



UNECE Weekly

United Nations

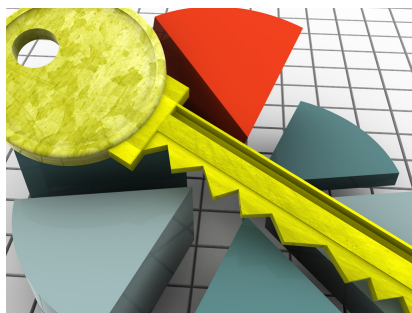
Economic Commission for Europe

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The Editorial Board of UNECE Weekly wishes readers a happy holiday season

UNECE PROMOTES BEST PRACTICE IN STATISTICAL CONFIDENTIALITY



Delegates from all over the world met in Bilbao, Spain on 2-4 December to discuss ways to extract the maximum research and analytical value from data whilst still maintaining the confidentiality of the people, households and businesses that respond to statistical surveys.

The biennial work session on statistical data confidentiality, organized jointly by UNECE and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat), was hosted this year by the Basque Statistics Office, and covered topics ranging from international standards to the latest academic research in this field. The forthcoming round of population censuses in many UNECE countries was an important theme, as researchers are demanding increased access to census micro-data, whereas the public are becoming increasingly concerned with data privacy.

A special panel session discussed the merits of different disclosure control techniques, whilst other contributions focused on risk assessment and new software tools. The high level of interest in this work session confirms the importance that national and international statistical organizations give to data protection. ■

For more information contact Steven Vale (support.stat@unece.org).

PRESERVING THE BEAUTIFUL DANUBE

The beautiful Danube River, winding its way through the heart of Europe has been the home, highway and food basket for millions of people for centuries.

However, with numerous industrial facilities along its length, the river is also at risk. A single industrial accident along the Danube could have devastating effects on the people and environment surrounding the spill.

To prevent this from happening, the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (along with other organizations) is working with countries bordering the Danube to ensure the protection of the river.

Recently, Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia participated in a project consisting of workshops and an in-field exercise designed to address any problems in their response to an industrial accident along the Danube.

The September in-field exercise was particularly useful, giving the emergency services of the three countries the chance to test their response plans and to cooperate with their counterparts from across the river.

The in-field exercise was held near the towns of Prohovo in Serbia, and Gruia in Romania, which are situated only a few kilometres from the triple border separating the three countries. The exercise saw buckets of woodchips thrown into the water in order to simulate an oil spill on the river. The position of the "pollution" was tracked by emergency response crews in boats with the help of GPS devices.

Data was collected and analysed, lessons were learnt and improvements will be made to ensure that an industrial accident doesn't lead to disaster on the beautiful Danube.



The workshops and the in-field exercise were part of the Assistance Programme of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents. The Programme helps countries to increase their capacity to ensure compliance with the aims and goals of the Convention.

The Danube project is an example of the work of the Convention in ensuring a safe, clean environment for Europe. ■

For more information contact the Convention secretariat (teia@unece.org).

Not an official record - For information only

BUILDING CAPACITY ON UNFC IN CENTRAL ASIA, THE CAUCASUS AND MONGOLIA

A two-day workshop was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan on 10 and 11 December to build capacity on the United Nations Framework Classification for Fossil Energy and Mineral Reserves and Resources (UNFC) in Central Asia, the Caucasus and Mongolia.

The event was attended by representatives from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. This highly interactive workshop provided training on how the UNFC can be applied to both solid fuels/minerals and to oil, gas and uranium.

The UNFC is the only modern classification system in the world that has been developed to address both the minerals and the petroleum sectors using a single set of definitions.

The key strengths of the UNFC are: that it can be applied directly; that it provides a tool to map other classifications to one another; and, that it offers a set of globally harmonized terminology and definitions for both the minerals and petroleum sectors.

With one facilitator from the minerals industry and two representing the petroleum sector, the participants were able to benefit from detailed explanations of how the UNFC can be used in practice from a very broad perspective.

Case studies on application of the UNFC were delivered on behalf of the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate, RWE Dea AG and Statoil. Ukraine, which was the first country to formally adopt the UNFC for solid fuels and mineral commodities in 1997, shared its long experience in working with and applying the classification through presentations and interventions from senior representatives of the State Commission of Ukraine on Mineral Resources.



The UNFC has been designed to meet the needs of four key areas: international energy and mineral studies; Government resource management; industry business processes; and financial reporting. Application of the UNFC will lead to increased efficiencies and reduced costs. A presentation was provided on the plans of the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) to develop an International Financial Reporting Standard for Extractive Activities and the ongoing collaboration between IASB and UNECE on this issue.

The Workshop was organized using funds from the UNECE's Regional Programme for Technical Cooperation, as well as significant sponsorship from BP, Ernst & Young, Ross Petroleum, RWE Dea AG and Statoil. The event has now resulted in a new community being familiar with the UNFC – participants provided feedback on their intentions to organize national training seminars on the UNFC in 2010. ■

For more information visit http://www.unece.org/energy/se/docs/spf_wsDec09_Almaty.html or contact Charlotte Griffiths (reserves.energy@unece.org).

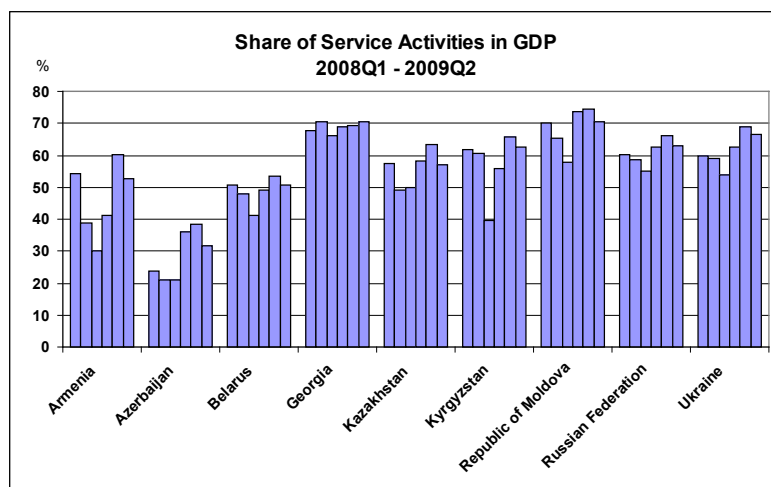
FACTS AND FIGURES

SERVICES GAIN IN SHARE DURING THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IN COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE, THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

Services account for some 70% of world gross domestic product (GDP) nowadays. In the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) the share of services has been noticeably lower until a year ago, in some countries less than 50%. Only in Georgia and the Republic of Moldova did the share of services reach 70% over the last few years.

When the economic crisis hit the EECCA countries in the second half of 2008, the manufacturing and construction sectors were the first to contract, rather severely in some countries. The services sector seems to have been more resilient to the downturn, at least initially, and its share in GDP rose across the region: in the first quarter of 2009 it accounted for more than 60% in GDP in seven EECCA countries.

The most dramatic changes were observed in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. In the second quarter of 2009, the share of the services sector was more than 10 percentage points higher than a year before in Armenia and Azerbaijan, and some 7 percentage points up in the last two countries. It remains to be seen whether this change will be a long-lasting one. ■



Source: UNECE Statistical Database (<http://www.unece.org/stats/data>) and national statistics. Quarterly data are not available for Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.