



UNECE Weekly

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It's just happened ...

General Assembly supports UNECE work to improve global road safety

In a resolution adopted at its 60th session currently taking place in New York, the General Assembly stresses the importance of the improvement in the international legal road traffic safety norms and welcomes specifically in this regard the



substantial package of amendments to the 1968 Conventions on Road Traffic and on Road Signs and Signals that has been elaborated by the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee.

At the same time, it encourages Member States to adhere to the Conventions on Road Traffic and on Road Signs and Signals, in order to ensure a high level of road safety in their countries, and also encourages them to strive to reduce road traffic injuries and mortality in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The General Assembly furthermore encourages Member States and the international community to lend financial, technical and political support to the United Nations regional commissions, the World Health Organization and other relevant UN agencies for their efforts to improve road safety. It also invites regional commissions and other agencies to continue the existing road safety initiatives and encourages them to take up new ones.

Finally, on the basis of a proposal made by the UNECE, the General Assembly invites the United Nations regional commissions and the World Health Organization to organize jointly the first United Nations Global Road Safety Week, which will serve as a platform for global and regional, but mainly national and local, activities to raise awareness about road safety issues. The first UN Global Road Safety Week will be targeted at young road users, including young drivers. ♦

For more information contact José Capel Ferrer (jose.capel.ferrer@unece.org).

EU directives and UNECE regulations

In order to simplify EU legislation to make life easier for citizens and



enterprises, the Commission has decided to "replace EU directives by UNECE regulations" in the car sector. In a press release dated 25 October 2005, the EU mentions that: "Currently, EU car manufactures have to undergo two overlapping procedures (UN and EU rules) to get approval to bring products like fuel tanks, direction indicators or headlamps on the market. The Commission intends to recommend a significant reduction in the volume of EU legislation by referring directly to international measures and developing flexibility for conformity assessment and test procedures for vehicles. Half of the legislation will be repealed (from 56 to 28 directives) by replacing EU directives by UNECE

regulations. However, for issues of political significance, the EU will reserve the right to continue using the EU co-decision procedure.

The Commission's view is that the choice of UNECE regulations over EU legislation should be done in all those areas where the EC has acceded to a UNECE regulation for which in parallel an EC directive exists, and where the latter does not provide a higher level of safety or environmental protection. In such cases the UNECE regulation should replace the corresponding EU directive (which will be repealed)." ♦ <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/394&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Important Progress on Agricultural Quality Standards for Europe

Approximately 90% of the fresh fruits and vegetables commercialized in the European Community are covered by the UNECE standards. During its meeting on 17-20 October, the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards approved 12 standards and 19 recommendations from its specialized sub-groups on fresh fruit and vegetables, dry and dried produce, seed potatoes, and meat, covering such produce as table grapes, bilberries, blueberries, peaches, nectarines, early and ware potatoes, apples (maturity and sizing), cherries and ceps.

UNECE standards used by EU and OECD

The UNECE standards are taken into account when drafting European Community standards, which are mandatory at all levels of marketing from



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producer to the retail level. As of 2005, 36 EC standards were harmonized with the relevant UNECE standards, which are also the basis of the implementation guidelines developed under the OECD Scheme for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. The UNECE standards promote orderly and efficient trade by providing a common trading language for commercial quality criteria that takes into account commercial practices.

A new discussion was also opened on the alignment of the Control Certificate with the UN Layout key, a standard developed by another UNECE body, the UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business. Such an alignment would allow the certificate to be compatible with many other documents used in trade. ♦

For more information contact Claudio Meza (agristandards@unece.org)

Combating counterfeit goods on international markets: UNECE body explores new solutions

Counterfeit goods, according to the World Customs Organization, now account for around 5-7% of international trade. Today, profits from counterfeit products such as CDs and DVDs are greater than those from heroin. In a survey conducted by Procter and Gamble in Ukraine in 1999, Procter and Gamble found that a staggering 43% of the hair-care products and 23% of the laundry products using its brand names were counterfeit.

The aim of the Second UNECE International Forum on Market Surveillance and Consumer Protection (24-25 October) was to find a consensus on how to approach the issues of consumer safety and protection and the fight against fraud

through a "broader concept" of market surveillance. A second objective of the Forum was to help public authorities from countries in transition and developing countries to obtain first-hand information on how to protect human health and safety, animal and plant life and health, as well as the environment, without introducing trade restrictive practices.

True but misleading statements

Among the numerous concerns expressed during the Forum were difficulties in controlling misleading or false language, and the lack of appropriate definitions in the area of market surveillance. In order for countries to adequately share information about market surveillance practices and results, a common vocabulary is needed and it was agreed that this is an area where the UNECE will undertake future work. ♦

For more information contact Serguei Kouzmine (trade@unece.org).

Are we measuring farmers' standard of living correctly?



The UNECE, in cooperation with FAO, OECD, Eurostat and the World Bank, has released a Handbook on *Rural Households' Livelihood and Well-Being: Statistics on Rural Development and Agriculture Household Income*.

Measuring agricultural income – a difficult issue

The conventional way of assessing incomes in agriculture has been by measuring the rewards from farming. But for many, farming may be only a minor part of household income, which might in addition include money from off-farm employment, business profits, pensions etc. Furthermore the wealth of farm households has usually been ignored when assessing their well-being. This is highly unsatisfactory as, in OECD countries, farmers as a group are often wealthy compared to the rest of society. Ways of measuring wealth and of combining it with income in a single measure are considered in the Handbook.

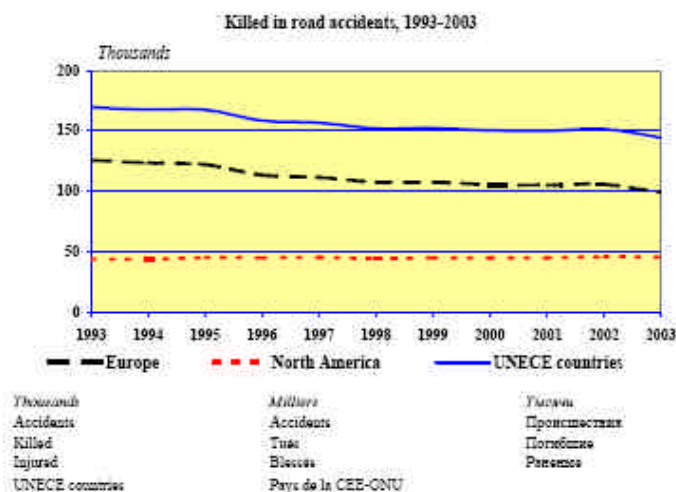
Importance of international standards

The most fundamental problem facing the development of statistics on the income and wealth of agricultural households is the provision of data, without which the discussion of methodological issues and identification of good practice loses much of its relevance. International standards are crucial since present information is hampered by large variations in how results are calculated at national level, offering the possibility of misrepresentation and false conclusions.

It is hoped that the Handbook will assist in identifying the direction in which methodology and data systems should be moving, if not the exact path by which they should get there. ♦

The Handbook is available at <http://www.unece.org/stats/rural/>
For more information contact UNECE Statistical Division (support.stat@unece.org).

Facts and figures:



Coming up soon ...

31 October-2 November
Seminar on Monitoring and Assessment (Tbilisi, Georgia)
31 October-3 November
Working Party on the Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs

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>

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