

Salle XIX

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
60th Anniversary Session, Geneva 25-27 April 2007**

Item 6: Building on ECE's sixty-year contribution to pan-European integration
(a) Cooperation for Stability and Prosperity in the ECE Region

**Cooperation for Stability and Prosperity in the ECE Region
Thursday 26 April: 11.00-13.00 hours**

Concept Note

ISSUES NOTE

- **The inherent link between stability and prosperity.**

It is widely acknowledged that peace and security on the one hand and development on the other are strongly interdependent. There can be no lasting peace and security without development, and vice versa there can be no economic growth and social progress without an environment of stability and security.

- **The extraordinary success of Europe in building stability through prosperity.**

In the last 60 years Europe has been extraordinarily successful in creating an environment of peace, security and stability. After many centuries of brotherly European wars and bloody confrontations, often exported to the rest of the world, now Europe appears a continent where people can enjoy living in peace, where countries have made a remarkable transition to democracy after totalitarian regimes, where there are no barriers, no ideological tensions preventing cooperation and dialogue East-West, North-South and Trans-Atlantic, as it was the case in the past. No other continent enjoys such conditions. This unprecedented result has been achieved mainly through focusing on economic cooperation and addressing the basic needs of the people: food, jobs, shelter, energy, communications, etc.

- **Common values.**

In no other part of the world, there are so many basic shared values that provide a strong common identity and underpin the stability and the functioning of the economy and society. They are the principles of the market economy, the values of democracy and freedom, and the pursuing of social progress and environmental protection. Shared values and a common identity represent the basis for promoting economic cooperation and integration, building stability and prosperity. ECE countries have a vested interest not only in consolidating these values and this identity to the benefit of their own citizens, but also in upholding these principles world-wide by working together at the global level. By working together ECE countries can make their voice much better heard, influence global governance, and respond to the growing challenges that threaten peace and stability in the world.

- **European stability and prosperity is unfinished business.**

There remain in the ECE space areas of tension, frozen conflicts, risks of instability. This is the case in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, the Balkans, and the Mediterranean. ECE countries need to address these issues by applying the same recipe that has granted success in the past: i.e. by focusing on building economic conditions of sustainable development; and by working together East and West, North and South and Trans-Atlantic and engaging in economic cooperation.

- **Can we draw lessons from the European experience?**

There are many success stories in Europe of an effective interaction between stability and prosperity. The case of the successful transition to the market economy and democracy in Eastern Europe, the transition to democracy of Spain, Portugal and Greece, the cases of Albania, Romania and Bulgaria in the Balkans, the case of Tajikistan and other countries in Eur-Asia, etc. These lessons should form the basis of policy dialogue and economic cooperation, so that growth and stability can be promoted in all parts of the ECE, and valuable experience can be provided at the global level.

- **The European institutional architecture for stability and prosperity.**

One of the major factors that contributed to European success has been the institutional architecture that has promoted intergovernmental dialogue and cooperation in Europe. ECE is one of the Pan-European and Euro-Atlantic institutions that have contributed to stability and prosperity. But there are many other institutions in the ECE region: Pan-European and Trans-Atlantic institutions, the European Union and EurAsEc, sub- regional level organisations and initiatives, international financial institutions. Success has been achieved also thanks to the effective collaboration between the various European institutions. Particularly important for stability and prosperity has been the collaboration between ECE and the OSCE. Important has also been the collaboration between the Council of Europe, the European Union, the OECD, the Stability Pact, the SPECA, etc.

Questions to be addressed by the Panel:

- How can economic cooperation contribute to stability, particularly in the areas of tension and frozen conflicts in Europe? What are the fields of economic cooperation that are most useful in promoting security and stability? Energy, environment, transport, technical change, infrastructure, etc.?
- What lessons can be learned from the European experience of interaction between stability and prosperity? Are there success stories? Can we learn from the mistakes of the past?
- In spite of the common values and the common identity, there are widespread perceptions of divergent values and conflicting views of the world, e.g. between East and West, between North and South, and between Europe and North America. These divergences actually appear to be growing threatening dialogue and economic integration. How can promote a better understanding of the common values and identity binding together ECE countries? How can we avoid fomenting incomprehension and tensions? How can we build on what we have in common? Can economic dialogue and concrete economic cooperation activities contribute to bridging gaps and differences? In what fields and how?

- The institutional architecture of European organisations has evolved gradually throughout the post-war period in response to changing requirements. How can we best exploit the existing institutions, and promote coordination and cooperation? Do we need to revisit the existing architecture? How can ECE reform contribute to reform of the Pan-European and Transatlantic international institutional architecture?
- How can ECE countries work better together to promote stability and prosperity in the world? What lessons can be brought from Europe to the global debate on stability and prosperity, notably in relation to peace-building, the North-South divide and global security?
- How can the ECE continue to contribute to economic cooperation and integration at the ECE level?