



United Nations

# UNECE Weekly

Economic Commission for Europe

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## Exhibition on Gunnar Myrdal

During the Commission session there will be a special exhibition devoted to Gunnar Myrdal, the first UNECE Executive Secretary, 1947-1957

The exhibition will be located on the third floor of the Palais des Nations new building from 23 to 27 April 2007.



## Wood energy has vast potential

The Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics meets every year, bringing together forest statisticians from the UNECE region to provide guidance on the programme of work. This year the

[www.unece.org/trade/timber/woodenergy.htm](http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/woodenergy.htm).

A new enquiry, carried out with support from the International Energy Agency and the European Commission, has produced some surprising results, indicating that far more wood is used for energy than has previously been reported and that there is a vast potential to use post-consumer recovered wood for energy. The enquiry also showed that some countries are already meeting a significant portion of their energy needs from wood (see graph). Countries were pleased with the work, and appreciated

the chance the enquiry gave to improve internal coordination and understanding of the importance of wood energy.

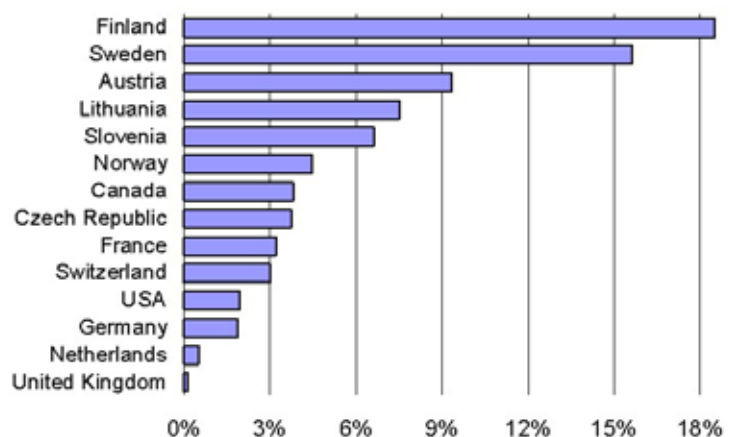
The Working Party also reviewed and approved the accomplishments and future plans in three work areas (markets and statistics, forest resources, outlook studies). It strongly supported the continued cooperation between the international agencies active in forestry statistical work (FAO, International Tropical Timber Organization, Eurostat, and the UNECE) which has led to significant improvements in data and reduction in duplication of work.

*The documents, presentations and report of the meeting can be found at <http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/docs/stats-sessions/stats-29/stats-29.htm>.*



main topic was wood energy, which has attracted steadily increasing interest as concerns have mounted over fossil fuel prices, energy security and environmental impacts. Wood energy is a reliable, locally available and carbon-neutral energy source and a leading source of renewable energy. What has been lacking so far has been good information on the amount of wood used for energy and where it is coming from. The Working Party has spearheaded efforts to improve the quality of information on wood energy to assist policymakers (see <http://>

### Role of wood energy in Total Primary Energy Supply



## Potato virus is worldwide

Delegates from 16 countries met in Geneva on 19-21 March to update and amend the UNECE Standard concerning the marketing and commercial quality of seed potatoes and the accompanying List of diseases and pests. The Standard has been considerably renewed over the past several years and its practical use now needs to be actively promoted. This for example will be done at the world "POTATO RUSSIA 2007" congress in Moscow in August this year.

One important outcome of this meeting of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes was its common position on potato virus Y (PVY). The delegations wanted the following message transmitted to the potato industry:

- New strains and variants of PVY are occurring worldwide and seem to be more readily transmissible than earlier strains.
- Strains and variants differ in their ability to cause leaf and/or tuber symptoms.
- Control of PVY is still only possible through strict PVY tolerances within a seed potato certification scheme, through breeding and through adoption of best crop management practices.
- An option to control Potato Tuber Necrotic Ringspot Disease

on susceptible varieties may be a specific certification tolerance for superficial necrosis, until an appropriate detection method becomes available.

- Applying a zero tolerance for widely distributed viruses, such as PVY, is not effective, practical or feasible.



*Potato virus Y*

The Specialized Section will monitor scientific developments in this area and will discuss, at its future meetings, how new virus detection methodologies can be used within the framework of national certification schemes.

For more contact [agri.standards@unece.org](mailto:agri.standards@unece.org).

## Facts and figures

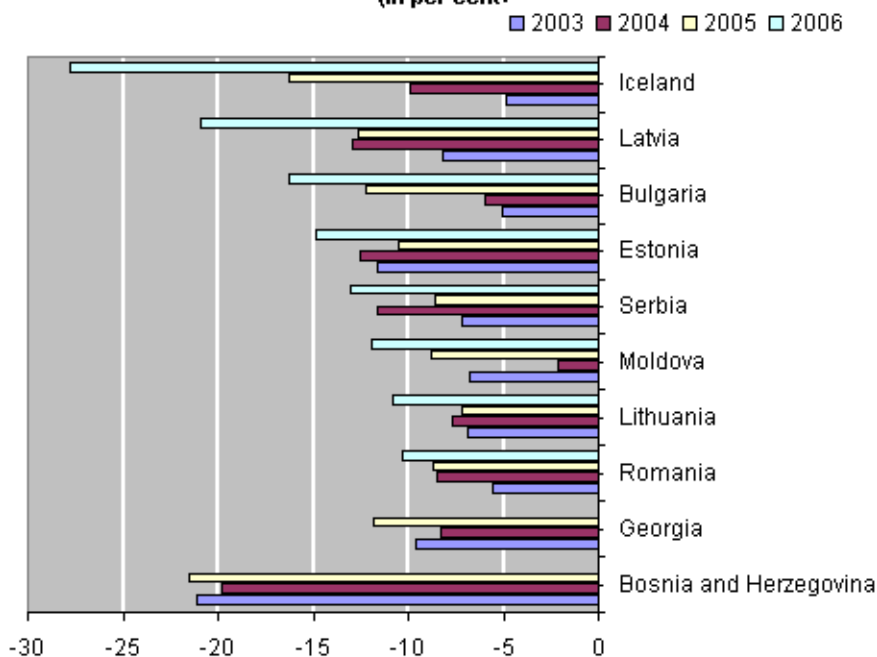
**In one fifth of UNECE countries the current account deficit exceeds 10 per cent of GDP**

## Coming up

2-4 April

Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane

### Current account deficit relative to GDP (in per cent)



In a number of UNECE countries, the ratio of current account deficit to GDP was close to or above the 10% mark in recent years. It continued to escalate in 2006: Iceland's current account deficit reached 28% of GDP and was the highest among the UNECE countries, while Latvia's – at 21% - was the highest within the EU, followed by Bulgaria and two other Baltic countries. Booming domestic demand, due in part to real wage growth and credit accessibility to the private sector, boosted imports in these countries. Their export growth failed to match, however. These very high deficits pose concerns about increasing economic risks, particularly in countries with fixed or highly managed exchange rates, as their dependency on foreign financing deepened, making them more vulnerable to capital outflow. Concerns are smaller regarding the current account deficits in Serbia, Moldova, Georgia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina – their recent import growth is to a large extent both driven and financed by foreign direct investment.

Source: UNECE Statistical Database (<http://www.unece.org/stats/data.htm>) and Central Banks.

Note: Countries are sorted according to the current account deficit ratio in 2006.