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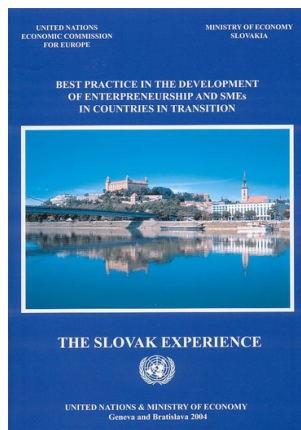
Focusing the Spotlight on UNECE's Activities and Strategy for the Development of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

– a key facet of UNECE's Entrepreneurship Programme –

UNECE's Strategy for SME Development...

The overall goal of the **UNECE Strategy for SME Development** is to facilitate promotion of entrepreneurship in countries with economies in transition through sustainable and dynamic SME development. The **objective** of the Strategy is to promote the conditions that are necessary for the growth and development of the SME sector, namely:

- a favourable policy and regulatory environment;
- strong and sustainable institutions providing financial and non-financial services to meet the demand of SMEs; and
- improved access of disadvantaged and low-income entrepreneurs (including women, rural poor, young families, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities) to financial resources and business services.



A key **element** of the strategy is the use of UNECE resources and expertise to catalyse the formalization and proliferation of SMEs by encouraging:

- the creation of impartial rules through regulation and institutional reform, so eliminating barriers that impede SME development;
- the reduction of disadvantages faced by SMEs in accessing inputs, such as financing, qualified labour, information, technology and management skills; and
- formation of various public-private and business-to-business partnerships within and between countries to improve competitiveness of SMEs.

The full text of the UNECE Strategy for SME Development is available at the following address:

www.unece.org/operact/enterp/documents/strat.pdf

How is the SME Strategy implemented?

There are a number of key operational instruments within the UNECE for **supporting** and **implementing** SME development, including expert groups of the Working Party on Industry and Enterprise Development (WP8) and the Working Party on International Commercial Legal Practice (WP5); Regional Advisory Services, in particular the Regional Adviser on Entrepreneurship and SMEs; technical assistance provided within the cooperation agreement between UNECE and the Central European Initiative (CEI); and SME Forums.

Activities for Promotion of SMEs

The UNECE is continuously involved in events that facilitate entrepreneurship and the development of SMEs. The following events have already been organized by UNECE in 2004:

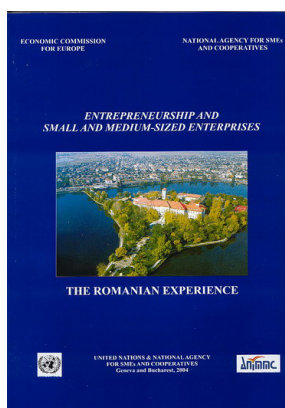
- ❑ **Fourth Session of the "Team of Specialists on Entrepreneurship in Poverty Alleviation: Youth Entrepreneurship"**, Geneva, 9-10 February. At this session a **Guide on How to Support Youth Entrepreneurship** was adopted. It is interesting to note that the attitude towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs varies widely across all 55 member

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Activities for Promotion of SMEs *continued...*

countries of the UNECE, and that the differences are great between different regions. The level of entrepreneurship in the EU is very high, and there are many initiatives encouraging and adopting the most appropriate approaches for producing more entrepreneurs. With regard however to development of youth entrepreneurship, programmes need to recognise that promotion of young entrepreneurs is part of the national youth development programme, as well as an organic part of the small business development programme.

□ **Forum on “Best Practice in Development of Entrepreneurship in Countries in Transition: The Romanian and Slovak Experiences”**, Geneva, 31 March. To complement the Forum the Governments of Romania and Slovakia each prepared a comprehensive report on the experience with SMEs in their countries. This was the sixth in a series of similar events; previous Forums included the Czech and Hungarian experiences in 1999 and 2000, Poland and Belarus in 2001, and Croatia and Slovenia in 2003.



□ **Expert Meeting on “Good Governance for SMEs”**, Geneva, 1-2 April. This event focused on current governance practices and analytical models of SME governance in countries with advanced market economies, new and prospective EU member countries and countries with economies in transition. The Meeting explored the situation at the micro-level, how SMEs understand corporate governance, what their problems are and what governments and non-governmental organizations can do to assist. *Good governance* is an important element in sustained economic growth; good governance for SMEs means practices that could encourage the establishment of SMEs and methods that are useful for start-up businesses to tackle the challenges of market forces.

□ **Training Workshop on “The Development of Entrepreneurship and SME Sector in the Republic of Moldova”**, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, 29-30 June. The key purpose of this event was to stimulate further development of the SME sector by taking account of best international practice and experiences in this field.

Additional Information on Entrepreneurship and SMEs is available on the UNECE web site at: www.unece.org/indust/sme/ece-sme.htm. Alternatively, please contact the Regional Adviser on Entrepreneurship and SMEs, e-mail: antal.szabo@unece.org.

Facts and figures:

Millennium Development Goal 3 Promote gender equality and empower women Women as percent of total non-agricultural paid employment			
EU new member countries	2000	2001	2002
Cyprus	41.7	41.9	42.4
Czech Republic	46.5	46.6	46.7
Estonia	51.7	51.7	51.5
Hungary	46.3	46.1	46.7
Latvia	53.2	52.8	53.4
Lithuania	52.2	51.3	50.3
Malta	32.1	30.8	33.8
Poland	46.9	47.0	47.5
Slovakia	50.8	51.9	52.0
Slovenia	48.0	47.7	47.9
Selected southeast European countries			
Albania	41.4	41.1	40.2
Bulgaria	52.8	53.1	51.3
Croatia	46.0	45.9	45.7
Romania	45.5	45.7	45.2
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	41.6	41.9	41.8
Turkey	19.0	18.9	20.6

Source: United Nations Statistics Division, Millennium Indicators Database (based on data provided by ILO)

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