



United Nations

UNECE Weekly

Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 367 — 12-16 April 2010

UNECE WINS REGIONAL AWARD FOR IMPACT ASSESSMENT

On 11 April, UNECE received the 2010 Regional Award from the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA). The award was presented at the Association's annual conference, held in Geneva, with some 700 participants from around the globe.

UNECE was selected for this honour because of "its major contributions to the regional development of impact assessment, particularly through its role in the development and implementation of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (also called the Espoo Convention after the Finnish city where it was adopted in 1991) and related Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment"

The award citation declared that "practice under the Espoo Convention has strengthened application of environmental impact assessment" within countries that are party to the Convention, "as well as protected human health and the environment in countries that otherwise would have been adversely impacted" by development projects. The Espoo Convention requires that member States notify and consult each other on all projects that might have an adverse transboundary environmental impact.

The Secretary to the Espoo Convention, Nick Bonvoisin, accepted the award on behalf of Ján Kubiš, UNECE Executive Secretary. Mr. Bonvoisin emphasized that the Convention has promoted both environmental protection and international cooperation, and it is being applied increasingly frequently and to a higher standard. □



For more information, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/env/eia> or contact Nick Bonvoisin at: eia.conv@unece.org.

The Espoo Convention was adopted and signed in 1991 and came into force in 1997. The Convention now has 44 Parties – 43 States Parties plus the European Union – and has recently had a burst of growth, gaining Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina as members in 2009. The Convention's Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment requires one more Party for it to enter into force, with this expected later in 2010. The Protocol will ensure that Parties integrate environmental assessment into their plans and programmes at the earliest stages, so helping to lay the groundwork for sustainable development. The Protocol also provides for extensive public participation in the governmental decision-making process.

The IAIA Regional Award is given to an individual or organization that has made a substantial contribution to the field of impact assessment, or has taken a leadership role in promoting good practice in impact assessment, within the region of the location of the conference that year.



THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, BELARUS AND KAZAKHSTAN LAUNCH JOINT PROJECT TO COMBAT AIR POLLUTION

The Russian Federation in cooperation with Belarus and Kazakhstan announced on 13 April 2010 the launch of their joint project to implement and ratify the Heavy Metals, POPs and Gothenburg Protocols under the UNECE's Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP).

The project was launched during the 46th Session of the Convention's Working Group on Strategies and Review. The meeting was followed by a reception hosted by the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations Office in Geneva. Representatives from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan all reiterated their support for the project and emphasized the importance of improving air quality in the region.

The project, conducted in coordination with the LRTAP secretariat in Geneva, will assist the countries in developing national strategies to combat some of the most harmful air pollutants. The project aims at the implementation of best available technologies, emissions inventories and a policy framework to guide the reduction of harmful emissions of pollutants such as lead, cadmium, mercury, persistent organic pollutants, sulphur dioxide, and ammonia amongst others.

This initiative is part of the Convention's efforts to foster the implementation and ratification of the Convention and its protocols in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and

Central Asia. The Convention is conducting similar projects in South-Eastern Europe: in Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. □



For more information, please visit:

http://www.unece.org/env/lrtap/lrtap_h1.htm

or contact the secretariat at:

air.env@unece.org.

1ST MEETING OF THE PARTIES OF THE PROTOCOL ON PRTR GENEVA, 20-22 APRIL 2010

The first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the 2003 Kiev Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs), adopted under

the auspices of the Aarhus Convention, will take place in the Palais des Nations on 20-22 April 2010.

The Protocol is the first legally binding international instrument on pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTRs), its objective being to enhance public access to information through the establishment of coherent, nationwide PRTRs. The PRTRs established pursuant to its provisions will help to identify the biggest sources of pollution in communities across Europe and eventually further afield, including those emitting the main

greenhouse gases which contribute to climate change. The Protocol will serve as a key tool for citizens and public authorities to measure and combat environmental pollution, and will thus contribute to UNECE's efforts to mitigate climate change in our region.

The entry into force of the Protocol on 8 October 2009 was an important achievement. The first session of the Meeting of the Parties will be an equally important milestone, serving as an opportunity both to mark the progress achieved so far and to reflect on and plan for the challenges which lie ahead. The Ministerial segment of the meeting, which will take place during the afternoon of Wednesday 21 April 2010 and the morning of Thursday 22 April 2010, will include high-level panel discussions and will culminate in the adoption of a declaration and a number of key decisions which will set the future course of the Protocol. □

For more information, please visit:

www.unece.org/env/pp/mopp1.htm

or contact the secretariat at:

public.participation@unece.org.

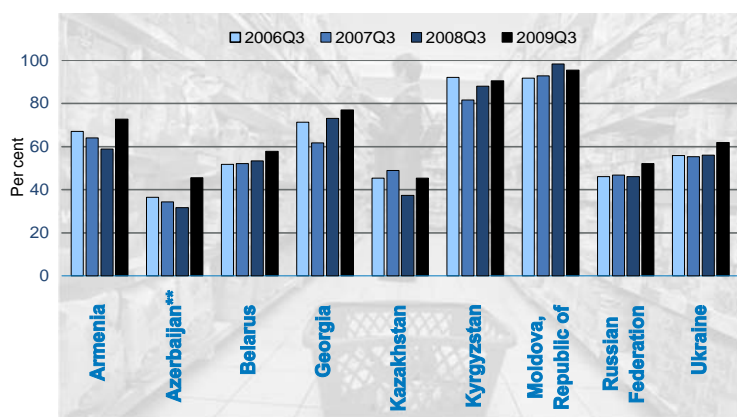
HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION GREW IN IMPORTANCE DURING THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

Household consumption has played an important role in the current economic crisis. During the crisis, as the other sectors of the economy have stumbled, the share of household consumption in gross domestic product (GDP) has risen. Although in most countries household expenditure has also diminished, the drop has not been as dramatic as in other sectors.

Household consumption includes all expenditure of households on goods and services. Their expenditures form the largest component of GDP in most Eastern European, Caucasus and Central Asian countries (EECCA). The share of household consumption usually amounts to more than 50 per cent of all expenditures in GDP.

In the EECCA area, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Kazakhstan provide an exception to this pattern. In these countries foreign trade (export or import) has traditionally accounted for the largest component of GDP. However, in the course of 2009 the share of household expenditure outgrew foreign trade in Belarus and Kazakhstan. In Azerbaijan the export of oil and oil products is the most important factor on the expenditure side of GDP, while the share of household expenditure used to add up to about one third of GDP. Also in Azerbaijan export decreased substantially in 2009, allowing the consumption of households to exceed 45 per cent in GDP. □

Household expenditure* in relation to GDP 2006-2009 third quarter (in percent)



*Including Non Profit Institutions Serving Households (NPISH).

** Data for Azerbaijan are for second quarter.

Source: UNECE Statistical Database (www.unece.org/stats/data), national statistical offices.