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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON TRADE

Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and
Standardization Policies

Sixteenth session
Geneva, 19-21 June 2006

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE SIXTEENTH SESSION
to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
starting on Monday, 19 June, at 10 a.m.

The sixteenth session of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) will be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva from Monday, 19 June to Wednesday, 21 June 2006.^{1/} It will include the International Forum on Common Regulatory Language for Global Trade, which starts at 3 p.m. on 20 June and concludes on 21 June. The Forum is a joint event with the newly formed Committee on Trade, which has its session from Wednesday, 21 June, until Friday, 23 June. Interested delegates are invited to attend the joint policy segment on the UNECE contribution to regulatory convergence, planned for Wednesday afternoon, 21 June.

Detailed provisional agendas of both the International Forum and the first session of the Committee are set out in documents ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/3 and ECE/TRADE/C/2006/1, respectively. Documents for all three meetings will be posted on the UNECE Trade and Timber Division's website as they become available, as well as being distributed through the normal channels.

^{1/} Delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations should complete the registration form, downloadable from <http://www.unece.org/trade/ct/welcome.htm> and transmit it to the secretariat by e-mail (Dominique.Rames@unece.org) or by fax (+41 22-917 0037). Prior to the meeting, delegates are requested to present themselves with a valid identification card/passport at the UNOG Security and Safety Section, located at the Villa Les Feuillantines, 13 Avenue de la Paix, to obtain a security badge to enter the Palais (in case of a problem please call 022-917 3096). Documents for the meetings, maps of Geneva, lists of hotels and restaurants, and information for visitors are available on the UNECE website at: <http://www.unece.org/trade/ct/welcome.htm>.

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

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|----|---|---|
| 1. | Adoption of the agenda | ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/1 |
| 2. | Election of officers | |
| 3. | Implementation of the UNECE reform and follow-up to the 2006 session of the Commission | ECE/TRADE/C/2006/17
ECE/1434/Rev.1
ECE/TRADE/C/2006/10
ECE/TRADE/C/2006/13 |
| 4. | UNECE International Forum on Common Regulatory Language for Global Trade | ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/2
ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/3
ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/3/Add.1
ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/3/Add.2
ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/3/Add.3 |
| 5. | Review of developments in standardization and regulatory cooperation | ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/4 |
| 6. | Coordination | |
| | Revision of UNECE recommendations | ECE/STAND/17/Rev.4
ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/5 |
| | UNECE standardization and regulatory list | ECE/STAND/20/Rev.5
ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/6 |
| 7. | Harmonization/Regulatory Cooperation | ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/7 |
| | (a) UNECE Recommendation “L” –
“International Model for technical harmonization based on good regulatory practice for the preparation, adoption and application of technical regulations via the use of international standards” | |
| | (b) Regional projects | |
| | (c) Sectoral projects | |
| 8. | Conformity assessment | |
| | (a) Review of recent developments | ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/8 |
| | (b) Mutual Recognition Agreements | |
| | (c) Accreditation | ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/9 |
| | (d) Other issues | ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/10 |
| | (i) Organic agriculture | |
| | (ii) Policy issues related to quality assurance | |

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| 9. Market surveillance | ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/11
ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/11/Add.1 |
| 10. Programmes of work of the Working Party and the Committee on Trade | ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/12
ECE/TRADE/C/2006/12 |
| 11. Other business | |
| 12. Adoption of the report | ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/13
ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/13/Add.1 |

II. TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

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|-----------|---|
| Day One | Items 1-3, 5-8(a), (b) and (d) and 11 |
| Day Two | Items 8(c), 9, 10, and 4 (Forum, afternoon) |
| Day Three | Items 4 (Forum, morning) and 12 (afternoon) |

III. ANNOTATIONS

1. Adoption of the agenda

The proposed provisional agenda and timetable were agreed upon by the Bureau of the Working Party and are presented here for approval.

2. Election of officers

In accordance with the Commission's rules of procedure and established practice, the Working Party is expected to elect a Chair and two vice-chairs. At the fifteenth session, Mr. C. Arvius (Sweden), Mr. V. Koreshkov (Belarus) and Mr. A. Gonda (Slovakia) were elected as Chair and vice-chairs, respectively.

3. Implementation of the UNECE reform and follow-up to the 2006 session of the Commission

The secretariat will report on the discussions held and decisions adopted by the Commission at its sixty-first session (21-23 February 2006) regarding the reform of the UNECE (document ECE/1434/Rev.1, "Work Plan on ECE Reform") and on the new name and structure of the Committee on Trade, the parent body of the Working Party. The revised terms of reference and recommendations for strengthening the Committee are presented in documents ECE/TRADE/C/2006/10 and ECE/TRADE/C/2006/3, respectively.

4. UNECE International Forum on Common Regulatory Language for International Trade

The Forum is organized jointly by the Working Party and the Committee on Trade, following a decision taken by the (former) Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development at its ninth session in June 2005. The provisional programme is presented in document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/3. The background paper and other documents are reproduced as ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/2 and ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/3/Add.1 to 3, respectively.

The Forum is open to the public. During this time, the Working Party will be in informal session.

5. Review of developments in standardization and regulatory cooperation

National delegations, international and regional organizations, the European Commission and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) are invited to report on their standardization and regulatory activities, as well as on technical cooperation programmes with other countries or regions.

If such information is available sufficiently in advance of the meeting, it will be issued as document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/4.

6. Coordination

Revision of UNECE recommendations

At its fifteenth session, the Working Party decided to revise two of its recommendations, Recommendation "D" on "Reference to Standards" and Recommendation "J" on "Definitions" (as contained in the publication *UNECE Recommendations on Standardization Policies* (ECE/STAND/17/Rev.4)). At the current session, the Working Party will have before it for discussion and approval the revision of Recommendation "J" (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/5).

UNECE standardization and regulatory list

The most recent version of the Standardization List was published in 2002 as ECE/STAND/20/Rev.5.

The Working Party has been discussing the revision of the Standardization List, including its format. It agreed that there was a logical link between standards and technical regulations in the further development of national and regional work. As a result, the Working Party supported the idea of changing the scope and format of the current (sixth) revision of the List to include regulatory areas and product sectors where member countries see the need for a transnational dialogue on regulatory convergence matters.

The Working Party agreed on the new format of the List, as presented at the fifteenth session (document TRADE/WP.6/2005/4).

The Working Party invited delegations and international organizations to submit their proposals on standardization and regulatory priorities to be included in a new draft of the List. Such information will be presented in document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/6.

7. Regulatory Cooperation/Harmonization

(a) UNECE Recommendation “L”, “International Model for technical Harmonization based on good regulatory practice for the preparation, adoption and application of technical regulations via the use of international standards”

The “International Model” was included as a new UNECE Recommendation (“L”) in the publication of the UNECE “Recommendations on Standardization Policies” (ECE/STAND/17/Rev.4); and has also been made available to delegations as a separate document TRADE/WP.6/2002/7.

The Working Party will be informed about the promotion of its regulatory projects and of the work of its Team of Specialists on STandardization And Regulatory Techniques (“START” Team).

(b) Regional projects

The Working Party will be informed about the status of regional projects in the CIS (namely on the status of a CIS agreement on harmonization of technical regulations) and in the Balkan countries (including a report on discussions with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) on a possible follow -up to the UNECE/SIDA “South-East Europe Regulatory Project”).

(c) Sectoral projects

The Working Party will be informed about the current status of its two “sectoral initiatives” in telecommunications and earth-moving machinery, as well as about consultations with Governments regarding the proposal for a new project on pipeline safety, as presented at the fifteenth session. The Working Party will also be informed about a proposal from Germany on a possible new project in the area of equipment for explosive environments.

The status of the Working Party’s regulatory convergence projects is presented in document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/7.

8. Conformity assessment

This year, the Bureau decided that discussions on conformity assessment should be confined to some specific matters of concern to member States.

(a) Review of developments

National delegations and international and regional organizations are invited to report on trade-related aspects of developments in conformity assessment. International organizations are also invited to provide an update on the current situation with regard to international guides, standards, etc. If available sufficiently in advance of the meeting, this information will be issued as document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/8.

(b) Mutual recognition agreements

At its fourteenth and fifteenth sessions, the Working Party discussed the state of play regarding government mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) to which UNECE member countries are parties. Any information received under this subitem will be presented to the Working Party.

(c) Accreditation

National delegations, and international and regional organizations are invited to report on developments in accreditation. International organizations are also invited to provide an update on current developments. Submissions are invited in written form to allow more time for discussion at the session.

An update on the activities of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation and the International Accreditation Forum will be presented.

(d) Other issues

(i) Organic agriculture

The Working Party will be updated on the activities of the International Task Force (ITF) on Harmonisation and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture. The Task Force was jointly established by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). In particular, information will be provided on the discussions held at the ITF meeting in Tunisia in December 2005 where the possibility of drawing up common regulatory objectives (in line with the "International Model") for organic products was raised.

Information on developments concerning the above organic agriculture issues will be available as document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/9.

(ii) Policy issues related to quality assurance

At its previous sessions, the Working Party considered national experiences in quality and environmental management systems and possibilities of establishing and implementing integrated management schemes/systems.

In conjunction with its sixteenth session, the Working Party is organizing a side event (on 22 June 2006): an informal discussion on the experiences in the CIS region with ISO 9001 certification and on the use of integrated management systems.

National delegations and international and regional organizations are invited to report on their experience in introducing and implementing quality policy and environmental management schemes. Such information will be made available as document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/10.

9. Market surveillance

In October 2005, in conjunction with its fifteenth session, the Working Party held a second UNECE International Forum on Market Surveillance and Consumer Protection (for the report see document TRADE/WP.6/2005/15/Add.1).

The Working Party will be updated on the preparations for a meeting of the Advisory Group on MARKET Surveillance ("MARS" Group) to be held in Slovakia in September 2006, and will receive a report on other meetings in the region, including on a meeting of market surveillance authorities from the member countries of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) which was held in Bulgaria in April 2006.

During the October 2005 Forum, the Working Party discussed the experience of some UNECE member States with cooperation between market surveillance agencies and private companies in the fight against fraud by spotting counterfeit and pirated goods during market control inspections. A draft recommendation on the subject was discussed and delegations were invited to send their comments on it. The Working Party will have before it the new draft for further comment, as well as a discussion paper on market surveillance concepts and definitions (documents ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/11 and Add.1). Further consultations on these documents will be made within the framework of the "MARS" Group meeting in autumn 2006 with a view to consolidating revised versions for final consideration and approval by the Working Party at its seventeenth session in 2007.

10. Programmes of work of the Working Party and the Committee on Trade

At its thirteenth session, the Working Party changed its mandate and name as a part of the revision of its activities to better meet the demands and concerns of the member States.

In the context of the UNECE reform initiated in 2005, the Working Party continued its restructuring process and its strategic re-thinking of the Working Party's role and future work. With this in mind, a paper had been prepared on the Working Party's vision, strategic directions for 2006-2010, and work plan for 2006-2007 (document TRADE/WP.6/2005/13). The programme of work was reorganized, linked with the United Nations budget cycle, made more concise by cutting down some activities (in line with recommendations made under the UNECE reform), aligning programme elements with the new Working Party mandate and prioritizing them.

With a view to better understanding the value provided by the work, an evaluation of the WP.6 activities was done at the fifteenth session. The average level of satisfaction for the WP.6

programme in general was appraised at 4.14 (on a 0 to 5 scale, 5 –highest level). Full information on the results of this questionnaire and proposals made by delegations are available on the WP.6 website.

The results of the restructuring of the Working Party (including discussions on the Working Party's vision and programme of work) were presented at the Bureau of the Committee on Trade in February 2006 which supported this process. The Bureau requested the Working Party to present its activities within the Committee's overall programme of work for 2008-2009 (document ECE/TRADE/C/2006/12).

The Working Party will be invited to further discuss its strategic direction and work plan. A revised draft of the WP.6 vision and programme of work paper will be made available for consideration and approval (document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/12).

11. Other business

The Working Party will consider the work of its coordinators and rapporteurs and decide on their future tasks and scope of activities.

The Working Party will be informed of tentative dates for its meetings in 2007.

12. Adoption of the report

According to the agreed practice, the Working Party will, during its session, approve a list of main decisions and leave the drafting of the descriptive part of the annual report to the secretariat, in consultation with the office bearers, taking into account the contributions made during the session.

The final report will be published as document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/13 and Add.1.

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