



UNECE Weekly

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MESSAGE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO THE 61ST SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Geneva, 21-23 February 2006

Delivered by Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva



I am pleased to address the Economic Commission for Europe at a time of reform and transition. Yours is an organization that has traditionally been proactive in terms of moving with the dynamics of change. From the fall of the Berlin Wall through the processes of economic integration of the 1990s, you, as Member States, have adapted the Commission to the new realities and challenges in the region.

Today, confronted with a changing European architecture, you are adapting yet again. I know Member States and the secretariat will join forces to work for effective implementation of this round, building on the strong partnership between membership and secretariat that has served the UNECE so well in the past.

Your reform effort rightly emphasizes the implementation of

outcomes of UN Conferences and Summits through system-wide coherence. That coherence is particularly essential to the implementation of the World Summit Outcome Document. The way the UN as a whole changes – from ECOSOC reform to the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission – will have a direct impact on the work of the UNECE. It was in that spirit that I recently formed a new, High-level Panel to explore how the United Nations system can work more coherently and effectively across the world in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment.



Sergei Ordzhonikidze

These are times of change for all of us, but I am convinced that the result will be a more effective United Nations. I thank you all for your commitment, and wish you a most productive session. ❖

Adapting to a Changing European Architecture

The 61st session of the UNECE, 21-23 February, essentially focused on the implementation of the UNECE Reform.

“Today, the challenge of the UNECE consists in making its member States rediscover the advantages of dialoguing, of adopting common conventions and regional integration, this at a moment when multilateralism is going through an unprecedented crisis,” stressed Ambassador François Roux, the Chairman of the Commission.

“Member States would have not gone through the Reform process if they did not believe in what UNECE has done and its potential for the future”, said Marek Belka, UNECE Executive Secretary. “Our challenge now is to implement the reform. It is a challenge for both the member States, and for us, the secretariat.”

New sectoral committee

The 7 chairs/vice-chairs of the Sectoral Committees briefed the Commission on the implementation of the UNECE reform within their sectors, also outlining



From left to right: Andrei Savinykh (Belarus), Zohrab Mnatsakanian (Armenia), Gordan Markotić (Croatia), Marek Belka (UNECE Executive Secretary), François Roux (Chairman), Dariusz Rosati (Moderator), Georg Jürgens (Germany).

More photographs of the session are available on the UNECE website.

existing and planned cooperation with partner organizations and highlighting the achievements and challenges. The Executive Secretary presented the process leading to the establishment of

a new work programme on Economic Cooperation and Integration. A panel of four representatives of the member States engaged in an exchange of views on the future role of UNECE and in particular on the priority issues to be addressed by this new work programme.

UNECE in OECD/DAC List of Main International Organizations

The Commission emphasized the importance of technical cooperation for implementing the UNECE’s core activities.

Until the early 1990s the UNECE had no member States eligible for technical assistance from the international community and bilateral donors, and therefore was not – unlike the other regional commissions – included in the Development Assistance Committee’s List. Official contributions to organizations on this list may be reported as Official Development Aid (ODA). The Commission urged its members who are also members of the DAC to support the inclusion of the UNECE on the List. ❖

Malaysia accedes to UNECE Agreements on Vehicle Regulations

On 3 February 2006, Malaysia communicated to the United Nations Secretary-General its accession to the 1958 and 1998 Agreements. These two accessions bring the number of Parties to the 1958 Agreement to 45 and the number of Parties to the 1998 Agreement to 26. These accessions also underline the worldwide recognition of the role of the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29), the body administering both Agreements.

Uniform technical prescriptions

In acceding to the 1958 Agreement, Malaysia joins the vast majority of European countries, including the European Community, as well as non-European countries such as Japan, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea. Malaysia will be identified with the E-52 UNECE symbol when granting type approvals under the 1958 Agreement.

The 1958 Agreement provides the legal framework for the development of uniform technical prescriptions for vehicles and their components, with the aim of increasing active and passive safety of motor vehicles, reducing their emissions and improving their anti-theft performance. The 123 Regulations so far developed under the 1958 Agreement are constantly updated, incorporating new technologies to make vehicles safer and more environmentally sound.

Global scope

The 1998 Agreement provides the legal framework for the development of global technical regulations for vehicles and their



components, with the aim of increasing their active and passive safety, reducing their emissions. Contracting Parties to this Agreement include 17 European Countries, the European Community as well as Canada, Japan, New Zealand, People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, South Africa and the United States of America. Until now, two global technical regulations have been adopted. Other global technical

regulations are being developed by WP.29 on issues like pedestrian safety, head restraint systems, installation of lighting and light-signalling devices, tyres, controls and displays, heavy duty vehicle emissions, on-board diagnostic for heavy-duty vehicles and hydrogen and fuel cells vehicles. ❖

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Off the press ...

A colour chart for walnut kernels

has been issued, supplementing the UNECE Standard for Walnut Kernels and the OECD Standard for the same produce.

Walnut kernels are classified in three classes according to their quality and colour:

"Extra" Class walnut kernels must be of superior quality, uniformly light-coloured with practically no dark straw and/or lemon-yellow colour and with no dark brown.

Class I walnut kernels must be of good quality, of a colour not darker than light brown and/or lemon-yellow.

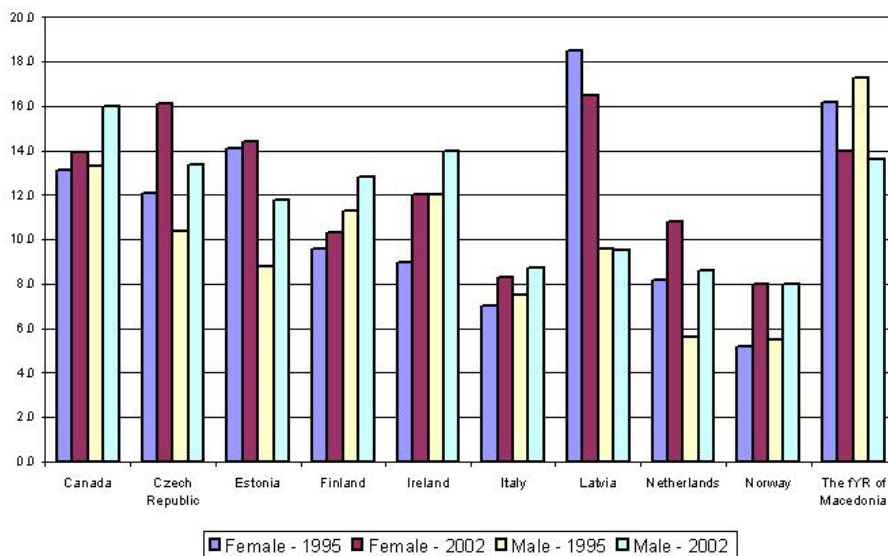
Class II includes kernels which do not qualify for inclusion in the higher classes, but satisfy their minimum requirements.

They must be of a colour not darker than dark brown. Darker kernels may be marketed in this class, provided the colour is indicated on the package. ❖



The chart is available at http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/standard/dry/dry_e.htm, or from the UN Sales and Marketing Section (unpubli@unog.ch).

Obesity trends in selected UNECE countries: 1995 & 2002
(Percentage of obese persons among adult population)



Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database.

Notes: Canada, Finland, Italy: 2002 data refer to 2001; Czech Republic: 1995 data refer to 1996.

The international standard for measuring obesity is the Body Mass Index (BMI), defined as a person's weight (in kg) divided by height squared (in m): kg/sqm. An adult is considered obese if BMI exceeds 30kg/sqm. Except in a few countries, in 2002 obesity affected a greater proportion of the adult population than in 1995.

Coming up ...

2-3 March

Workshop on Transboundary Water Management in South-Eastern Europe



(to be held in Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro)

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