



UNECE Weekly

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 141 – 10-14 October 2005

It's just happened ...

The timber market

Timber markets continue at record levels in the subregions of the UNECE: CIS, Europe and North America, stressed the UNECE Timber Committee at its recent meeting.

Kyoto Protocol helps promote forests

The provisions of the Kyoto Protocol, which came into effect in 2005, will influence all parts of the forest sector and present an additional opportunity to promote forests and wood products. In the short term the main consequence has been increased policy support for developing wood energy. There is evidence that consumption of energy wood is growing in many regions under the influence of high oil prices and official policies to reach renewable energy goals and Kyoto Protocol commitments.

More wood needed to reconstruct New Orleans

The catastrophic windstorms in the Baltic Sea region in January 2005, and the hurricanes in the Mexican Gulf region of the United States in

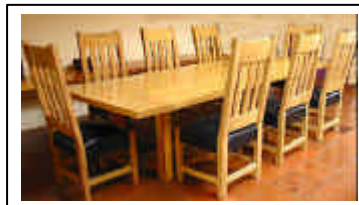


September 2005, caused extensive forest damage with subsequent effects on primary wood products production and trade patterns. The hurricanes will bring large volumes of roundwood to the market. At the same time the huge demand for

housing repair and reconstruction – up to 400,000 (wood-based) homes were destroyed and a similar number damaged – will create an additional demand for sawnwood and other wood products.

China buys raw wood and sells wood products

China is now the largest plywood exporter in the world and the second furniture exporter. The expansion of the Chinese forest products industry has widespread and significant consequences for the forest sector in the UNECE region. Chinese industries are



buying wood raw material and primary products (logs, sawnwood, recovered paper) from the UNECE region, as well as from other regions, and exporting manufactured products, notably plywood and furniture. Because of the large scale of the operations and low Chinese labour costs, prices have fallen all along the supply chain, reducing the economic viability of the European forest and timber sector. As a response to trading practices which they consider unfair, the EU has put anti-dumping measures in place for plywood, and the US has set punitive tariffs on some Chinese furniture.

Question of the week



to Ambassador François Roux, Permanent Representative of Belgium and Chairman of the Economic Commission for Europe

Why a reform of UNECE?

The main reason for this reform is the fact that following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the 2004 enlargement of the European Union, the UNECE has to re-adapt to the new reality in Europe.

In addition there was a need to look at the governance issue, as well as the interaction between the membership and the secretariat, in order to better respond to the needs of the member States, and in particular the countries in transition.

The UNECE mandate is still the same as when it was founded in 1947, we are therefore really talking about an adjustment of its work. The reform is not a budget-cutting exercise, but aims at re-allocating resources within the organization.

At what stage is the reform?

An evaluation report was prepared during the first part of the year. An ad hoc intergovernmental working group was set up in July and a road map adopted by member States. On the basis of the evaluation report and consultations between member States, a draft has been proposed which contains the main elements of the reform. Negotiations on this draft will begin in the second week of October, and agreement is expected by the end of November. ♦

New image of forest needed

Better communication is necessary to improve the public's image of wood and forests which suffers from concern for deforestation outside the region and the legality and

sustainability of harvests. Wood coming from sustainably managed forests is truly friendly to the environment: a much greater communication effort is needed to fix this impression in the public mind,

replacing the many misconceptions there are at present.

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Website

<http://www.unece.org/trade/timber> ◇

Measuring living habits

In 2003 about 2,500,000 people in Italy (4.5% of the population) commuted between two households. In 2001 about 60,000-70,000 people in Norway were living apart together – i.e. couples who have separated homes but live together (in one of the two homes) on a non regular basis. The percentage of people living apart together was 6% of the adult population in France in 1996, and 9% in Germany in 1994. Participants in a first joint UNECE-Eurostat-OECD meeting on social statistics, held in Luxembourg on 29-30 September, made recommendations on expanding the current work on families and households to develop common concepts and methodology to measure new forms of households, such as persons who live apart together, commuters between households, same-sex couples, persons living distant but within the network, etc. The latter term refers to people who live in separated households in a very close distance, but where one of the

household provides support to the other one (the typical example is a family where one or two grandparents live alone but very close to the family household so that they can receive or provide support.



Participants in the meeting – Directors of Social Statistics of 31 UNECE countries and 4

non-UNECE countries (Australia, Republic of Korea, Mongolia and New Zealand) – also agreed that there is a need for a continuing forum to address the measurement of emerging social issues.

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Single Windows

Currently used by over 20 countries, a Single Window is a facility to allow business to submit all trade

documents (related to export, import and transit procedures) to government at one single point. One single inspection of cargo by regulatory officials (including customs), and one single payment of required duties and fees, facilitate cross-border trade, enhance transparency, and save time. The process also allows the sharing of information among government agencies.

The web-based UN/CEFACT Repository of Single Window case studies is now available at http://www.unece.org/cefact/recommendations/rec33/rec33_trd352e.pdf.

This provides information in areas such as business model, costs, benefits, and lessons learned, from countries that have already operational, or soon to be operational, Single Windows.

A Conference on common standards and interoperability for Single Windows is planned for Spring 2006.

For more information contact Tom Butterly (tom.butterly@unece.org). ◇

Coming up soon ...

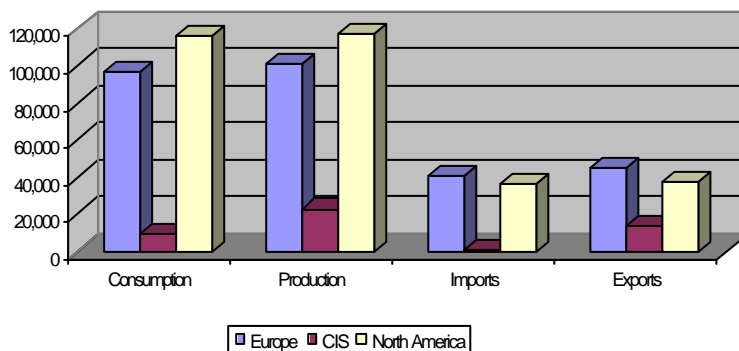
October

- 10-11 Seminar on Environmental Services and Financing for the Protection and Sustainable Use of Water-related Ecosystems
- 10-12(am) Committee on Environmental Policy
- 12(pm)-13 Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials "Environment for Europe"
- 11(pm)-14 Working Party on General Safety Provisions
- 12-14 Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee
- 11-14 Joint UNECE/OECD Meeting on National Accounts ([OECD, Paris, France](#))

Facts and figures ...

Sawnwood in 2004

1000 m³



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