



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

TRADE/CEFACT/2005/35  
23 May 2005

ENGLISH ONLY

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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND  
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)

Eleventh session, 20 – 23 June 2005

Item 10 of the provisional agenda

**Project for Technical Assistance in Trade Facilitation  
jointly managed by UNECE and the Czech Republic**

Substantive report, 2004, and planned activities for first quarter of 2005

This document has been submitted by the UNECE Regional Adviser on Trade Facilitation  
**for information.**

The secretariat, together with the Czech delegation, are reporting to the Plenary on the latest phase of the project “Support to Trade Facilitation Measures and UN/EDIFACT Implementation in Selected Eastern European Countries”. The Government of the Czech Republic has funded the project since 1997 as part of its Plan for Bilateral Development Assistance.

1. This project is funded on the basis of yearly allocations by the government of the Czech Republic. It is jointly executed by the Czech national trade facilitation body, FITPRO, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), which hosts the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT). Experts from the beneficiary countries with longer-term experience also contribute to project activities in countries that have joined more recently.
2. The purpose of the project is to introduce the concepts of trade facilitation, electronic commerce and e-government and to act as a catalyst for cooperation in support of their implementation among all the stakeholders in beneficiary countries. The involvement of UNECE in the project also makes it possible to link the beneficiary countries to various international trade facilitation and electronic business initiatives and events. The beneficiaries of the project are countries in transition. So far, assistance has been provided to Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, the Republic of Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.
3. Assistance is provided in the following areas:
  - Awareness-raising and promotion of trade facilitation and e-business, usually in the form of an introductory seminar to trade facilitation and e-business concepts (documentation provided free-of-charge);
  - Training in the Czech Republic and in the beneficiary country for country representatives on issues of priority interest to their country in trade facilitation, electronic commerce and e-government (two 1-week training courses for two experts per country);
  - Help in setting up a structure for public-private partnership in support of trade facilitation (e.g. a national trade facilitation body in compliance with UN/CEFACT Recommendation 4). These can be informal working groups providing a platform for cooperation and projects on trade facilitation issues;
  - Establishment of links to international projects and initiatives in the area of trade facilitation/e-commerce and e-government through UNECE, UNCTAD, annual sessions of UN/CEFACT, the UNECE International Forums on Trade Facilitation in Geneva, etc.
4. The following activities were undertaken during 2003-2004:
  - Seminar on trade facilitation and the Czech experience in the area of customs and international standards, with speakers from the Czech Republic and the Republic of Moldova (Chisinau, December 2003);
  - Study stay for a Belarusian expert to familiarize her with the operation of two electronic marketplaces in the Czech Republic and the experience of FITPRO (Prague, December 2003);
  - Preparation of introductory project missions to Kazakhstan and Armenia – development of national projects for these countries;
  - Participation of representatives from beneficiary countries in the UNECE Executive Forum “Competing in a changing Europe”, as well as related meetings and consultations.
  - Seminar on trade facilitation and the Czech experience in the area of electronic customs procedures and an electronic transit system, with speakers from the Czech Republic and Uzbekistan (Tashkent, September 2004);
  - Contribution to the 7<sup>th</sup> International Transport+Logistics Conference, Trade Exhibition and other related events (Kiev, October 2004);
  - Meeting for representatives of Moldovan organizations responsible for trade facilitation in order to prepare a plan for further cooperation (Chisinau, June 2004);
  - Study stays for Ukrainian, Belarusian, Uzbek and Moldovan experts to familiarize them with the Czech legislation concerning electronic business, the operation of two electronic marketplaces in the Czech Republic, the experience of FITPRO and some of the concrete results of trade facilitation (Prague, July, October and November 2004);
  - Finalizing a paper on e-commerce implementation in the CIS countries (June 2004)

- Participation of the beneficiary countries and the Czech Republic in the UNECE Capacity Building Workshop on Trade Facilitation Implementation and follow-up (Geneva, October 2004);
- Key speech at the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on electronic business in the CIS and East European Countries (Minsk, November 2004);
- Organization, together with the UNECE secretariat, of a workshop on trade facilitation and other working meetings (Moscow, November 2004)
- Seminar on trade facilitation in the Republic of Moldova in support of the Moldovan national trade facilitation body (December 2004).
- Development of national projects for Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan.

5. The following activities have been carried out in or are scheduled for 2005:

- Seminar on trade facilitation and the management of information flows in Uzbekistan (28 April 2005). Meetings and discussions on this and other projects with the Agency of Foreign Economic Development of Uzbekistan, the Chamber of Commerce, the State Customs Committee, Uzincomcenter, etc.
  - Seminar on trade facilitation and PRO committees in collaboration with the Azeri national trade facilitation body and the TRACECA Permanent Secretariat (18 May 2005). Participation in the World Customs Exhibition, Baku (19-20 May 2005).
  - Two seminars on trade facilitation and improving trade information flows in Kazakhstan (Astana, 31 May 2005, Almaty, 2 June 2005).
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