Republic informed participants that the eleventh meeting of the Group would be held in Prague from 12 to 14 September. The topics proposed for discussion included:

- Further development of the UNECE Generic Market Surveillance Procedure.
 - Implementation of the UNECE Recommendation “I” on Education in Standards-related Issues.
 - Discussion of best practice guidelines in market surveillance.
 - Experience in the implementation of the EU Regulation on Standardization.
 - Experience in the implementation of the EU Construction Products Regulation.
 - Proposed modification of market surveillance within the framework of the EU.
 - Accreditation of laboratories for market surveillance.
- New rules on market surveillance in the Eurasian Economic Community.

20. The meeting would be co-organized by the Czech Office for Standards, Metrology and Testing, the Slovak Office of Standards, Metrology and Testing, and the Czech Ministry of Trade and Industry. The organizers would encourage the participation of market surveillance authorities both of the European Union and of Russian-speaking countries, including the countries of the Eurasian Economic Community.

21. Participants discussed the organization of the 2014 Meeting of the MARS Group, which would be held back to back with a summit meeting of national market surveillance authorities of Serbia. The meeting would be held over three days, two being exclusively for the MARS Group and one open to both national participants and MARS delegations. The meeting would be organized by the Ministry of Trade and Industry of Serbia, with financial assistance from the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) Project for Serbia; and the German Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) project.

22. Participants suggested trying to use this opportunity to include other market surveillance authorities from South-East Europe in the activities of the Group.

VI. Other business

23. No items were raised.