



UNECE Weekly

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It's just happened ...

UNECE hosts International Methane to Markets Meeting

On 27-28 April the UNECE hosted the Coal Mine Methane Technical Subcommittee Meeting of the Methane to Markets Partnership. The Methane to Markets Partnership is an action-oriented initiative that will reduce global methane emissions to enhance economic growth, promote energy security, improve the environment, and reduce greenhouse gases. Other benefits include improving mine safety, reducing waste, and improving local air quality. The initiative, which focusses on cost-effective, near-term methane recovery and use as a clean energy source, will be effected internationally through collaboration between developed countries, developing countries, and countries with economies in transition — together with strong participation from the private sector.

There are clear linkages and synergies between the objectives of the UNECE's programme of work on coal mine methane and those of the Methane to Markets Partnership. Mine methane recovery and use are very important issues for many of the countries in the UNECE region which include countries ranked among the world's top coal producers and the world's leading emitters of coal mine methane. Upstream, the capture of methane is paramount to maintaining safe working conditions and mine productivity. Downstream, successful utilization of the methane can yield local, regional, national and global socio-economic benefits. UNECE views coal mine methane recovery and use as a critical element of the sustainable energy portfolios in many UNECE countries. The meeting discussed its Action Plan and



other activities and projects for launch in 2005. It also began to identify concrete actions the Partnership could undertake to spur additional mine methane recovery and avenues for cooperation and support between the member countries and its Project Network.

UNECE to focus on Economic Benefits of Improving Mine Safety

The first meeting of the UNECE Task Force on the Economic Benefits of Improving Mine Safety through Extraction and Use of Coal Mine Methane was held on 29 April. The Task Force, whose membership comprises experts from the technical, business and regulatory communities, will specifically support the activities of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane in the area of improving mine safety through extraction and use of coal mine methane. The meeting agreed that the Task Force will seek to: (i) establish a clear linkage between the economic benefits and the mining of gassy coal seams based on the safe drainage and use of the gas, and to facilitate this through the establishment of a dedicated membership from the technical, business and regulatory communities; (ii) develop a number of focussed case studies that will then serve to provide the basis for the elaboration of a set of UN Guidelines on "Avoidance and Minimizing the Impact of Coal Mine Explosions"; and (iii) cooperate and work with the governments of target countries and the global mining industry in developing the economic justifications for implementing incentives to increase the extraction and use of coal mine methane.

For further information contact Charlotte Griffiths (charlotte.griffiths@unece.org).

Coming up soon ...

Air Pollution Protocol takes effect on 17 May

The **Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone** to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) will enter into force on Tuesday, 17 May 2005. It has so far been ratified by: the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia,

Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United States and the European Community.

The Protocol aims to cut emissions of sulphur, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and ammonia from energy generation, industrial sources, motor vehicles, agriculture and products.

For further information contact Keith Bull (keith.bull@unece.org).

Not an official record - For information only

An International Conference on Strengthening Subregional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia and the Future Role of the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) will be held in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 25-27 May 2005. The Conference is being organized by the Government of Kazakhstan in cooperation with UNECE and UNESCAP. In addition to the SPECA member States (Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), other neighbouring

countries, bilateral donor agencies, international financial institutions, international organizations, including regional cooperation and integration organizations and initiatives have been invited to take part. Background documents prepared jointly by UNECE and UNESCAP are now available, alongside with other information, at the following web address:

<http://www.unece.org/operact/astana.doc>

May

16-18 Work Session on Statistical Data Editing (Ottawa, Canada)

17-18 TIR Executive Board

19-20 Ad Hoc Expert Group on Phase III of the TIR Revision

18-20 Water Convention Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (Bratislava, Slovakia)

Facts and figures:

Unemployment rates by sex in the European Union countries

	2000		2004		Change from 2000 to 2004	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
France	7.6	10.9	8.8	10.7	1.2	-0.2
Germany	6	8.7	8.7	10.5	2.7	1.8
Italy	7.8	13.6	6.4	10.5	-1.4	-3.1
Austria	3.1	4.3	3.9	5.2	0.8	0.9
Belgium	5.6	8.5	7	8.8	1.4	0.3
Finland	9.1	10.6	8.7	8.9	-0.4	-1.7
Greece	7.5	17.2	6.6	16.2	-0.9	-1.0
Ireland	4.3	4.3	4.9	3.9	0.6	-0.4
Luxembourg	1.8	3.1	3.4	5.3	1.6	2.2
Netherlands	2.2	3.6	4.3	4.8	2.1	1.2
Portugal	3.3	5	5.9	7.6	2.6	2.6
Spain	7.9	16.7	7.9	14.9	0.0	-1.8
Eurozone (12 countries)	6.5	10.5	7.5	10.5	1.0	0.0
United Kingdom	5.9	4.8	5.1	4.2	-0.8	-0.6
Denmark	4.1	4.8	5.1	5.6	1.0	0.8
Sweden	5.9	5.3	6.5	6.1	0.6	0.8
European Union (15 countries)	6.4	9.3	7.1	9.2	0.7	-0.1
Cyprus	3.2	7.8	4	6.3	0.8	-1.5
Czech Republic	7.3	10.3	7.1	9.9	-0.2	-0.4
Estonia	13.4	11.5	10.3	8.1	-3.1	-3.4
Hungary	6.8	5.6	5.8	6	-1.0	0.4
Latvia	14.4	12.9	9.2	10.3	-5.2	-2.6
Lithuania	18.6	14.1	10.3	11.3	-8.3	-2.8
Malta	6.5	7.4	6.9	8.3	0.4	0.9
Poland	14.6	18.6	18	19.7	3.4	1.1
Slovakia	18.9	18.5	17	19.3	-1.9	0.8
Slovenia	6.4	6.8	5.6	6.5	-0.8	-0.3
10 New Member States	12.6	14.8	13.4	15	0.8	0.2
European Union (25 countries)	7.3	10.2	8	10.2	0.7	0.0

Source: UNECE Gender statistics database & Eurostat

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

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