



# UNECE Weekly

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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## It's just happened ...

### Hackers in sensitive private data

**How to learn more about households and businesses without violating their privacy**

Each of us is afraid that hackers may get into our sensitive private data on computers and in our drawers. However, there are other places where our information is kept. Government agencies keep a large amount of detailed statistical data on individuals (persons and businesses). The data are protected by the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics adopted by the UNECE in 1992, and may not be used for other than statistical purposes. However, these data represent a potential source of valuable information for researchers working on projects that can move forward the knowledge about various socio-economic phenomena. National statistical agencies have to resolve the conflict between protecting the privacy of the individual respondent and satisfying the hunger of researchers for confidential statistical data. A wide range of organizational, statistical and technological approaches have been developed to ensure maximum data protection.

#### First of all data have to be anonymised

In addition to removing names of respondents, statistical methods for disclosure prevention involve additional modification of the original data set. They improve confidentiality protection, but may damage the information – cause a loss of information or other inconveniences. Statisticians are therefore actively seeking to improve their methods to optimise both the data protection and safeguarding the information.

#### Only serious researchers should be allowed access

The organizational approaches include careful screening of the purpose of the



### Question of the Week

*to Ambassador Carlo Trojan, Head of the Delegation of the European Commission in Geneva*

*How is the UNECE reform going to bring closer together Brussels and Geneva?*



The European Commission has a long tradition of close cooperation with UNECE because most UNECE activities fall to various degrees into Community competences. Commission officials contribute to and attend regularly meetings in Geneva and our experts on transport, environment, trade facilitation and statistics appreciate highly the norm setting as well as the invaluable and unique concrete work in these sectors.

The EC was supportive of the UNECE Reform because its main objective was to adapt it to the profound changes of the European institutional landscape in which the enlargement of the EU was obviously a major feature.

We made last Spring an extensive consultation of all various Commission services at the request of the External Evaluation Team and got clear answers putting transport, environment as priority

areas for UNECE activities in the future. Activities in the area of statistics and agricultural standards also got strong support, whereas activities related to economic analysis and industrial restructuring were seen as areas better suited to be pursued

by other organisations.

We shared the views of the evaluators that UNECE had spread its activities in too many areas without enough resources to cover all the fields it wanted to cover.

Now that the reform exercise is nearly concluded, I can say that the outcome in terms of a new mission statement, a new governance structure and clear priorities in the work programme as well as the redistribution of resources is satisfactory and very close to the Evaluation Report's proposals.

It is when the UNECE better concentrates on the "niches" in those areas where it has a worldwide influence that brings Geneva closer to Brussels. ❖

research, data needs and real interests of the researchers. For example, advertising companies and various business consultants are to be avoided, so there's no risk of our private information being made available by a department store or on a public website.

#### We should not allow hackers to play with our databases

Technological measures consist of a complex architecture of firewalls, secure

servers, safe computational environments, safe data centres and preventing data from being downloaded to a media external to the statistical agency.

These issues are very important to both statistical offices and researchers. This interest was proved by the participation of almost 100 experts in statistical disclosure control, who followed 50 presentations at the 9-11 November Joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Statistical Data Confidentiality. ❖

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## Ukraine - structural reform in environmental management

After the “Orange Revolution”, Ukraine is going through a process of structural reforms in many areas, including its environmental management. The second Environmental Performance Review of Ukraine is being conducted at a time when its conclusions and recommendations may be of particular importance for the country. A team of 14 experts from the UNECE secretariat, OECD and UNECE member countries spent 11 days (23 October-3 November) in Ukraine collecting data and interviewing government officials, businesses, NGOs, academicians, and representatives of international organizations in Kiev, Donetsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhya.



EPR Team

### Reform fatigue

Ukraine has developed a comprehensive legislation in the area of environmental

protection, however the effectiveness of its implementation and compliance with its provisions are often lagging behind. At the national level, the environmental authorities have gone through an almost permanent restructuring for years and a strong feeling of “reform fatigue” has developed.

The international experts are now analysing the information they gathered and their draft report will be sent for comments to the environmental authorities in Ukraine. The EPR Secretariat intends to conduct

a follow-up mission to Ukraine in spring 2006 to update the information and adjust the report after the Parliamentary elections in March 2006. The final draft of the Review will be submitted for approval to the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy in October 2006. ❖

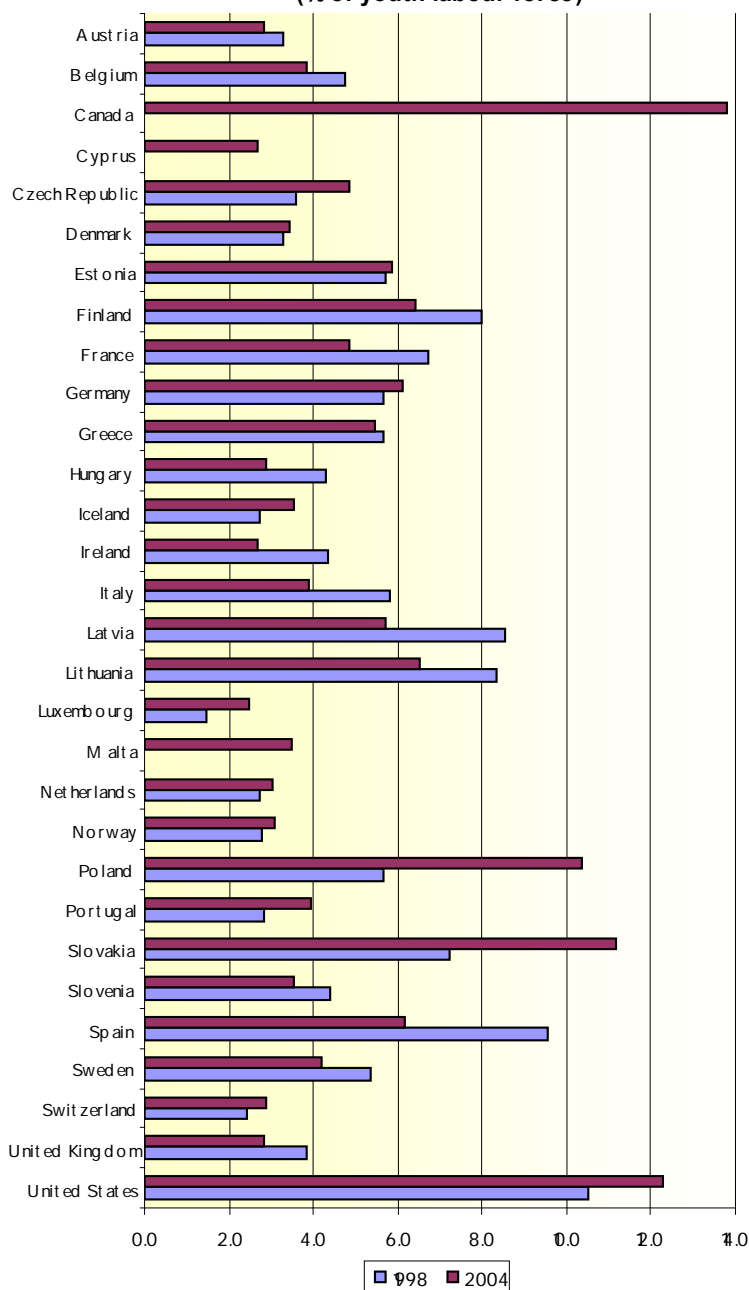
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## Coming up soon ...

21-22 November  
Working Party on Land Administration

24-25 November  
Task Force on Public Participation in international Forums

Youth unemployment rate in selected UNECE countries  
(% of youth labour force)



Source: UNECE, compiled from Eurostat, ILO and national sources.

Definition: Unemployment rate among people in the age group of 15-24.

Data are measured at the second quarter of the year.

Canada: Annual data, refers to 2003.

USA: The reference age group is 16-24.

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