



UNECE Weekly

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It's just happened ...

Regional approach to ageing

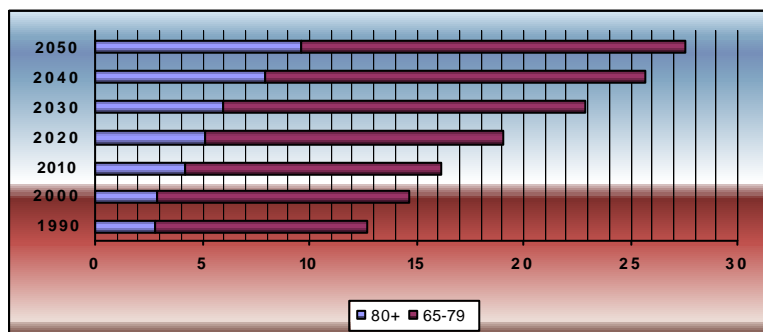
A combination of a number of factors – such as increasing life expectancy, low fertility rates and expected retirement of post-war baby-boomers – has led to shifts in the age structures of the population which are having deep socio-economic consequences. As a result of these demographic changes, the population over age 65 has already reached 20-30% of the working age population in most developed countries.

Notwithstanding the variation in the strategy of adjustment to population ageing across various UN regions, a common approach and better cooperation is needed among the regional commissions for a successful review and appraisal of the implementation of

the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA). UNECE and UN/DESA co-organized an Inter-Regional Consultation in Geneva on September 26-28 in an attempt to build such a unifying framework. The meeting, which brought together the focal points on ageing from the UN regional commissions and representatives from other international organizations and NGOs, focused on the bottom-up participatory approach to the review and appraisal exercise of the MIPAA plan. Although this approach is frequently used in the evaluation of policies and programmes, it has not been used in a global review and appraisal.

For more information contact Andres Vikat (andres.vikat@unece.org). ◆

Projected percentage of the population at age 65 and older in Europe



Source: UN/DESA Population Division, World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision and World Urbanization Prospects

Can Tajikistan improve its environment?

The Tajik Aluminium Plant, close to the Uzbek border, annually discharges over 21,000 tons of harmful substances into the air. These discharges account for about 60-70% of all emissions from stationary sources and result in a high rate of respiratory diseases, particularly among children, as well

as increased infant morbidity, double the normal rates of miscarriages and a high incidence of skin cancer. These estimates are set out in the UNECE Environmental Performance Review (EPR) of Tajikistan which was launched in Dushanbe on 19-20 September. ➔

Question of the week

to Mr. Zaal Lomtadze, Chairman of the Committee on Environmental Policy



“How is environmental policy evolving in countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia?”

While in some countries of the region the environmental code has been moderately developed, it has usually not been matched by proper implementation. Recent political changes have created new circumstances. As a general pattern, new governments promptly address issues of transparency and accountability of the government itself, and elimination of widespread corruption. Ultimately, these measures are expected to result in more efficient administration, indeed improving the possibilities for more effective national policies.

How does this affect environmental policy?

The urge to focus government actions more efficiently on the acute problems (and, not least, to fulfil the promises made to the electorate) also causes overall reconsideration of country priorities. Typically, these do not include the environment, at least not in the short-term. Instead, they are oriented towards creating a healthy business environment, lowering barriers and cutting red tape as much as possible. While these are definitely justified, the definition of “barriers” becomes essential. There is a risk of perceiving environmental regulations as “barriers”. At this point, international cooperation can help to keep environmental standards at least at a minimum acceptable level during the hard times of transition.

Are there improved possibilities for more effective environmental policies?

In a nutshell, yes – the possibilities have improved. Still, much effort will be needed to use these possibilities properly. ◆

→ Air and water quality are major concerns in Tajikistan. In the main cities the emission of harmful substances are well over the limits, mainly due not so much to industrial production but to the increased number and age of vehicles, while inadequate drinking water quality and drinking water supply have become one of the main environmental health problems.

The Review presents an analysis and recommendations for the most pressing environmental issues of

the country. The main purpose of the launch, organized by the UNECE secretariat in cooperation with the UNDP Office in Dushanbe and the State Committee on



Environmental Protection and Forestry of Tajikistan, was to increase the understanding and visibility of the results of the Review in the country and to mobilize all stakeholders for the successful implementation of the recommendations.

The publication is available in Russian and English on the UNECE website http://www.unece.org/env/epr/countries_reviewed.htm. For more information contact Catherine Masson (catherine.masson@unece.org) or Oleg Dziubinski (oleg.dziubinski@unece.org). ♦

Off the press ...

UNECE Industrial Accident Notification System

In the event of a major accident with transboundary effects it is crucial that all potentially affected countries be notified promptly so that they may activate the necessary response measures. Furthermore efficient provision of international assistance to respond to such an accident may reduce its consequences.

Parties to the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents are called upon to establish and operate compatible and efficient industrial accident notification systems at

appropriate levels. The Convention also provides for rendering mutual assistance to minimize the effects of an accident. The UNECE Industrial Accident Notification (IAN) System, accepted by the Conference of Parties to the Convention in 2000, serves for notifying neighbouring countries, at national level, or a major accident which has caused



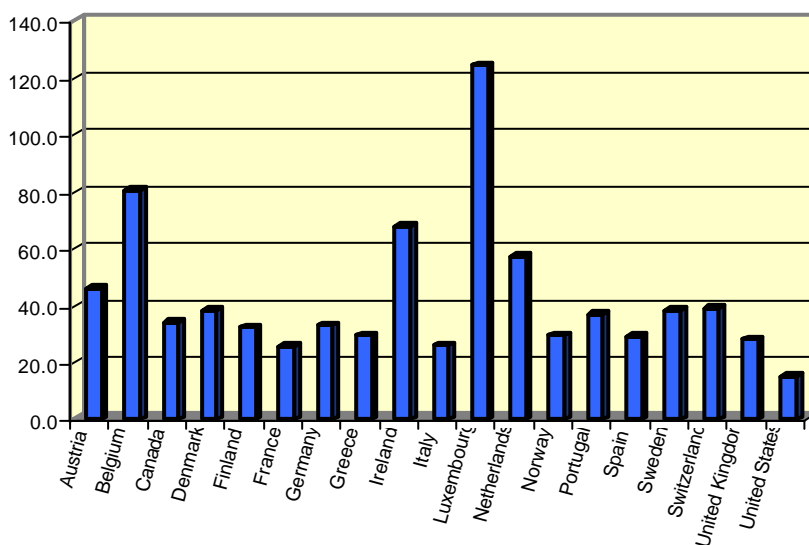
or is capable of causing transboundary effects. The System comprises three categories of reports: (i) early-warning (ii) information and (iii) assistance request.

This publication contains the UNECE IAN System as amended by the Conference of Parties at its third meeting in 2004.

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Facts and figures ...

Imports of goods and services of selected UNECE economies in 2004
Per cent of GDP at current prices



Source UNECE Statistical Database, compiled from Eurostat and national sources

Coming up soon ...

October

- 3-7 Working Party on Lighting and Light-signalling
- 4-7 Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews
- 4-7 Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

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