



# UNECE Weekly

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 145 – 7-11 November 2005

## It's just happened ...

### Albania joins the European Agreement on Road Traffic

On 27 October, Albania acceded to the European Agreement supplementing the United Nations  Convention on Road Traffic of 1968. This accession brings to 30 the total number of UNECE member States that are Parties to this European Agreement.

The European Agreement, concluded under the auspices of the UNECE in 1971, was aimed at achieving greater uniformity in the rules governing road traffic in Europe, with a view to curbing the then growing number of road accidents and victims on European roads. To this end, the European Agreement established road safety standards that were stricter than those of the Convention on Road Traffic of 1968 and that some non-UNECE Member States Parties to the Convention might have difficulties meeting. The European Agreement also made obligatory some provisions that were of a recommendatory nature in the Convention.

The European Agreement of 1971 has recently been amended, notably in order to reduce the maximum admissible level of alcohol in the blood of road drivers from 0.8 to 0.5 g/l.

Albania recently became a Party to several other United Nations and UNECE Conventions and Agreements on transport, including the Conventions on Road Traffic and on Road Signs and Signals of 1968, as well as the 1971 European Agreement supplementing the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals and the 1973 Protocol on Road Markings. ♦

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### Question of the Week

to Sigurd Heiberg, Project Manager of Statoil, Norway and Chairman of the UNECE Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Harmonization of Energy Reserves and Resources Terminology

Why is UNECE working on a global code for mineral and fossil energy reserves?



Fossil and nuclear fuels, i.e. oil, natural gas, coal and uranium, are all non-renewable resources that currently meet around 70% of the total world energy demand. Their availability over the longer term is of crucial importance to both energy consumers and producers since today there is a large, growing population rapidly coming out of poverty. It is essential to provide relevant and reliable information on reserves and resources in support of efficient resources management, of industry's management of exploration and production processes, of management

of the associated international financial resources and for public awareness.

For over 10 years the UNECE has managed the support function for development of the *United Nations Framework Classification for Fossil Energy and Mineral Resources (UNFC)*. It is a simple universally applicable scheme for classifying and evaluating energy and mineral reserves and resources. Most importantly, it allows a common and necessary international understanding.

The Classification is designed to incorporate existing terminology and definitions, which vary significantly around the world, and thus to make them comparable and compatible. This approach has been simplified through the use of a three-digit code clearly indicating the essential characteristics of extractable energy and mineral commodities in market economies, notably (i) degree of economic/commercial viability; (ii) field project status and feasibility; and (iii) level of geological knowledge. ♦

### UNFC - solid basis for a global code

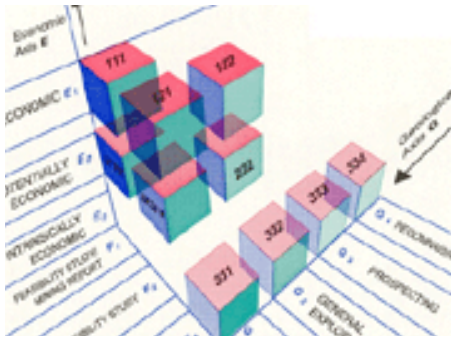
There is a legitimate concern over the diversity of standards currently being used for the reporting of energy and mineral reserves and resources, as well as how these are used by governments, corporations and shareholders for decision-making. Numerous classification systems are in practice based on a wide variety of terms and definitions. This semantic diversity of terminology hampers information flow and makes compilation and analysis difficult.

#### An urgent need

A strengthening of the need for one common global code covering extractive activities has been identified. It is anticipated that this requirement will

prevail and will need to be met urgently as global capital and commodity markets mature. The growing importance of this need for a global common code has resulted in three important actions to date:

- (a) In 1997, ECOSOC recommended the UNFC be applied to coal and mineral resources. It has since been tested successfully in more than 60 countries and legislated in several.
- (b) In 1999, UNECE and the Council of Mining and Metallurgical Institutions (CMMI, now known as CRIRSCO) agreed on the specific joint wording for those reserve/resource definitions they shared. This effectively brought the UNFC and the CMMI classifications together.
- (c) In 2004 ECOSOC recommended an amendment to the 1997 UNFC, incorporating petroleum (oil and gas) and uranium resources. This extended



its application fully to fossil energy and mineral resources.

While the UN does not aim to formulate binding requirements in this regard, global implementation of the framework would provide member countries, industries, international and professional organizations with an unparalleled legitimacy for implementing and maintaining the common framework. It will be up to the individual stakeholder to adopt it or not. The vision is that the efficiencies offered

by a common framework will cause it to be widely adapted. Naturally, this is best confirmed by voluntary participation.

The meeting of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Harmonization of Energy Reserves and Resources Terminology (9-11 November) will discuss in detail the implementation of a common global code for fossil energy and mineral resources. ♦

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## Preparations start for “Environment for Europe” 2007

The UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy, at its 2004 session, set up an open-ended Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials (WGSO) to prepare for the Sixth Ministerial Conference, to be held in Autumn 2007 in Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro.

### Focus on implementation ...

At its first meeting on 12-13 October the Working Group discussed the possible political framework and themes to be addressed by the Belgrade Conference. With regard to the key purpose of the Conference, strong support was expressed for a focus on implementation. Three major components within this context were identified:

(a) assessment of the effectiveness of agreed commitments and tools (e.g.

Environmental Programme for Europe, Kiev Declaration, Environmental Strategy for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA Strategy), multilateral environmental agreements, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, Millennium Development Goals);

(b) analysis of problems in implementation and of their roots; and

(c) presentation of success stories and good practices to be built on for further progress in capacity building and in the implementation of existing commitments.

### ... biodiversity and ecosystems ...

With regard to the themes that could be addressed by the “Environment for Europe” Belgrade Conference biodiversity and ecosystems; cleaner technology and energy (e.g. renewable and cleaner energy, phase-out of leaded petrol);

education for sustainable development, sustainable production and consumption (e.g. eco-efficiency, eco-labelling, organic farming), and water (e.g. qualitative and quantitative aspects, transboundary and health-related issues) received support. The topics remain subject to further consultations.



Belgrade

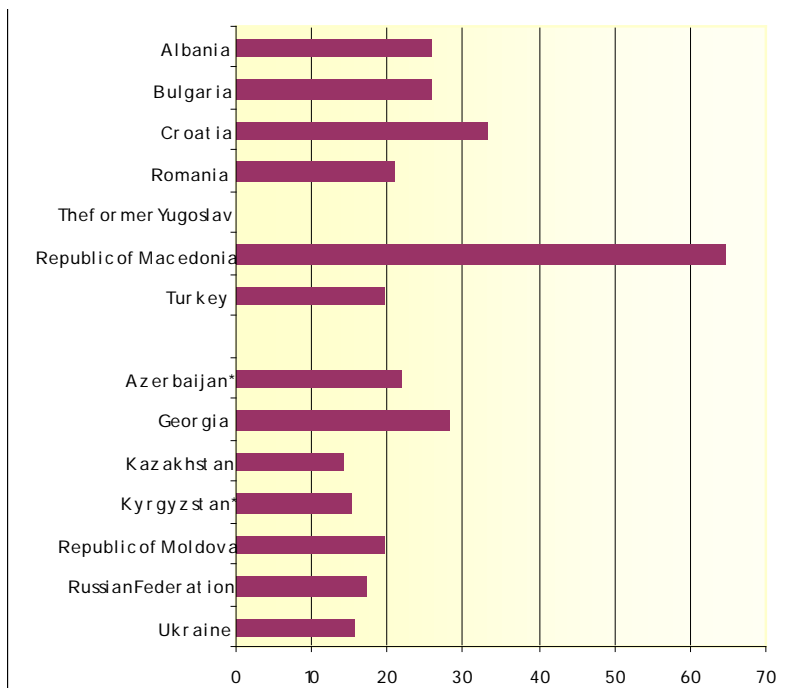
### ... and sub-regional issues

The Working Group also discussed possible sub-regional issues for the Conference. It was decided that emphasis should be put on the sub-regions of EECCA and South-East Europe, while at the same time the priorities for the UNECE region as a whole should not be neglected. ♦

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## Facts and figures ...

Youth unemployment rate in selected South-East Europe and CIS Countries, 2004  
(per cent of labour force in age group 15-24)



Source: UNECE, compiled from national sources

\* Data refer to 2003

## Coming up soon ...

### November

- 7-11 Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods
- 9-11 Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Harmonization of Energy Reserves and Resources Terminology
- 7-8 Task Force on Electronic Information Tools
- 9-11 UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Statistical Data Confidentiality
- 10-11 Ad Hoc Expert Group on Phase III of the TIR Revision

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