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It's just happened ...

High-level Meeting of Environment and Education Ministries



Mr. A.Z. Kaminskas, Permanent Secretary of the Government of Lithuania, Ms. B. Schmögnerová, UNECE Executive Secretary, Mr. K. Bärlund, Director UNECE Environment and Human Settlements Division, Mr. M. Algirdas, Minister of Education of Lithuania

In Vilnius, Lithuania, on 18 March 2005, UNECE ministers, vice-ministers and other representatives of Environment and Education Ministries adopted with acclamation a UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) – a practical instrument to promote sustainable development through education. They also adopted the Vilnius Framework for Implementation setting up a Steering Committee and an expert group on indicators in order to facilitate coordination and review of the Strategy's implementation.

The Meeting debated the progress in implementing ESD, good practices in the region and identified key challenges that lie ahead. It discussed the role of the UNECE region in implementing ESD in a global context, and its cooperation with UNESCO. The Meeting also launched the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in the UNECE region.

For more information contact Ella Behlyarova (ella.behlyarova@unece.org).

Maturity requirements for apples

The Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables is trying out maturity requirements for apples. At its meeting on 8-11 March it decided to propose to the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards to include in the UNECE standard for apples a section on minimum quality requirements, to give quality inspectors a tool to remove immature produce from the markets. The new provisions will be tried out in practice for 2 years in close contact with producers and traders.

Before this, size was used as the main maturity requirement. Now quality inspectors can test apples for their sugar content in order to ensure that they

are mature enough to reach the consumer in satisfactory condition. The minimum sizes of apples in the European Community standard will be aligned with those in the UNECE Standard this year. This will allow smaller apples to be traded – these are particularly successful with children. The concerns of some that allowing small apples might lead to unripe apples on the markets have been addressed with the new minimum maturity requirements.

For more information contact the UNECE Agricultural Standards Unit (agristandards@unece.org).



Task Force on Heavy Metals will test the effectiveness of Protocol

The Air Pollution Convention held the first meeting of its newly-established Task Force on Heavy Metals on 16-18 March 2005 in Berlin. Its main task was technical preparations for the review of the 1998 Protocol on Heavy Metals – one of 8 protocols to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution – which entered into force on 29 December 2003 and has been ratified by 24 countries. The review process was started by the Convention's Executive Body at its session in December 2004. At its first meeting the Task Force agreed on how best

to apply the available scientific and technical work of the Convention in its assessment of the sufficiency and effectiveness of the Protocol. A second meeting (Geneva, 16-17 June) will evaluate emission limit values for selected sources and assess the best available technologies for controlling the heavy metals presently covered by the Protocol: Cadmium, Lead and Mercury.

For further information, contact Brinda Wachs (brinda.wachs@unece.org).

Not an official record - For information only

Five Business Requirements Specifications (BRS) approved by UN/CEFACT Forum

Significant future improvements in trade facilitation will result from the adoption, by software makers, of the electronic business and trade facilitation standards. To achieve these improvements, UN/CEFACT has placed at the centre of its e-Business strategy three fundamental elements: Cross-sectoral analysis (to promote interoperability and supply chain synchronicity); Business process and information modelling (to capture user requirements, independent of any specific technology, through the creation of business collaboration models); and Mapping to new technologies as they emerge (e.g., eXtensible Markup Language (XML), Web Services, shared and/or distributed objects, etc.).

The vast breadth of business knowledge will be captured by Business Requirement Specifications (BRS) that are independent of the underlying

technology and explicit means of implementation. The benefits to users will be the protection of existing infrastructure investments by reducing the cost of transitioning to new technologies. At the sixth UN/CEFACT Forum, meeting in Kuala Lumpur on 14-18 March, the Steering Committee of the International Trade and Business Processes Permanent Group formally approved the first Business Requirement Specifications (BRS), namely Cross industry invoice; Cross industry remittance advice; BoostAero e-Supply Chain; Material Safety Data Sheet; E-Tendering. These will now be submitted to the next UN/CEFACT Plenary session for approval as UN/CEFACT Business Standards.

For more information visit <http://www.uncefact.org> or contact Jean Kubler (jean.kubler@unece.org).

Facts and figures:

**Women and Men as Percent of Service, Shop and Market Sales Workers
Selected UNECE countries**

country	2000		2003		Difference 2003-2000	
	women	men	women	men	women	men
Finland	...	...	79.0	21.0	...	...
Latvia	72.7	27.7	76.0	23.8	3.3	-3.9
Sweden	79.3	20.7	75.8	24.2	-3.5	3.5
Denmark	78.4	21.6	75.6	24.4	-2.8	2.8
Germany	75.1	24.9	75.0	25.0	-0.1	0.1
France	73.8	26.1	74.2	25.8	0.4	-0.3
United Kingdom	70.1	29.9	73.3	26.7	3.2	-3.2
Norway	71.6	28.4	72.6	27.4	1.0	-1.0
Iceland	71.9	31.2	...	...	...	...
Russian Federation	67.1	32.9	70.0	30.0	2.9	-2.9
Switzerland	71.3	28.7	69.4	30.6	-1.9	1.9
Netherlands	69.1	30.9	...	...	...	...
Austria	65.7	34.3	68.6	31.5	2.9	-2.8
Lithuania	68.5	31.5	68.5	31.6	0.0	0.1
Portugal	64.4	35.6	68.4	31.7	4.0	-3.9
Belgium	65.5	34.5	67.9	32.1	2.4	-2.4
Romania	72.0	28.0	67.2	32.7	-4.8	4.7
Slovakia	66.4	33.6	66.3	33.6	-0.1	0.0
Ireland	64.8	35.1	66.1	34.1	1.3	-1.0
Czech Republic	66.0	34.0	65.2	34.8	-0.8	0.8
Slovenia	63.5	35.8	65.0	35.2	1.5	-0.6
Bulgaria	65.5	34.5	65.0	35.0	-0.5	0.5
Poland	64.9	35.1	63.0	37.0	-1.9	1.9
Luxembourg	55.6	44.4	62.5	37.5	6.9	-6.9
Spain	57.7	42.3	61.1	38.9	3.4	-3.4
Hungary	57.4	42.6	60.7	39.3	3.3	-3.3
Croatia	55.1	44.9	59.5	40.5	4.4	-4.4
Greece	51.9	48.1	52.7	47.3	0.8	-0.8
Kyrgyzstan	50.9	49.1	...	...	...	...
Italy	48.6	51.5	50.1	49.9	1.5	-1.6
Georgia	41.8	58.2	48.6	51.4	6.8	-6.8
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	...	...	41.4	58.6	...	...

Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database compiled from national statistical offices, ILO and Eurostat.
Notes: Data refers to employment in ISCO-88 Occupational Group 5. May not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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