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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON TRADE

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards
(Sixty-first session, Geneva, 18–20 October 2005)

REPORT ON ITS SIXTY-FIRST SESSION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The new, revised and updated UNECE standards and recommendations can be found on the website at: www.unece.org/trade/agr

Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Revised UNECE Standards adopted:

- Melons (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/18/Add.1)
- Apples (Sizing) (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/18/Add.2)

Revised and new UNECE Recommendations adopted:

- Table Grapes (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/18/Add.1)
- Apples (Maturity requirements) (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/18/Add.2)
- Bilberries and Blueberries (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2004/25/Add.5)
- Potatoes (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2004/7)
- Cherries (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/18/Add.3)
- Peaches and Nectarines (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2004/25/Add.4)
- Ceps (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/18/Add.4, TRADE/WP.7/2005/3)
- Plums (see TRADE/WP. 7/GE.1/2005/13) (Deletion of recommendation on hybrids for plums).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONT'D)

Dry and Dried Produce

Revised and new UNECE Recommendations adopted:

Dried Tomatoes (TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/19/Add.3).

Trial periods extended for one year:

Inshell Almonds (TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/19/Add.1).

Pistachio Kernels and Peeled Pistachio Kernels TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/19/Add.2).

Seed Potatoes

The revisions proposed to the UNECE Standard for Seed Potatoes (as proposed in document TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2005/11) were adopted.

Meat

As the text proposed as a revised UNECE Standard for Porcine Meat was not received on time, its adoption had to be postponed.

The revised UNECE Standards for Ovine Meat and Chicken have been revised and are now awaiting approval prior publication in print and on the website.

Publications

The secretariat provided information on the status of the publications on Walnut Kernels, Porcine, Ovine and Chicken meat.

Alignment of the control certificate with the UN Layout Key

The Working Group presented the proposal that was prepared in cooperation with SITPRO. The draft will be updated in line with the comments made, discussed in GE.1 and then transmitted to the Working Party.

Revision of the Geneva Protocol

A draft of the new terms of reference was presented. Details to be discussed later.

Sales packages

The Working Group made a presentation, and following further discussion, will present an official document at the next session.

Point of application of UNECE standards

The secretariat presented the work developed by the specialized sections and the Working Party on how to make reference to the point of application of UNECE standards. Document TRADE/WP.7/2005/7 summarizes these discussions.

Assessment of the implementation of UNECE Standards

The secretariat presented the work of the specialized sections GE.1 and GE.2 on how to report on the acceptance and application of UNECE standards. Document TRADE/WP.7/2005/8 sums up the result of these discussions.

Workshops

Information was provided on workshops, seminars and training courses held in 2005.

Opening of the session

1. The meeting was held in Geneva from 18 to 20 October 2005. In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. David Priester (United States), the meeting was chaired by Mrs. Viera Baricicova (Slovakia). The session was opened by Ms. Virginia Cram-Martos, Director of the Trade Development and Timber Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).
2. She reported that in 2005 it had been possible to organize a joint inter-organizational workshop in Tbilisi, Georgia, on quality standardisation and inspection in horticultural trade. The organizers were the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), UNECE, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The secretariat had also participated in the 10th International Training Course in Mojmirovce, Slovakia, sponsored by OECD. The workshop had been followed by the Central European Initiative (CEI) conference on “Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Marketing Quality and Health Safety Controls – differences and similarities between CEI countries”. She thanked the Governments of Georgia and Slovakia for their support in the preparation of these events.
3. She informed participants that the European Union had moved towards aligning its standards with UNECE Standards. The secretariat also enjoyed good cooperation with the World Health Organization, the Codex Alimentarius Commission and OECD. She also informed them that Mr. Claudio Meza had been selected to replace the outgoing secretary of the Working Party, Mr. Tom Heilandt, who had taken up a position with FAO.
4. Concluding, she pointed out that a major independent evaluation of UNECE had taken place. The work on the development of agricultural quality standards had been appreciated, which meant that more resources could be allocated to this work in the future depending on the outcome of current UNECE reform negotiations.

Participation

5. Representatives of the following countries attended the session: Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Morocco, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States of America.
6. The European Community was also represented.
7. A representative of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme also attended the session.
8. At the invitation of the secretariat, a representative of the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables participated in the session.
9. A representative from the following non-governmental organization participated in the session: COPA/COGECA (Committee of Agricultural Organizations in the European Union and General Confederation of Agricultural Co-operatives in the European Union).

ITEM 1 Adoption of the agenda

TRADE/WP.7/2005/1, INF.1

10. The agenda was adopted with the changes that are reflected in this report.

INF	Document
1.	Provisional Agenda
2.	Matters of Interest
3.	Geneva Protocol, under agenda item 8.b.
4.	Report of the 10th International Training Course sponsored by OECD, Mojmirovcé, SK
5.	Alignment of the control certificate with the UN layout key
6.	Programme of Work 2005-2006

11. The following documents were deleted from the provisional agenda:

TRADE/WP.7/2005/2 - Matters of interest arising since the last session

TRADE/WP.7/2005/6 - Sales packages

ITEM 2 Matters of interest arising since the last session**(a) UNECE**

12. The secretariat introduced document TRADE/WP.7/2005/INF.2, which contains the discussion on the work of the Working Party that was held at the 2005 session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development. This is an excerpt of the report of the 9th session of the Committee.

UN/CEFACT

13. The secretariat reported that the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) had launched its Trade & Business Processes Group 18 on Agriculture (TBG-18) at a meeting in Lyon, France, in September. TBG-18 would develop and maintain Business Process and Transaction Models for Agricultural business applications. Among the main objectives of the group would be to define, develop and maintain UN/EDIFACT messages for provisioning and logistics-storage, harmonization of the codes of the goods and traceability of the data.

(b) Other organizations**Codex Alimentarius**

14. The delegation of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme informed the Working Party on the latest developments in Codex on the standardization of fresh fruits and vegetables since the 28th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, in July 2005.

15. The Commission had adopted the Codex Standard for Rambutan, as proposed by the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV). The Commission had also agreed to delete the footnotes related to the “notification of acceptance” in Codex standards for fresh fruits and

vegetables in view of the abolishment of the Acceptance Procedure from the Procedural Manual. In addition, the Commission had agreed to request the Codex Committee on General Principles to look into the question of making amendments/revisions to Codex standards without the need to present a “project document” to justify this.

16. This question had originated from a request by CCFFV to update Codex standards for fresh fruits and vegetables, in particular those standards containing list of varieties. The Commission also approved the development of a separate Codex Standard for Bitter Cassava as new work for the Committee, on the understanding that having done so, the Committee might consider the possibility of merging both standards in a single standard for cassava.

17. In relation to the ongoing work on apples and maturity requirements/minimum bunch weight for table grapes, the representative of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme informed delegations that the working groups on apples and table grapes would hold meetings in early February 2006 in Chile. The exact date and venue and relevant additional information would be transmitted to Codex Members and Observers through the Codex electronic distribution list (Codex-L).

European Union

18. The delegation of the European Community (EC) introduced Mr. Ignacio Clavero, who will participate in the specialized sections and the Working Party. Since the last session the EC had continued the work on aligning its standards with those of UNECE. The Head of Delegation informed the meeting that the EC standards for the following produce had been amended: avocados, asparagus, apples and plums.

19. Reductions of the size requirement for apples were delayed to June 2008, to study the possibility of integrating the maturity criteria proposal submitted to Working Party 7.

20. Third countries that currently have an agreement with the European Community on recognition of quality controls of their inspection services are: Switzerland, Morocco, South Africa, Israel, India and New Zealand. Negotiations are under way with Kenya, Turkey, and Senegal.

OECD Scheme

21. The OECD delegation informed the meeting about the activities of the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables.

22. The explanatory brochures on the Standards for Beans, Cultivated Mushrooms (available in English and French) and Strawberries (available in English, French and Spanish) had been issued. These sales publications can be found on the OECD website: www.oecd.org

23. Work was being carried out on the explanatory brochures for Citrus Fruits, Apples, Pears, Table Grapes, Cucumbers, Potatoes, Pistachios, Hazelnuts and Prunes and on the definition of commercial types of melons.

24. It was also envisaged to draw up guidelines for objective tests to determine the internal quality and maturity of the fruit.

25. The Scheme was revising the operational framework for the control of the quality of produce exported under the Scheme, which included a model control certificate.

26. At its last session, the Plenary meeting of the Scheme had decided to make a proposal to UNECE to officially formalize and strengthen cooperation between the Scheme and the Working Party by:

(a) Developing an agreement aimed at strengthening the cooperation between the two organizations, emphasizing their existing cooperation, underlining the confidence that has been built between them, granting mutual recognition to each other's work and increasing the mutual promotion of their work;

(b) Endeavouring to harmonize the dates of meetings of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables and the OECD Scheme plenary session.

27. At the Plenary meeting of the OECD Scheme, hope had been expressed that WP.7 would respond positively to the proposal for strengthening cooperation between the two organizations.

28. A joint OECD/UNECE/FAO Workshop on Quality Standardization and Inspection in Horticultural Trade was held in Georgia in July 2005 (see under agenda item 9).

29. The International Annual Training Course on "Harmonization of Fruit and Vegetables Quality Assessment", sponsored by OECD and organized by Slovakia had been held in September 2005 (see under agenda item 9).

30. The next plenary meeting was scheduled to take place from 15-17 November 2005 in Paris.

ITEM 3 Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/18

31. The Chair of the Specialized Section, Mr. David Holliday (United Kingdom), provided information on the outcome of the Section's fifty-first session. He said that, besides the work on standards, the group also discussed different ways to promote fruit and vegetable consumption, the alignment of the Control Certificate with the UN Layout Key and the point of application of the UNECE standards.

32. He told delegations that information concerning simplifying the list of varieties for apples should be sent directly to him.

3 (a) Text recommended for adoption as revised/new UNECE standards

33. The Working Party adopted the following texts as revised standards proposed by the Specialized Section:

- Melons (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/18/Add.1)
- Apples (Sizing) (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/18/Add.2)

34. The Working Party adopted the text for Apples, “Provision concerning minimum sizes”, as in the recommendation, except for the section on uniformity sizing by weight, which was still at the trial stage.

35. Discussions on topic uniformity sizing by weight (eventually, tolerances of sizing by weight) would be conducted in the next session of the Specialized Section, in which France would provide additional information.

36. The delegation of the United States lodged a reservation on the adoption of the text of the UNECE Standard for Apples “Provision concerning Sizing” – section on Sizing by Weight - pending completion of the work on Uniformity by Weight.

3 (b) Text recommended for adoption as UNECE recommendations

Table Grapes

TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/18/Add.1

37. The Specialized Section proposed to the Working Party to amend the text of the UNECE recommendation for Table Grapes, specifically, the sections on minimum quality and minimum maturity requirements.

38. The Working Party adopted the text for Table Grapes (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/18/Add.1) as a UNECE recommendation for a two-year trial period until 2007.

Apples (Maturity requirements)

TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/18/Add.2

39. The Specialized Section proposed that the Working Party adopt as a revised UNECE standard the inclusion of a section on minimum quality requirements but without recommending brix values for the moment.

40. The Working Party adopted the text for Apples regarding Minimum maturity requirements (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/18/Add.2) as a UNECE recommendation for a two-year trial period until 2007.

Bilberries and Blueberries

TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2004/25/Add.5

41. The Working Party adopted the extension of the Standard for Bilberries and Blueberries for a one-year trial period until November 2006.

42. Some research would be needed to ensure the correct marking of the names “Bilberries” or “Blueberries” in different languages. The delegation of France indicated that it would enquire about the correct denomination from different producer countries and makes a proposal to the next session of the GE.1.

Potatoes

TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2004/7

43. The Working Party adopted the extension of the joint standard for Early and Ware Potatoes (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2004/7) for a one-year trial period until November 2006 to allow time for comments from interested parties.

44. The Specialized Section decided to first discuss the status of the recommendation before proposing any amendment to the standard. The trade organization EUROPATAT had indicated to the secretariat that some of its members were not in favour of a joint standard. The Working Party requested the Specialized Section to present its position at the EUROPATAT meeting.

45. The delegation of France proposed a number of amendments to the standard, notably to the minimum requirements and also the introduction of quality classes based on the definitions in the French national standard.

46. The Specialized Section decided to create a Working Group to discuss issues relating to potatoes (members: France, Germany). All delegations were invited to provide the delegation of France with their national standards and to join the Working Group.

Cherries

TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/18/Add.3

47. The Specialized Section proposed that the UNECE Standard for Cherries (FFV-13) be amended to allow the standard to be used for both cherries with and without the stem attached, provided that the skin was not leaking.

48. The delegation of France asked for a further extension of the trial period until 2007 (originally it had been a one-year trial period until 2006). France was still conducting a testing procedure that should be finished by end of May or in June 2006.

49. The Working Party adopted the text for Cherries (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/18/Add.3) as a UNECE recommendation for a two-year trial period until 2007.

Peaches and Nectarines

TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2004/25/Add.4

50. The Working Party confirmed the continuity of the trial period until November 2006.

51. The Specialized Section decided to make a correction to the text of the Standard and Recommendation for Peaches and Nectarines. In the section on minimum maturity requirements, the words "with the skin intact" were deleted.

Ceps

TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/18/Add.4

TRADE/WP.7/2005/3

52. The Working Party adopted the text for Ceps (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/18/Add.4, consolidated in TRADE/WP.7/2005/3) as a new UNECE recommendation for a two-year trial period until 2007.

3 (c) Deletion of the UNECE Recommendation for Hybrids derived from Plums

53. The Working Party adopted the deletion of the UNECE Recommendation of hybrids derived from plums from the UNECE Standard for Plums. The existing standard remains in force.

ITEM 4 Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce

54. The Chairman of the Specialized Section, Mr. Csaba Gáspár (Hungary), provided information on the outcome of the fifty-second session of the Specialized Section and invited delegations to take decisions on the standards and recommendations proposed for adoption.

4 (a) Texts recommended for adoption as revised/new UNECE standards

55. No texts were recommended for adoption as revised or new standards.

4 (b) Texts recommended for adoption as UNECE recommendations

Inshell Almonds

TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/19/Add.1

56. At the last session, this text had been amended extensively to create an example of how the standards could be restructured to simplify their application. The main changes had been the integration of the definitions contained in the annex into the minimum requirements and the closer connection between the quality classes and the table of tolerances.

57. The delegation of the United States indicated that they supported the efforts to simplify the standards. However, their industry did not support the new format and the deletion of the annexes.

58. The delegation of France pointed to one discrepancy between the documents TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/19/Add.1 and TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/19. The Working Party requested the secretariat to compare both texts and provide a clarification at the next session of the Specialized Section. The delegation of France suggested that placing the definition of the product in square brackets might be a solution.

59. The Specialized Section recommended that all provisions in the quality classes be deleted, except for a general statement linking the definition of the classes to the tolerance table. This was regarded as a logical consequence of the process started last year.

60. As there was no consensus among the delegates of the Specialized Section to delete “crop year”, “crop year” was put in square brackets.

61. The Working Party adopted the proposition by the Specialized Section to extend the trial period for this recommendation for one further year until November 2006.

Pistachio Kernels and Peeled Pistachio Kernels

TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/19/Add.2

TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/9 (United States)

TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/10 (United States)

62. The Specialized Section reported that a compromise solution had been found on the colour classification. It proposed to change the application of the classification in the following way:

- To have no colour classification for pistachio kernels, as the colour would not be visible.
- To make the colour classification for peeled pistachio kernels optional, as this classification was not used in all markets as a quality indicator.

63. The Working Party approved the proposal submitted by the Specialized Section to extend the trial period until November 2006.

Dried Tomatoes

TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/19/Add.3

64. Following a proposal presented to the Specialized Section, the maximum moisture content for the “high moisture” group was increased from 35 to 50 per cent to take into account new products on the market. Other amendments to the text were made to align the text with the standard layout.

65. The Working Party adopted the proposal of the Specialized Section for the new UNECE Recommendation for Dried Tomatoes for a two-year trial period until November 2007.

4 (c) Deletion of the word “(fruit)” from the name of the Specialized Section

66. The Working Party adopted the proposal to change the name of the “Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce (Fruit)” to the new name “Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce”.

ITEM 5 Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes

TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2005/11

67. The Chairman of the Specialized Section, Mr. Pier Giacomo Bianchi (Italy), provided information on the outcome of the thirty-fifth session of the Specialized Section.

- Proposals to amend the Standard
- Other activities of the Specialised Section
- Overview of other issues which are under discussion for possible future amendments
- Extended bureau meetings of 2005 and the programme of activity for 2006

5 (a) Text recommended for adoption as revised UNECE Standards

68. The Working Party adopted the text contained in TRADE/WP.7/2005/4 and TRADE/WP.7/2005/4/Add.1 as a revised UNECE Standard for Seed Potatoes. These documents incorporate changes in the following areas:

- Netted scab
- Destination tolerances
- Definition of Leaf Roll
- Size band
- Pests/Diseases from which seed potatoes are required to be free (Potato rot nematode *dytylencus destructor*)
- Units of presentation/container
- Provisions concerning presentation
- Visual inspection versus testing
- Traceability
- Improvement of annex IX (Sampling)
- Definition of designated authority
- Summary table of tolerances

69. The annex summarizing the requirements of the Standard has been consequently amended to facilitate the consultation and comparison with national standards.

5 (b) Information on meetings of the extended bureau

70. The Chairman said that following an invitation by the German authorities, an Extended Bureau meeting would be held in Rostock from 24 to 27 October 2005. The Chairman thanked the authorities of Germany for organizing this event. At the meeting, a number of issues would be discussed, which would lead to the further development of the standard. Included among these issues would be:

- Arbitration rules / dispute settlement
- The concept of Living Modified Organism (LMO) in the standard
- Images for common and netted scab
- Implementation of the standard (in light of regular changes)
- Reference to the UNECE standard on the label
- Concept of direct progeny
- Discussion on annex VI (comparative trials)
- Homogeneity and Size of the lot
- Exchange of practices of taking samples for tuber inspection
- Paper on PTNRD
- Paper on distribution of TSWV
- List of pest and diseases

71. A two-day prototype seminar has been developed. It will be offered countries wishing to improve their seed potato production or to importing countries wishing to be better informed about ordering seed from other countries.

72. The Chairman expressed his gratitude on behalf of the Specialized Section, to Mr Tom Heilandt. He also mentioned that former Vice-Chairman Mr. Pierre Miauton (Switzerland) had retired. At the last session, Mr. Willem Schrage (USA) was elected as the Vice-Chairman.

73. The next 36th Specialized Section is scheduled for 20 to 22 March 2006.

ITEM 6 Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat

74. In the absence of the Chairman, the Working Party was informed by the secretariat on the outcome of the fourteenth session of the Specialized Section. Final corrections were submitted to the secretariat on the texts of the standards for chicken meat and ovine meat. The secretariat was currently incorporating those comments into the final drafts and will proceed with their publication (see Item 7).

6(a) Revised UNECE Standard for Porcine Meat

75. As the publication on porcine meat had not been submitted on time to the secretariat, it could not be translated and be ready for adoption by the Working Party. The secretariat would be in direct contact with the Chair to find the best solution to speeding up the process and finalizing the publication.

6 (b) Meeting of rapporteurs

76. The rapporteurs on turkey meat met in Warsaw on 28 and 29 June 2005.

77. The Chair of the Working Party requested the secretariat to encourage participation of the Specialized Section on Meat in future meetings of the Working Party.

ITEM 7 Publications

7 (a) UNECE Standards for Meat

78. The secretariat reported on the status of the publications of the updated standard for bovine, ovine and chicken meat and the new standard for llama meat.

79. The UNECE Standard for Bovine Meat had been published in English, French and Russian.

80. The draft of the UNECE Standard for Ovine Meat had been circulated for comments. The cut-off date for receiving opinions had been 30 September 2005. Currently, the secretariat was preparing the final draft, which would be sent to the Chair for final approval. Further to the approval, the document would be sent for translation, printing and publication.

81. The draft of the UNECE Standard for Chicken Meat had also been circulated for comments. The cut-off date for receiving opinions had equally been 30 September. A few comments had been received, and these had already been included into the final draft. The document had been sent for translation to French and Russian, and would then be ready for publication.

82. Because of changes in priorities, the publication UNECE Standard for Llama Meat has been postponed.

7 (b) Promotional booklet on the work and achievements of the Working Party

83. Because of changes in priorities within the secretariat, the promotional material would be issued as a colour brochure in early 2006.

7 (c) Colour Chart for Walnut Kernels

84. The Working Party adopted as the new title for the publication “Colour Chart for Walnut Kernels” to replace the original title “Colour Gauge for Walnut Kernels”.

85. The secretariat informed delegations of the progress made on the development of the Colour Chart for Walnut Kernels. For technical, administrative and budgetary reasons the publication had been delayed. It was currently ready for printing and would be issued in early 2006.

86. The delegate from OECD offered assistance to the secretariat to find ways to print this publication.

87. The delegation from United States would like to receive a copy of the final draft before printing.

ITEM 8 General questions concerning the work of WP.7 and its Specialized Sections

8 (a) Alignment of the Control Certificate with the UN Layout Key

TRADE/WP.7/2005/INF.5

88. The Working Group on the Control Certificate prepared a proposal in cooperation with the United Kingdom trade facilitation organization, SITPRO. The proposal aims at aligning the control certificate with the UN Layout Key and at defining continuation sheets to allow several lots to be treated on one certificate.

89. The Working Party discussed information provided in document TRADE/WP.7/2005/INF.5. The compiled document would be published separately as TRADE/WP.7/WP.7/2005/9/Add.2. The Control Certificate was not yet considered ready for adoption.

90. Following the discussions, the delegation of the United Kingdom presented modifications in the information paper as follows:

- Replace last two bullets in INF.5 with: “Some official control services have systems where the inspector signs and stamps the control certificate to verify that the conformity checks have been carried out under an approved quality control/assurance system. In this case additional physical sampling checks may not be made and the statement in Box 17 is not appropriate. The Working Party asked Specialized Sections GE.1 and GE.2 to consider how to manage this situation.”

91. The delegate of the Netherlands pointed out that auto control had been a fact in trade and standard practice for a long time; the Control Certification could not be done by governmental organizations only.

92. The deadline for submitting comments on the Control Certificate and Guidance Notes to the United Kingdom delegate was 31 January 2006.

93. The representative of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme informed delegations that the CCFV also had on its agenda the consideration of Guidelines for the Quality Control of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, which included a layout for a control certificate based on the current UNECE/OECD certificate. She also informed delegations that risk-based inspection would be discussed at the forthcoming session of the Codex Committee on Food Inspection and Certification System. The provisional agenda for the meeting was available on the Codex website at <http://www.codexalimentarius.net>

8 (b) Terms of reference for the Working Party and the Specialized Sections (Revision of the Geneva Protocol)

TRADE/WP.7/2005/INF.3

94. The secretariat presented to the Working Party document INF.3, Revision of the Geneva Protocol. This document was issued for information (in English only).

95. The Working Group on Working Procedures would report on its discussions on updating the framework in which the Working Party and its specialized sections operated and the status of the revision of the working procedures.

96. The delegation of Germany requested that both the current version of the protocol and the draft proposed in document TRADE/WP.7/2005/INF.3 be distributed.

97. The delegation of Switzerland requested that copies of the draft be distributed in the three official languages of the Commission.

98. The delegation of the European Union stated that the process for adopting the Protocol was still unclear (who, when, voting process, etc.) and requested that the secretariat explore the best way of doing it (not only considering the discussions at WP.7 level). Should it be a task for Governments? The secretariat was requested to make its proposal at its earliest convenience.

8 (c) Sales packages

99. The working group (United States, European Community, Germany, France and the Czech Republic) withdrew document TRADE/WP.7/2005/6 from the agenda.

100. On behalf of the working group, the delegation of Germany made a presentation on packages and explained the difficulties that were found in reaching a consensus on several issues. The working group proposed that the discussions on definitions and further work continue in the Specialized Section on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables. The secretariat sent a copy of the presentation to the heads of delegation.

8 (d) Point of application of UNECE standards

TRADE/WP.7/2005/7

101. The secretariat presented the work developed by the specialized sections (GE.1 and GE.6) as well as the Working Party about the point of application of UNECE standards. Document TRADE/WP.7/2005/7 summarizes these discussions.

8 (e) Assessment of the implementation of UNECE Standards

TRADE/WP.7/2005/8

102. The secretariat presented the work developed by the specialized sections GE.1 and GE.2 about a proposal from Germany on how to report on the acceptance and application of UNECE standards. Document TRADE/WP.7/2005/8 summarizes these discussions.

103. The delegation of France asked the secretariat to explain how this could be incorporated in the Specialized Section of Meat (GE.11).

104. The delegation of the United States requested that UNECE Standards should be for international trade only - between countries but not within the countries. There was wide agreement on that, but it would be up to the countries if they themselves wanted to apply them internally.

105. Product description was largely debated. There was agreement that this should be clarified by the Working Party. The Working Party stated that all the specialized sections should work on this topic.

8 (f) Review of the work of the Working Party

106. Because few responses were received, the secretariat would redistribute among delegations the draft questionnaire for a review of the work of the Working Party and its Specialized Sections. The document had already been published as an addendum to the report of the Working Party's session in 2004. See TRADE/WP.7/2004/10/Add.1.

ITEM 9 Workshops/seminars/training courses

Georgia

107. Ms. Viera Baricicova (Slovakia) and Ms. Sylvie Poret (OECD) informed the Working Party on the Joint OECD/UNECE/FAO Workshop on "Quality Standardisation and Inspection in Horticultural Trade" held in Tbilisi, Georgia (4-8 July 2005).

108. They provided information on the role of standardization and its impact on the markets, as well as on international standardization programmes. There were made presentations on the interpretation of UNECE/OECD standards for apples and tomatoes. Discussions were conducted on identification of problems in the horticultural sector of participating countries and possible solutions (Round table discussion) and identification of possible future cooperation in the region. More than 30 private and public sector participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova attended the workshop.

Slovakia

109. The 10th International Training Course sponsored by OECD on “Harmonization of fruit and vegetables quality assessment” had been held from 12 to 14 September 2005 in Mojmirovce (Slovakia).

110. The programme had focused on the interpretation of quality standards and on their application. The following UNECE and OECD quality standards had been presented: mango, kiwi and potatoes. A presentation was also made on growing methods, varieties and world production of mangoes.

111. Participants visited the Billa distribution centre in Senec and AGRO – Macaj – a vegetable producer in Kralova pri Senci.

112. The last day of the course was dedicated mainly to inspectors’ permanent training.

113. The programme included the following presentations:

- New system of EC reg.1148/2001 application on exempted traders, RIK – Inge Clavaux, Netherlands.
- The use of digital imaging techniques to facilitate the interpretation and harmonization of quality standards – Alex Gurvich, Israel
- Fruit and vegetables inspectors authorisation – Alena Kosková, Czech Republic
- HMI inspectors training system – Lauren East, United Kingdom
- Information about OECD Scheme activities after reform - Viera Baricicova, Slovakia.

114. Forty-eight delegates from 17 countries attended the training course (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Slovenia and United Kingdom) and 33 inspectors from State and District Veterinary and Food Administrations of Slovakia.

115. Representatives of OECD, UNECE and the European Commission were present.

116. All participants successfully passed a final test on quality assessment of covered produces and received a Certificate of Attendance during the reception given by the Ministry of Agriculture of Slovakia.

117. The next International Training Course would be held from 19 to 22 June 2006.

Other meetings

118. The delegation of Germany informed delegations about the Quality International meeting, held in February 2005 in Bonn.

119. The delegation of the United Kingdom informed delegations about the planned Workshop on Agricultural Quality Inspections at the Horticultural Marketing Inspectorate (HMI), most likely in September 2006.

ITEM 10 Other business

Discussion on implementation and cooperation with other organizations

120. The Working Party had been informed of the external evaluation of the UNECE and welcomed the preliminary recommendations.

121. The Working Party stated that trade in agriculture had great potential for increasing employment and export-based economic growth for lower income countries in the UNECE region and could result in employment opportunities, foreign exchange earnings and foreign direct investment. Given the importance of the sector in some UNECE member States where agriculture accounts for up to 40 % of GDP, it was important that that sector participated fully in international supply chains. It was also of benefit to all member States who implement the UNECE agricultural quality standards to see the standards implemented in as many countries as possible, both within and outside the region – as that increased market transparency for exports as well as imports.

122. In the light of the above information, both the Working Party and the secretariat had received numerous requests for capacity-building activities as well for increased promotion of the standards.

123. The Working Party would therefore like to see:

- A significant increase in the promotion of the quality standards, in particular in countries that have not yet implemented them;
- Increased capacity-building and implementation support in less advantaged member States;
- An investigation of various options for enhanced cooperation with other international organizations, such as OECD and FAO, through activities that might include joint programmes of work, events and capacity-building programmes.

124. Realizing that this could not be accomplished within existing resources, the Working Party, recommended to the secretariat and the Economic Commission for Europe to seriously consider assigning additional resources to this work.

ITEM 11 Programme of work

11 (a) Calendar of meetings

125. The Working Party took note of the 2006 provisional calendar of meetings of the specialized sections and the Working Party. Delegations were invited to inform the secretariat as soon as possible if any of the proposed dates should be inconvenient.

126. The delegation of the United States requested the secretariat to include in the calendar of meetings the meetings of the working groups. This would increase participation and avoid bureaucratic procedures for the delegates.

Tentative calendar of meetings for 2006

Meeting	Session	Location	Date
Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (GE.1)	52	Geneva	15 to 19 May ¹
Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce (GE.2)	53	Geneva	12 to 16 June ²
Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes (GE.6)	36	Geneva	20 to 22 March
Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat (GE.11)	15	Brisbane, Australia	19 to 24 April ³
Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7)	62	Geneva	6 to 9 November

¹ Working groups will have the opportunity to meet on 15 May 2006.

² Working groups will have the opportunity to meet on 12 June 2006.

³ Dates should be synchronized with the World Meat Congress, Australia

11 (b) Future work

127. The Working Party reviewed its programme of work (TRADE/WP.7/2005/INF.6), making some amendments. The updated version of the programme, as well as a draft agenda for the next meeting of the Working Party, will be published as addenda to the current report (TRADE/WP.7/2005/9/Add.3).

ITEM 12 Election of officers

128. According to the Commission's Rules of Procedure and established practice, the Meeting elected a Chair and two Vice-Chairs. The Working Party elected the following bureau at its sixty-first session:

Chair: Ms. Viera Baricicova (Slovakia)

Vice-Chairs: Mr. Csaba Gáspár (Hungary), Ms. Niina Kauhajärvi (Finland)

ITEM 13 Adoption of the report

129. The Working Party adopted the report of its sixty-first session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.

The following addenda have been published separately:

TRADE/WP.7/2005/9/Add.1 Revision of the Geneva Protocol

TRADE/WP.7/2005/9/Add.2 Alignment of the control certificate with the UN layout key

TRADE/WP.7/2005/9/Add.3 Programme of Work

TRADE/WP.7/2005/9/Add.4 Provisional Agenda for the Sixty-Second Session

130. Contributions should be sent to the secretariat either on diskette by mail to:

Food Standards Officer
UNECE Trade Division
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10
Tel: (41) 22 917 1265
Fax: (41) 22 917 0629

Or by e-mail to:
agrstandards@unece.org

Documentation for all meetings is available on our home page:

<http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm>