



# UNECE Weekly

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## It's just happened ...

### Zambia becomes full member of GHS Sub-Committee

On 27 April the Economic and Social Council endorsed the Secretary-General's decision to approve the application of Zambia for full membership in the *Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals* (GHS Sub-Committee) of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals. This brings the total full membership of the Sub-Committee to 32 countries.

The GHS has been developed on the basis of a mandate given in Agenda 21 by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. It addresses classification of chemicals by type of hazards and proposes harmonized hazard communication elements, including pictograms and safety data



sheets. It aims at ensuring that information on physical hazards and acute toxicity from chemicals be available in order to enhance the protection of human health and the environment during the handling, transport and use of these chemicals. The GHS also provides a basis for harmonization of rules and regulations on chemicals at national, regional and worldwide level, an important factor also for trade facilitation. The Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, adopted in Johannesburg in 2002, encourages countries to implement the GHS as soon as possible with a view to having the system fully operational by 2008.

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### Early Warning Mechanism

On 26 April a second *UNECE-OSCE Workshop on a Joint Early Warning Mechanism in the Economic and Environmental Dimension* was held in Geneva with the participation of experts from both organizations, UNDP and research institutes. Participants discussed an OSCE project proposal for a joint mechanism, including methodology, institutional questions and funding. The meeting reviewed different sources of data, including structural analysis, monitoring behavioural indicators as well as the possibility of consultations with countries concerned. It was agreed that there was no need for independent data collection or large analytical capacity, thanks to the availability of a wealth of relevant data as well as analytical studies. Highly sophisticated electronic monitoring and analytical programmes developed by the research

community could considerably reduce resource requirements of the project.

Participants discussed how to channel early warning information into the decision-making process of the two organizations, e.g. through the Chairman-in-Office or Secretary-General of the OSCE, the OSCE Economic and Environmental Sub-Committee or a UNECE relevant body. They heard a presentation on early warning activities of OSCE in other (human, political and military) dimensions of security. Experts of the two organizations will brief the Missions in Geneva as well as the OSCE Economic and Environmental Sub-Committee in Vienna about the conclusions of the workshop in the near future.

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### Monitoring forest resources

The UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on *Monitoring forest resources for sustainable forest management in the UNECE region* had its inaugural meeting on 25-27 April. High-level forest monitoring experts from 20 countries, the European Commission, EU Joint Research Centre, European Forest Institute, Ministerial Conference on Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), FAO and UNECE discussed reporting on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest



Not an official record - For information only

management (as agreed within the pan-European MCPFE process) and its coordination with the analogous Montreal processes. The team is expected to contribute to the monitoring of temperate and boreal forests, and to advise on the implementation of forest resources assessment. The MCPFE is a continuing high-level cooperation process of around 40 European countries and the European Community. It addresses the most

important issues on forests and forestry and declares recommendations in favour of the protection and sustainable management of forests in Europe. The MCPFE was launched in 1990 and is based on a chain of Ministerial Conferences and follow-up experts meetings.

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## Off the press ...

### Statistical Pocketbook

The latest edition of «*Trends in Europe and North America – The Statistical Pocketbook of the UNECE*» presents economic and social “profiles”, in statistics, of all 55 member countries for the most recent year available. It is intended to be of very general interest and aims at a wide range of users of international statistics who are not necessarily familiar with statistical terminology or with interpreting statistical tables. The information presented in this issue of «*Trends*» has been obtained from the national statistical offices and statistical departments of other international organizations that are data collectors and have expertise in a given field.

For more information contact the UNECE Information Service ([info.ece@unece.org](mailto:info.ece@unece.org)).



## Facts and figures:

**Unemployment rate, total**  
European Union and other selected UNECE economies  
(Per cent of civilian labour force)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
					Q1
<b>Euro area-12</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>8.8</b>	...
France	8.4	8.9	9.5	9.6	...
Germany	7.4	8.2	9.0	9.5	...
Italy	9.1	8.6	8.4	...	...
Austria	3.6	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.6
Belgium	6.7	7.3	8.0	7.8	8.0
Finland	9.1	9.1	9.0	8.8	...
Greece	10.8	10.3	9.7	...	...
Ireland	3.9	4.3	4.6	4.5	4.3
Luxembourg	2.1	2.8	3.7	4.2	...
Netherlands	2.5	2.7	3.8	4.7	...
Portugal	4.0	5.0	6.3	6.7	...
Spain	10.6	11.3	11.3	10.8	10.2
<b>European Union-15</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>8.0</b>	...
United Kingdom	5.0	5.1	4.9	4.7	...
Denmark	4.3	4.6	5.6	5.4	...
Sweden	4.9	4.9	5.6	6.3	...
<b>EU new members-10</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>14.1</b>	...
Cyprus	4.4	3.9	4.5	5.0	5.4
Czech Republic	8.0	7.3	7.8	8.3	8.3
Estonia	11.8	9.5	10.2	9.2	8.0
Hungary	5.6	5.6	5.8	5.9	6.3
Latvia	12.9	12.6	10.4	9.8	...
Lithuania	16.4	13.5	12.7	10.8	8.8
Malta	7.7	7.7	8.0	7.3	...
Poland	18.5	19.8	19.2	18.8	...
Slovakia	19.4	18.7	17.5	18.0	...
Slovenia	5.8	6.1	6.5	6.0	...
<b>European Union-25</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>9.0</b>	...
Iceland	2.3	3.2	3.4	3.1	...
Israel	9.4	10.3	10.7	...	...
Norway	3.6	3.9	4.5	4.4	...
Switzerland	2.6	3.2	4.2	4.4	...
Canada	7.2	7.7	7.6	7.2	...
United States	4.8	5.8	6.0	5.5	5.3

## Coming up soon ...

2-4 May

Meeting of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes

Source: UNECE Statistical Database, compiled from Eurostat, OECD and national sources.

Note: Standardized Eurostat/OECD definition conforming to ILO guidelines. Estimates are based on Labour Force Surveys covering private households only. Quarterly data are seasonally adjusted.

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