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REGULATORY COOPERATION AND STANDARDIZATION POLICIES

Recent developments

Note by the secretariat for information

This document summarizes the activities of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) over the last 12 months. Additional information can be found on the following webpage: http://www.unece.org/trade/ctied/wp6/documents/doc_archive.htm

1. Introduction

1. Last year, the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) celebrated the thirty-fifth anniversary since the beginning of the UNECE activities related to standardization policies. The jubilee meeting, which took place from 24 to 26 October in Geneva, comprised the fifteenth annual session of WP.6 and an International Forum on Market Surveillance and Consumer Protection.

2. Both meetings attracted a wide audience of over 100 delegates and experts from countries, United Nations specialized agencies, international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as business and consumer associations and private companies.¹

2. Normative work

3. The Working Party decided to revise two recommendations, “Definitions” and “Reference to standards”, and to develop a new recommendation on using market surveillance as a complementary means of protecting consumers against counterfeit goods.

3. Regional regulatory projects

4. In 2003, the Working Party assisted the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Interstate Council for Standardization, Certification and Metrology in preparing an agreement on the development of model technical regulations between CIS States. In 2005, the agreement was approved by the CIS secretariat and is to be submitted for consideration at the summit of the Heads of the CIS States in 2006. The agreement is based on the Working Party’s International model for technical harmonization (Recommendation “L”).

5. In March 2005, the members of the Eurasian Economic Commonwealth (EurAzEC) signed an agreement on the principles for harmonization of technical regulations within this grouping. EurAzEC comprises Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation and Tajikistan. The agreement is also based on Recommendation “L”.

4. Sectoral projects

6. A new pipeline-safety project was launched in October 2005. The secretariat is currently in contact with Governments and the private sector to identify potential interest and areas of mutual concern.

7. The secretariat is also looking for synergies with other UNECE programmes related to this project (namely, the Working Party on Gas and activities under the UNECE Convention on

¹ For further information on the session, see document TRADE/WP.6/2005/15. For the summary of the debate at the Forum, see document TRADE/WP.6/2005/15/Add.1. Details on WP.6 market surveillance activities appear separately in document ECE/TRADE/C/2006/16.

“The Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents”). It will report on developments at the Working Party’s session in June 2006.

8. In 2005, the German delegation proposed a new WP.6 regulatory project in the area of equipment for use in an explosive environment. The formal proposal to this end will also be presented for consideration at the 2006 session.

5. Capacity-building.

9. In October 2005, the Working Party contributed to a conference for Russian industry in Brussels on the European experience with standardization and technical regulations.

10. The Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START Team), at its meeting in March 2006, assessed the progress made on its sectoral (“earth-moving machinery” and “pipeline safety”) projects for the CIS region.

6. Communications

11. The Working Party’s regulatory concepts (Recommendation “L”) and projects were presented to:

- Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in February 2005
- International Organization of Standardization (ISO) Committee on Developing Country Matters meeting in September 2005 (in conjunction with the ISO General Assembly)
- Meetings of the African Organization for Standardization (ARSO), including the ARSO General Assembly and its African Standardisation Forum on “Challenging the Challenges of Standardisation in Africa” in February 2006.

ARSO expressed interest in holding a number of subregional meetings in Africa to promote the use of the “International Model”. Consultations with ARSO are currently under way to draw up practical modalities for financing and cooperation.

12. The Working Party has started to restructure its activities and to examine how it can best serve the needs of member States. It has studied the paper on “WP.6 Vision, Strategic Directions for 2006-2010, and work plan for 2006-2007” (document TRADE/WP.6/2005/13) which will be further discussed at its session in June 2006. It has also revised its priorities. Higher priority has been given to the regulatory-related and market surveillance segments of the work, as requested by member States.