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## **VERNISSAGE OF THE EXHIBITION "THE ART OF TREES – A FOREST GALLERY"**

Staff, delegates, representatives from Permanent Missions and civil society gathered in "Salle des pas perdus" on 15 February to officially open the International Year of Forests at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

Speeches by Sergei Ordzhonikidze, UNOG Director General, Ambassador Betty E. King, Eduardo Rojas-Briaies, FAO Assistant Director-General, and Andrey Vasilyev, UNECE Deputy Executive Secretary, preceded the opening of the exhibition 'The Art of Trees – A forest Gallery'.



For this occasion, UNECE and FAO had arranged a "temporary forest" inside the Palais des Nations, inviting visitors to reflect on the contribution of forests to economic, environmental and social wellbeing. These trees provided an ideal background for an artwork exhibition of the American painter Monte Dolack.

The exhibition, organized by UNECE and FAO, in partnership with the United States of America Permanent Mission to the United Nations and the United Nations Office in Geneva, is open until 25 February. □

## **UN-ENERGY REAFFIRMS KEY ROLE OF ENERGY IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

UNECE actively participated in the UN-Energy retreat held on 10-11 February in Vienna. The retreat renewed the commitment of United Nations agencies involved in energy to pursue a sustainable energy agenda and defined the group's priorities in the preparations for the Rio+20 process. Participants reaffirmed that energy was increasingly at the core of the United Nations' multidisciplinary response to the global initiatives on sustainable development. They stated the group's commitment to concentrate on achieving the two energy-related goals identified last year by the Secretary General's Advisory Group on Energy and Climate Change: achieving universal energy access and reducing global energy intensity by 40% by 2030.

UN-Energy will bring these two goals forward at COP-17 in South Africa next December and at the Rio+20 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, in May 2012. UN-Energy's initiatives in these areas will also resonate throughout 2012, which the General Assembly declared as the International Year for Sustainable Energy for All.

UNECE, a founding member of UN-Energy, is actively working to promote sustainable development in its region with the clear understanding that access to affordable, secure and sustainable energy will be essential. At the retreat, Ján Kubiš, UNECE Executive Secretary, reaffirmed

UNECE's commitment to these goals and to UN-Energy's work. He highlighted in particular UNECE's contribution on energy efficiency promotion and market formation.

UNECE actively contributed to the meeting's discussions and outcome with the participation of Sigurd Heiberg, Chairman of the Committee on Sustainable Energy, Scott Foster, Director of the Sustainable Energy Division and Gianluca Sambucini, Secretary of the Committee on Sustainable Energy.



UN-Energy was established in 2004 to help ensure system-wide coherence in the implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development's energy-related decisions. It comprises 20 United Nations agencies, programmes and organizations, including the five Regional Commissions. UN-Energy is chaired by Kandeh Yumkella, Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). □

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## **UNECE/EU WORKSHOP IDENTIFIES KEY AREAS FOR COOPERATION ON WATER IN EUROPE**



In Western and Central Europe the quality of freshwater has in general improved in the past 20 years thanks to remarkable investments in wastewater treatment plants. However, many challenges still threaten water resources and aquatic ecosystems: among them, pollution from agriculture and urban areas; new pollutants — in particular micro pollutants; as well as growing water scarcity; floods; and physical modifications. In some areas these pressures create serious water security problems. As most of the water resources in Europe are of a transboundary nature, these challenges need to be tackled jointly by riparian countries.

These were the main issues discussed at the workshop on transboundary water cooperation in Central and Western Europe, held in Budapest from 8 to 10 February. The workshop was organized by the Ministry of Rural Development of Hungary and UNECE, in cooperation with the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC), within the framework of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention). It gathered more than 50 experts from national authorities, river basin commissions, international organizations and NGOs.

The workshop was the first event on water of the Hungarian EU Presidency. Hungary has water very high on its political agenda for the Presidency and plans to organize other high-level events, including the "Future of European Waters" Conference (24–25 March 2011) and the Danube Hydrological Conference "Tradition and development in water science" (16–17 June 2011).

The workshop was also part of the preparations of the second Assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters, currently being developed under the Water

Convention for the Seventh "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference that will be held from 21 to 23 September 2011 in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Workshop participants worked together to develop an accurate picture of all transboundary waters of the region and exchanged views on the main political messages from Western and Central Europe to the Seventh Ministerial Conference.

Participants strongly called for the fulfilment of commitments, and in particular for the implementation of the measures included in the newly developed river basin management plans. Stronger transboundary cooperation between riparian countries was considered crucial to address emerging challenges such as climate change impacts on water resources. These considerations will support the water policy objectives of the Hungarian EU Presidency and the future European water policy. □

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## UNECE LAUNCHES ONLINE INVENTORY OF SOURCES ON MIGRATION IN THE REGION

**migratory** an online inventory of sources on migration in Europe, Central Asia and North America

UNECE's Statistical Division has developed an inventory of information sources and institutions dealing with migration issues. Called "migratory", this inventory identifies over 1,700 sources located in the UNECE region.

"migratory" delivers quickly and easily information on migration at national, regional and international level. For each listed source, it provides basic practical information, such as location, website, contact details and a short summary of the activities. "migratory" is intended as a reference tool for those responsible for designing and implementing migration policies and programmes, and for any other users interested in migration issues. It has been developed with support from the United Nations Development Account. □

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<http://www.unece.org/stats/migratory>.

## NEW UNECE REGULATION TO REDUCE CASUALTIES ON THE ROAD



On 1st February 2011, the Working Party on Brakes and Running Gear (GRRF) of the World Forum on Vehicle Regulations, proposed to adopt a new UNECE Regulation on Lane Departure Warning Systems (LDWS). It is expected that this new Regulation will be adopted by the World Forum in 2011.

Lane Departure Warning Systems assist drivers in keeping their lanes by emitting a warning when the vehicle is in danger of leaving the lane unintentionally (mainly due to lack of attention by the driver). Current systems use either an audible beep or a "rumble strips" noise, which mimics the sound made when the tyre runs over a lane divider or road edge marking.

These systems are particularly useful to avoid accidents caused by heavy duty vehicles leaving their lane, a major cause of casualties on motorways. According to a report by the European Commission, fitting all vehicles with LDWS would save 5,500 lives and avoid 30,800 severe injuries each year in the European Union.

The new UNECE Regulation on lane Departure Warning Systems will be made mandatory from 2015 for all heavy-duty vehicles sold in the European Union. □

*For more information, please visit:*

<http://www.unece.org/trans/main/wp29/wp29wgs/wp29grrf/grrf-infaebsldw11.html>

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