

**Economic and Social
Council**Distr.
GENERALTRADE/WP.6/2004/15
15 March 2005

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
INTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT**Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and
Standardization Policies

Fourteenth session, 22-24 November 2004

REPORT OF THE FOURTEENTH SESSION**Highlights**

At its fourteenth session, the UNECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies:

- Held a Round Table on Regulatory Cooperation in South-east Europe
- Held an International Workshop on Best Practices for National Quality Award Schemes
- Considered and supported the proposal for the “Earth-Moving Machinery Initiative”, as a project on regulatory convergence using the UNECE Recommendation “L” (“International Model for Technical Harmonization”).

A synoptic table of the regulatory priorities of the Balkan and the CIS countries, which was prepared for the Round Table, has been published as document TRADE/WP.6/2004/15/Add.1, which also contains programmes of the Round Table and the Workshop mentioned above.

All documents (including background papers and presentations at the Round Table and at the International Workshop) can be downloaded from the Working Party’s web site at <http://www.unece.org/trade/ctied/wp6/documents/wp6-04-list.htm>

INTRODUCTION

1. The Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) held its “Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Week” from 22 to 25 November 2004 in Geneva. The week included the Working Party’s fourteenth session (22-24 November), Round Table on Regulatory Cooperation in South-East Europe (22 November), International Workshop on Best Practices for National Quality Award Schemes (23 November) and a Task Force Meeting of the UNECE “Telecom Initiative” Project (25 November).

2. The following countries were represented: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

3. The European Community was also represented.
4. The following United Nations organizations and specialized agencies participated: the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.
5. The following intergovernmental organizations also attended: Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Interstate Council on Standardization, Certification and Metrology, and the International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML).
6. The following non-governmental organizations participated: the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC), the African Regional Organization for Standardization (ARSO), the European Committee for Standardization (CEN), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), the International Accreditation Forum, the International Federation of Inspection Agencies (IFIA), the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).
7. Representatives of the following countries participated under Article 11 of the terms of reference of the Economic Commission for Europe: Japan, Singapore and Sri Lanka.
8. Observers present at the invitation of the secretariat included representatives of private-sector companies, associations and educational institutions from western, central and eastern Europe, the CIS, North America and Asia. Among associations and educational institutions present were: the ESPRIX Award for Business Excellence, the Expert Institute of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, the Committee for European Construction Equipment (CECE), the Industry Cooperation for Standards and Conformity Assessment (ICSCA), the Romanian Association for Quality, the Yugoslav Union for Standards and Quality (YUSQ), the Ukrainian Association for Quality, and the University of Sussex (United Kingdom).

Item 1 Adoption of the agenda

9. The provisional agenda, as contained in document TRADE/WP.6/2004/1, was adopted.
10. The session was opened by the Director of the Trade Development and Timber Division, Ms. C. Cosgrove-Sacks. In her presentation, she highlighted the achievements of the Working Party during the past year.

Item 2 Election of Officers

11. Mr. C. Arvius (Sweden) was elected Chairman and Mr. D. Podhorsky (Slovakia) and Mr. V. Koreshkov (Belarus) were elected vice-chairpersons.

Item 3 Matters arising from the fifty-ninth session of the Economic Commission for Europe and from the eighth session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development

Documentation: ECE/TRADE/340

12. The Chairman of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (CTIED) highlighted the importance of the Working Party and its work to reducing technical barriers to trade and the interrelationship of this work with that of other subsidiary bodies under the Committee.
13. Subsequently, the secretariat reported on decisions taken by the Committee at its eighth session that related to the Working Party, including the approval of procedures and guidelines for subgroups and approval of the Working Party's new name and terms of reference. The Committee had requested all of its subsidiary bodies to take the results of these discussions into account in their programmes of work.
14. Among the areas consistently highlighted during the discussions related to the Working Party were: the importance of regulatory and standards convergence to trade; the need to improve market access and competitiveness, especially in transition economies; the importance of standards; assisting member States in managing change; and the need for a much greater emphasis on implementation.
15. The secretariat also drew the attention of the Working Party to the decision by the Committee to entrust the Working Party with organizing a Forum on regulatory cooperation in May 2006, during the Committee's annual session.

16. In addition, the secretariat noted the work done by the Committee to promote the Working Party's outputs and events through a network of national promotion organizations ("multiplier points") and a CD-ROM on "Norms, Standards and Practices for Trade Facilitation and International Business".

Item 4 Round Table on Regulatory Cooperation in South-east Europe

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2004/2
TRADE/WP.6/2004/7
TRADE/WP.6/2004/15/Add.1

17. The Chairman of the Working Party drew to the attention of the participants that in 2003, with the financial assistance from the Swedish International Development Agency, UNECE had started a project in the Balkan region to: (a) identify regulatory problems in trade; and (b) explore the feasibility of conducting a regulatory convergence dialogue among countries in the region. He added that in this region, discussions on regulatory cooperation took into consideration the Stability Pact's activities and were held in cooperation with its relevant bodies.

18. Regional experiences (including those of the Balkans) in good governance for regulatory practices had been discussed at the International Seminar that the Working Party had organized in conjunction with its thirteenth session in 2003.

19. The Working Party agreed that this dialogue and exchange of information on regulatory approaches needed to continue.

20. On 8 June 2004, a meeting of regulators from nine south-east European countries had been held in Ljubljana at the invitation of the Government. Participants had agreed on the importance of information exchange and close dialogue through the network established under this project and technical cooperation in areas where further actions had been identified (see annex to document TRADE/WP.6/2004/7). Documents and presentations from that meeting are available at the WP.6 web page http://www.unece.org/trade/ctied/wp6/other_events/other_events.htm

21. The purpose of the Round Table on Regulatory Cooperation in South-East Europe (22 November 2004) was to share information on regulatory priorities in countries of the south-east European region with a view to identifying areas for future regulatory cooperation (see TRADE/WP.6/2004/2 for the programme). A synoptic table of the regulatory priorities of the Balkan and the CIS countries, which was prepared for the Round Table, is contained in document TRADE/WP.6/2004/15/Add.1.

22. The framework for cooperation on trade-related issues under the Stability Pact was highlighted in the presentation from the Stability Pact Working Group on Trade Liberalization and Facilitation. The speaker was Mr. P. M. Wijkman, Technical Expert of this Working Group and Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South-east Europe.

23. The representative of the European Commission provided information which included the status of relations between the EU and individual countries in south-east Europe, agreements signed, and the progress of accession negotiations.

24. The representative of the CIS Interstate Council on Standardization, Certification and Metrology provided information on activities of the 12 CIS States that aimed at creating a harmonized standardization and regulatory framework (the list of the agreed CIS Regulatory priorities is reproduced in document TRADE/WP.6/2004/4). It was noted that these priorities included 29 regulatory projects (19 of which would be prepared on the basis of an existing EU Directive that covers safety requirements and conformity assessment matters).

25. During discussions, it was suggested that the Working Party could help identify best regulatory practices in order to assist any south-east European countries that were interested in implementing EU directives or using them as a basis for national technical regulations. A proposal was made to organize a training Workshop on good regulatory practices.

26. Representatives of regulatory authorities from south-east Europe presented the state of reforms in their legislative and standardization frameworks. The representatives also reported "success stories" in implementing and transposing EU directives (full texts of the presentations and of background papers submitted by the country experts are available on the WP.6 web page http://www.unece.org/trade/ctied/wp6/documents/wp6_04/roundtable/rt_doclist.htm).

27. Each south-east European country had prepared for the Round Table a background paper in which they identified their country's national regulatory priorities relating to approximation to EU directives, as well as areas where national regulators saw a need for additional technical regulations and where there was no existing EU legislation. The meeting noted with interest that these submissions would further stimulate dialogue on these regulatory matters.

28. During the discussion, issues were raised about the obligation of National Standards Bodies in the EU to transpose European standards as national standards and how that task could best be accomplished. It was noted that there existed about 12, 000 European standards, of which approximately 3,000 had the status of harmonized European standards linked to the implementation of EU New Approach Directives.

29. The Working Party:

- Recalled its previous decision – following the International Seminar on Regional Experiences in Good Governance for Regulatory Practices (with special reference to Balkan Countries) held at the 13th session in 2003 – on the necessity of continuing the dialogue and exchange of information on regulatory approaches.
- Complimented the Working Party office bearers on their initiative of looking into the issue of regulatory priorities both in the regional (UNECE) and subregional (south-east Europe) context.
- Thanked delegations from south-east Europe which had submitted information on their regional priorities: Albania (Ms. B. Haxhiu), Bosnia Herzegovina (Mr. Z. Bilbija), Bulgaria (Ms. O. Manafova), Croatia (Ms. Z. Horvatic), Republic of Moldova (Ms. N. Luskalov and Ms. M. Bizgu), Romania (Ms. A. Sandru), Serbia and Montenegro (Ms. L. Pavkovic Bugarski), Slovenia (Mr. S. Presern) and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Mr. Z. Grkov).
- Noted that countries of south-east Europe and of the CIS had indicated as a matter of high priority the adoption in their national regulatory frameworks of a number of EU technical legislative measures. The Working Party also noted that concern had been expressed that the lack of coordination between countries in the implementation of these regulations might lead to deviations in their application, which could create obstacles in trade.
- Requested the representatives of the EU – in view of the similarity between the regulatory priorities of most of the south-east European and CIS countries - to consider the feasibility of providing technical assistance to countries on a multilateral level to ensure coherent implementation of EU technical legislation by all countries in the region wishing to do so.
- Requested the secretariat to elaborate the necessary Terms of Reference for a “South-East Europe Regulatory Project” and continue its contacts with donors for further funding of this project with a view to addressing areas for future technical assistance as identified at the round table.
- Noted that the delegations from south-east European countries had identified the need for technical cooperation assistance from the UNECE in the following areas:
 - Governmental Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) to be concluded within the bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) between the Western Balkan countries;
 - Regulatory reform in areas where regulations of the ex-Yugoslavia (with mandatory standards and third Party certification) were still being applied (priorities to be further detailed by the western Balkan countries);
 - Implementation of the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (WTO/TBT);
 - International cooperation on agricultural products (classification, etc.) with forums such as the UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards.

Item 5 International Workshop on Best Practices for National Quality Award Schemes

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2004/3

TRADE/WP.6/2004/3/Add.1

30. The purpose of this Workshop was to draw the attention of policy makers to the importance of quality assurance schemes as a tool for increasing the quality of goods and services at a local level and for improving the competitiveness of companies on their export markets.

31. One way of promoting quality awareness is through national/regional quality awards. Such schemes already exist in many UNECE countries and the Working Party invited delegations to share experiences concerning these schemes.
32. The Workshop was opened by the WP.6 Chairman, Mr. C. Arvius, and by the Chairman of the UNECE ad hoc Team of Specialists on Quality Management Systems, Ms. R. Signe.
33. The European Foundation for Quality Management presented the procedures and requirement that must be met in order to participate in the European Quality Award.
34. The experience of Asian countries was highlighted in the presentation on the Singapore Quality award.
35. Further information on national quality award competitions was provided in detailed presentations from Belarus, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Switzerland and Ukraine (full texts are available on the following web page: <http://www.unece.org/indust/sme/qualityws.html>).
36. Companies exchanged experiences during the Round Table of Quality Award Scheme Winners organized as a part of the Workshop.
37. Delegates noted the importance of a further exchange of information on quality award schemes and, it was recalled that a questionnaire on this topic had been prepared for the November 2003 WP.6 session (document TRADE/WP.6/2003/10). As of 1 November, 21 countries had replied. Other delegations were invited to submit information on their national quality awards using this questionnaire.
38. As background documents, information on the Ukrainian State-supported competition on quality for the manufacturers of products (goods and services) – called “100 Top Products of Ukraine” – is contained in document TRADE/WP.6/2004/3/Add.1 and on the Polish Quality Award – in document TRADE/WP.6/2004/11.
39. As conclusions of the Workshop, the Working Party:
- ▶ Reiterated the importance of governmental support to quality management through organizing quality awards competitions, and promoting quality management standards and schemes as a means of raising the competitiveness of national industries and assisting consumers/users to have access to safe and quality products and services;
 - ▶ Recommended that interested Governments disseminate in their countries the information on national quality awards schemes and practices that had been discussed and presented at the Workshop;
 - ▶ Noted the importance of quality management activities for the countries in transition and requested the secretariat to continue consultations with interested countries, organizations, private-sector companies with a view to finding extrabudgetary resources to ensure that activities of the ad hoc Team of Specialists on Quality Management Systems could continue and be incorporated in WP.6 work.

Item 6 Review of developments in standardization activities and in the field of regulatory cooperation at the international, regional and national levels

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2003/3
TRADE/WP.6/2004/4
TRADE/WP.6/2004/Add.1
TRADE/WP.6/2004/6

40. The secretariat reported on the results of the “International Conference on Technical Regulations: national interests and international experiences”, organized by the Working Party in May 2004 in Kazan, Russian Federation, in cooperation with Federal bodies and the Government of the Tatarstan region. The conference had been attended by around 200 participants from the public and private sectors. It had addressed both general issues of regulatory reform in Russia, as well as matters related to the involvement of regional authorities, companies and consumers in consultations/regulatory work and mechanisms for that involvement. As a follow-up to this Conference, a round table on the role of technical regulations in economic integration was organized by the Russian Federal Agency for Technical Regulation and Metrology, together with the Working Party, on 6 December 2004 in Moscow.
41. The delegation of the Republic of Moldova, on behalf of the CIS Bureau for Standards, presented the document on CIS regulatory priorities (TRADE/WP.6/2004/4) and invited delegates to take part in the CIS annual meeting of standardization bodies to be held in Chisinau on 20-23 June 2005.

42. The Chairman recalled that at its thirteenth session, the Working Party had considered the draft text of an agreement between the 12 CIS member countries on the foundations for the harmonization of technical regulations (document TRADE/WP.6/2003/3). The Working Party welcomed the agreement as a practical means of facilitating and expanding trade and integration in that region. It was pointed out that the CIS agreement could provide an example of regulatory cooperation for UNECE member States not only in the area of harmonized technical regulations but also in the more general context of harmonization of legal and other procedures affecting trade or economic cooperation.

43. On behalf of the CIS Interstate Council for Standardization, Certification and Metrology, the delegation of the Republic of Moldova provided an update on the status of this agreement, informing the Working Party that it had been sent for comments to CIS Governments and that a final draft was expected to be ready in early 2005.

44. The representative of Ukraine presented document TRADE/WP.6/2004/6 on activities in the area of technical regulations and provided information on the latest legal developments including preparation of a new law on technical regulations, and achievements in meeting the targets of the State plan for standardization. Ukraine was actively working on technical regulations both at national and CIS levels. The CIS regulatory priorities foresaw the preparation of 29 intergovernmental model technical regulations, 15 of which were to be drawn up by the Ukrainian Committee of Technical Regulation and Consumer Policy.

45. The representative of Turkey provided an update on the legal changes required for the harmonization of Turkey's regulatory framework with that of the EU, current developments, and future challenges faced by Turkey in this process (document TRADE/WP.6/2004/4/Add.1).

46. The Working Party was given information on the latest institutional changes in Croatia where the existing State Office for Standardization and Metrology had been restructured into three independent institutions to deal with standardization, accreditation and metrology. These changes were to become operational as of 1 January 2005.

47. During discussions, it was brought to the attention of delegations that the Working Party supported regulatory reform and cooperation according to its "International Model for Technical Harmonization". A presentation followed on a study of quality and safety infrastructures in Africa, showing that because of the great differences among the legal and administrative systems on that continent the Model might be an optimal means of initiating a regulatory dialogue.

48. The Secretary General of ARSO, Mr. D.U. Agbanelo, provided an update on that organization's work in the region and on challenges faced by national standardizers and regulators. He expressed interest in obtaining more information on good practices, including the "International Model". A proposal was made that the Working Party might provide such assistance, for example, through the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). The Working Party was invited to present its regulatory activities to the ARSO General Assembly in February 2005.

49. The Working Party:

- ▶ Noted the presentations made by national delegations, international and regional organizations, the Commonwealth of Independent States, etc. regarding developments in standardization and regulatory matters and requested the secretariat to post this information on the WP.6 website as appropriate;
- ▶ Noted the outcome of the "International Conference on Technical Regulations: National Interests and International Experience" held in May 2004 (Kazan);
- ▶ Noted with interest the work on the identification of joint regulatory priorities done by the CIS countries within the framework of the CIS Interstate Council for Standardization, Certification and Metrology, as well as papers on regulatory priorities presented by the nine south-east European countries at the Round Table discussions (see item 4);
- ▶ Invited delegations to submit information on their future regulatory priorities.

Item 7 Coordination

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2004/5

ECE Standardization List

50. It was recalled that the Working Party had adopted the fifth revised version of the ECE Standardization List at its eleventh session and that the List had been published in 2002 as ECE/STAND/20/Rev.5.

51. The secretariat presented document TRADE/WP.6/2004/5, which contains proposals for the next revision of the List and its format. Discussions at the session showed that there was a logical link between standards and technical regulations in the further development of national and regional work and that this should be further considered in the revision of the List.

52. The Working Party

- ▶ Supported the idea of changing the scope and format of the next (6th) revision of the UNECE List by also including regulatory areas and product sectors where Governments see the need for a transnational dialogue on regulatory convergence matters. Such information might stimulate further regulatory cooperation, thus contributing to the elimination of technical barriers to trade and facilitating market access;
- ▶ Invited UNECE member State delegations and the WP.6 network of standards-developing organizations to forward their contributions to the 6th revision of the UNECE Regulatory/Standardization List to the secretariat by the end of April 2005;
- ▶ Requested the rapporteurs responsible, together with the secretariat, to prepare a proposal for the 6th revision of the UNECE Regulatory/Standardization List to be presented to the Working Party at its fifteenth session;
- ▶ Invited standards-developing organizations to report on progress made regarding standardization issues in the List and UNECE member States concerned to report on progress regarding cooperation on regulatory issues in the List in order to allow the Working Party to regularly review progress made on the issues in the UNECE Regulatory/Standardization List.

Environmental standardization

53. At its previous sessions, the Working Party considered information on “Environment: governmental participation in standardization work” with a view to increasing the transparency of government participation in related standardization work, as well as the national adoption and implementation of the resulting standards.

54. The Chairman drew to the attention of delegations that at previous sessions, the Working Party had received a number of submissions from member States on the participation of their governmental bodies in international standardization work in the environmental field and on the implementation of the resulting international standards as national standards in their countries (by the delegations of the Czech Republic and Sweden in document TRADE/WP.6/2001/5 and from Slovenia and Turkey in document TRADE/WP.6/2002/4).

55. The Working Party:

- ▶ Welcomed the continued collection of information on the participation of governmental bodies in international standardization work in the environmental area and the national implementation of international standards in this area;
- ▶ Invited UNECE member State delegations for further contributions in this regard;
- ▶ Requested the secretariat to create a special sub-section on the WP.6 website for the collection of this information and asked for further assessment of this information by the rapporteurs.

Item 8 Harmonization/ Regulatory Convergence

(a) Transposition and use of international standards

56. The Chairman recalled that at previous sessions, delegations had discussed the importance of the use of international standards by member countries, as well as of having access to information regarding the transposition of standards at the national level. The Working Party then considered the experience of national and international organizations in establishing mechanisms that enable implementation of international standards to be monitored on a national level.

57. At the session, OIML reported that it was beginning a process to review the use of its recommendations in national standards.

58. The Working Party:

- ▶ Welcomed a continued collection of information on the use of international standards by member countries and invited UNECE member State delegations to provide further contributions in this regard;
- ▶ Requested the rapporteurs to initiate work on a revision of the Recommendation on Reference to Standards (“D”) in the publication on UNECE Recommendations on Standardization Policies (ECE/STAND/17/Rev.4);
- ▶ Requested the secretariat to consult the ISO secretariat on the development of new definitions in the area of conformity assessment, etc. and to prepare a proposal for revision of the Recommendation on Definitions (“J”) in the publication on UNECE Recommendations on Standardization Policies (ECE/STAND/17/Rev.4).

(b) National horizontal legislation

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2004/6

59. The Chairman drew to the attention of delegations that at previous sessions the Working Party had considered information on national horizontal legislation concerning technical regulations, standardization and conformity assessment procedures, and had circulated reports from the following countries: Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden (document TRADE/WP.6/2001/6), Bulgaria (TRADE/WP.6/2002/9) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (TRADE/WP.6/2002/3/Add.1).

60. At the current session, Ukraine presented a document TRADE/WP.6/2004/6 with information on the reform of its technical regulation system, developing technical regulations on the basis of European New Approach directives, and, other related activities.

61. The Working Party:

- ▶ ▶ Agreed on the need for further information exchange on regulatory matters and noted that a round table on technical regulations with the participation of delegates from some CIS States and western experts would be held in Moscow on 6 December 2004 (see paragraph 40 above);
- ▶ Recalled that a number of UNECE member States had provided information on their national horizontal legislation and invited member States delegations to continue to provide information in this regard;
- ▶ Requested the secretariat and the Rapporteurs to create a special sub-section on the WP.6 website on this issue and requested further assessment of this information by the Rapporteurs.

(c) UNECE Recommendation “L” - “International Model for technical harmonization based on good regulatory practice for the preparation, adoption and application of technical regulations via the use of international standards” – regional and sectoral projects

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2004/7

62. The Chairman recalled that the “International Model” had been adopted in 2001, had been included as a new UNECE Recommendation (“L”) in the publication of UNECE Recommendations on Standardization Policies (ECE/STAND/17/Rev.4); and had been made available to delegations as a separate document (TRADE/WP.6/2002/7).

63. Since the thirteenth session, the Team of Specialists on Standardization And Regulatory Techniques (“START” Team) had continued to assist regional projects (in the CIS region and in south-east Europe) and sectoral projects (telecom and earth-moving machinery) that are based on the mechanisms and principles of the “International Model”. The Team held two meetings (March and September 2004) and at the latest meeting it agreed, inter alia, that a draft of the Common Regulatory Objectives (CROs) for earth-moving machinery be submitted to the Working Party.

64. Information was provided by the Moldovan delegation on the May 2004 Meeting of the CIS Interstate Council for Standardization Certification and Metrology, where participants had confirmed their interest in harmonizing the regulatory regimes of their countries. They intend to prepare uniform intergovernmental technical regulations, which would be implemented based on a framework agreement (following the principles of the “International Model”). Their priority areas for cooperation were those sectors/areas covered by the 13 EU “New Approach” Directives and by some EU “Old Approach” Directives as set out in document TRADE/WP.6/2004/4.

65. The Working Party:

- ▶ Noted with appreciation the successful development of its regional projects with the CIS (Agreement on harmonization of technical regulations) and with the Balkans (UNECE/SIDA “South-East Europe Regulatory Project”) and foresaw a positive impact on regional and international trade from these projects following their implementation;
- ▶ Requested its Team of Specialists on STandardization And Regulatory Techniques (“START” Team) to assist with existing and further sectoral initiatives by interested parties (e.g. regulatory authorities, industry, standardizers) and regional projects based on the “International Model”;
- ▶ Requested the secretariat and the Rapporteurs to start preparations for an International Forum on Regulatory cooperation and related international standardization matters to be held in 2006 as proposed by (the Bureau of) the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development;
- ▶ Recognized the significance of the UNECE Recommendation on an International Model for Technical Harmonization for facilitating trade and market access for member States;
- ▶ Requested the secretariat to investigate the possibility of working together with the other United Nations regional commissions, and other organizations, to promote the International Model on a more global basis. It also requested the WP.6 Bureau work with the secretariat to identify extrabudgetary funding to support this activity.

UNECE Earth-Moving Machinery Initiative

66. At its thirteenth session, the Working Party considered and endorsed a proposal from industry representatives for starting a sectoral project, according to the “International Model”, in the area of earth-moving machinery.

67. At the “START” meetings during 2004 the preparation of Common Regulatory Objectives (CROs) on the basis of ISO standards was discussed. The draft had been finalized and was submitted to the Working Party for consideration at the current session (see http://www.unece.org/trade/ctied/wp6/sectoral/earth-moving/earth_bkgrd.htm).

68. The Working Party:

- ▶ Thanked the Earth-Moving Machinery (EMM) industry representatives for the draft Common Regulatory Objectives (CROs) they had prepared following the principles of the “International Model”;
- ▶ Invited UNECE member States delegations to inform their competent regulatory authorities about the proposal for an EMM Initiative on regulatory convergence;
- ▶ Requested the secretariat to send a letter to UN member States to inform them about the EMM Initiative and to invite their regulatory authorities to join in regulatory convergence discussions in this area;
- ▶ Requested the secretariat to undertake the necessary arrangements for setting up an EMM Task Force and to make proposals for terms of reference for such a Task Force under the “START” Team;
- ▶ Requested the secretariat to invite the CIS Bureau for Standards to consider including the EMM CRO in the CIS list of regulatory priorities.

UNECE Telecom Initiative

69. The Chairman recalled that the “UNECE Telecom Initiative” had been launched in 2002, when representatives of telecommunication companies met under the auspices of UNECE and agreed on draft proposals for Common Regulatory Objectives (CROs) – as proposed in the “International Model” – for a number of the most popular portable products (GSM, IMT-2000, wireless LAN, Bluetooth, personal computers, public switched telephone network (PSTN) modems). The latest versions of these common regulatory objectives can be found at: http://www.unece.org/trade/ctied/wp6/sectoral/telecom/tele_cros.htm

70. In 2003, the discussions were joined by representatives of public authorities and it was proposed to establish a Task Force to implement this project. In November of that year, the Working Party formally established a “Telecom Task Force” under the “START” Team (for its terms of reference, see document TRADE/WP.6/2003/16/Add.2, annex 3).

71. The Chairman of the Telecom Task Force (TTF), Mr. N. Encarnação, reported on the activities of the Task Force in 2004, such as the informal meeting of the office bearers, the plan of action and the creation of a special web page for this project. He also said that the first European Commission report on Radio and Telecom Terminals Regulation (Report on the R&TTE Directive, see http://www.unece.org/trade/ctied/wp6/sectoral/telecom/docs/cec_recognize_ti.pdf) refers to the UNECE Telecom Initiative as being compatible with the “New Approach”. In summer 2004, an exchange of letters regarding the Telecom project took place between the UNECE and EU. The EU, at the Commissioner’s level, expressed its full support for this project.

72. A Task Force meeting was held on day after the current session, 25 November 2004, and discussed further actions to attract the attention of regulators on a global level to this project (e.g. within the CIS grouping).

73. 72.^(bis) The Working Party:

- ▶ Thanked all experts participating in the Task Force and asked the Task Force to continue its work with interested countries.
- ▶ Requested the Task Force to intensify its contacts with regulators in interested UN Member States and especially countries in transition in the UNECE region with a view to encouraging their involvement in the initiative.
- ▶ Invited UNECE member States' delegations to inform their competent regulatory authorities about the draft documents for the Telecom Initiative on regulatory convergence and request them to contribute actively to the enhancement and adoption of the proposed Common Regulatory Objectives (CROs).

Item 9 Conformity assessment

(a) Review of developments in conformity assessment at the international, regional and national levels

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2004/8

74. The delegation of France presented TRADE/WP.6/2004/8 containing a proposal to make an inventory of the mutual recognition agreements negotiated and concluded by UNECE member States in technical standards and regulations, and conformity assessment procedures. The paper also contained information on mutual recognition agreements concluded or negotiated by the EU. It was suggested that in the field of conformity assessment, such an inventory should cover acceptance of reports, certificates, authorizations and conformity marks. Its scope should be limited to agreements signed at a governmental level, either between Governments, administrations or agencies. It might include bilateral, regional, multilateral agreements, as well as unilateral agreements.

75. The secretary of ISO Policy Committee on Conformity Assessment (CASCO) provided an update on its latest activities (including on the latest guides prepared and a new guide on conformity assessment definitions ISO/IEC 17000:2004), as well as on its future programme of work.

76. Information was provided on the OIML Mutual Acceptance Agreement, which provides for the mutual recognition of calibration certificates (which was signed in 1999 and, after a transition period, entered into force in 2004).

77. The Working Party:

- ▶ Noted the presentations made and thanked the delegations of ISO/CASCO (Mr. G. Drake) and of OIML (Mr. A. Szilvássy);
- ▶ Thanked the delegation of France (Ms. M.-C. Poncin) for the proposal for a template to be used for collecting information on mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) between member States in the UNECE region (document TRADE/WP.6/2004/8). Member States delegations were invited to provide to the secretariat by the end of March 2005 information on government MRAs where their countries were engaged - according to the template.

(b) Accreditation

78. The representative of ILAC/IAF (Mr. D. Pierre, Director of COFRAC, France) provided information on its current activities and on cooperation with laboratories from eastern-European countries, European cooperation for accreditation and on assistance to developing countries.

79. The Working Party noted the information provided by the representative of ILAC/IAF on the current activities of the organizations mentioned above on cooperation with conformity assessment bodies from UNECE member States.

(c) Other issues

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2004/10

Environmental management standards

80. A representative of ISO/CASCO reported that on 15 November 2004 a new, revised standard ISO 14001:2004 had entered into force. An 18-month transition period had been given to companies that are currently certified under the former standard so that they could be re-certified in line with the requirements of the revised standard.

81. The Working Party reiterated its interest in the issue of environmental management standards and schemes and called on delegations to continue the information exchange in this area.

Forestry

82. The Chairman recalled that at its thirteenth session, the Working Party had started discussions on possible cooperation with the UNECE Timber Committee regarding forest certification.

83. The secretary of the Timber Committee presented a proposal for a Seminar on forest certification matters to be held in Geneva, tentatively in April 2005, in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization (as outlined in document TRADE/WP.6/2004/10) and invited the Working Party to share its experts' knowledge and experiences with the participants to this event.

84. The Working Party:

- ▶ Thanked the secretary of the UNECE Timber Committee, Mr. C. Prins, for information on the Committee's work on forest certification;
- ▶ Expressed its interest in further cooperation with the Timber Committee and requested the secretariat and office bearers to pursue further the proposal for a Seminar on forest certification;
- ▶ Invited interested delegations to participate in this event.

Organic agriculture

85. The representative of UNCTAD (Ms. Sophia Twarog) reported on developments with regard to the activities of the UNCTAD/FAO/IFOAM International Task Force on Harmonisation and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture. She highlighted the main results of the latest Task Force meeting held in Rome in November 2004. The Task Force would hold its next meeting in Nuremberg at the end of February 2005. She further presented the Task Force's future work on the comparison of available standards. Further information is available on the UNCTAD website (http://www.unctad.org/trade_env/itf-organic).

86. The Working Party welcomed the information presented by the representative of UNCTAD and noted that the UNECE "International Model" could be considered as one instrument in the efforts to find long-term international arrangements in this sector.

(d) Policy issues regarding quality assurance (including work within the ad hoc Team of Experts on Quality Management Systems)

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2004/3/Add.1
TRADE/WP.6/2004/11

87. Document TRADE/WP.6/2004/11 was presented by the Polish Committee for Standardization. It contained information on national quality promotion programmes, quality awards, use of quality management standards and related activities.

88. Information on activities carried out on the State level in Ukraine, aimed at improving the quality and competitiveness of products and implementing international standards, was provided in document TRADE/WP.6/2004/3/Add.1.

89. The delegation of Sweden reported on an ISO proposal, which was out for voting by 150 members, by the end of January 2005. The proposal concerned drawing up an international standard that will be guidelines for social responsibility for companies. The ISO members from Brazil (ABNT) and Sweden (SIS) are responsible for this work, which should be finalized in 2008. The resulting ISO 26000 guidelines on social responsibility would not be used for certification purposes.

90. The Working Party:

- ▶ Took note of the discussions held at the fourth meeting of the Team of Specialists on Quality Management Systems (22 November 2004), and interested delegations were requested to send their comments to the secretariat by the end of December 2004.
- ▶ Called for further considerations on a proposal for an integrated system of management standards (presented at the thirteenth session in document TRADE/WP.6/2003/12) bearing in mind the recent initiative in ISO on Social Responsibility.
- ▶ Expressed its interest in incorporating into its work the activities of the ad hoc Team of Specialists on Quality Management Systems provided some additional secretarial resources are provided.

Item 10 Market surveillance

Documentation: TRADE/WP.6/2004/14
TRADE/WP.6/2004/14/Add.1

91. The Chairman recalled that, based on the outcome of the International Forum on Market Surveillance held in conjunction with its twelfth session in October 2002, the Working Party had recommended that a Team of Experts should be established on market surveillance to consider issues of concern.

92. In September 2003, at the invitation of the Government of Slovakia, a workshop on “Market Surveillance in the Context of a Wider Europe: Current Approaches and Future Directions” and the first meeting of an ad hoc group of experts was held. The new group was given the title, “Advisory Group on Market Surveillance” (known as the “MARS” Group).

93. At its thirteenth session, the Working Party supported the activities of this new Group, and approved its terms of reference (TRADE/WP.6/2003/16/Add.2).

94. The Chairman of the “MARS” Group, Mr. D. Podhorsky, provided information about the activities of the “MARS” Group in 2004. He highlighted the main results of the joint “MARS” meeting with the Central European Free Trade Agreement countries’ market surveillance authorities in April 2004 in Slovakia. The discussions had shown the existence of common problems and concerns that required regional/international cooperation (see document TRADE/WP.6/2004/14). Background papers were prepared following the activities initiated by the “institute of facilitators” under the “MARS” Group to: (a) define issues for a checklist on market surveillance; (b) examine the possibility of adapting ISO 9000 to market surveillance; (c) develop a legal framework for market controls, etc. These papers are available at: http://www.unece.org/trade/ctied/wp6/index_wp6.htm.

95. Delegations were informed about the meeting of representatives of CIS market surveillance bodies held in Kiev in July 2004. Delegates from Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and the Republic of Moldova participated in this meeting. They had been informed about the “MARS” Group’s work and had expressed their interest in cooperating with UNECE on these matters.

96. Information was also provided about a conference on market surveillance that had been held in St. Petersburg in June 2004.

97. The delegate of Sweden informed the Working Party that Sweden had recently carried out a study of its present system of market surveillance. As a result, the Commission on the Organization of Market Surveillance had been examining a possible new structure.

98. This study had concluded that the strong role of the national sectoral authorities in Sweden must be respected and that they should serve as the focal points for communications with their market surveillance counterparts in other EU countries. Stronger coordination was also needed between authorities. The study further proposed that the role of the Council for market surveillance be strengthened, so that it might also become a forum for methodological discussion. The question of financing was also highlighted. The next step would be to present a bill to Parliament, probably in the first half of 2005.

99. The representative of France recalled that a document had been circulated containing an overview of the French system of market surveillance (TRADE/WP.6/2004/14/Add.1).

100. The representative of the Nordic Council reported on the Council's ongoing activities in the northwest regions of Russia related to market surveillance and consumer protection. A proposal had been made on cooperating with the Working Party on market surveillance matters, including the preparation of guidelines on good market surveillance practices. The practical details for such cooperation would be worked out with the "MARS" Group.

101. The Chairman of the "MARS" Group proposed to organize, in autumn 2005, a second International Forum on market surveillance in conjunction with the next Working Party session. He also announced that the Government of Slovakia was prepared to host the next meeting of the Group in Bratislava at the beginning of April 2005.

102. The Working Part was informed about contacts on issues related to market surveillance and about the potential interest of a number of organizations in contributing to such an International Forum, namely from ISO (CASCO and COPOLCO) and FAO/CODEX.

102. The Working Party:

- ▶ Noted the progress on market surveillance matters reported by the chair of the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (Mr. D. Podhorsky, President of UNMS, Slovak Republic);
- ▶ Noted with interest the planning for the next meeting of the Group and a third UNECE Workshop on Market Surveillance to be held in Slovakia in April 2005;
- ▶ Thanked all experts participating in the work of the Group and the Government of Slovakia for their support to that work;
- ▶ Took note of the document from France (Ms. M.-C. Poncin) containing an overview of the French system of market surveillance and of information provided by national delegations (Republic of Moldova, Slovakia, Turkey and Sweden);
- ▶ Noted information on the discussions at ISO CASCO on market surveillance matters and requested the secretariat and the Chairman of the "MARS" Group to continue liaison with the CASCO secretariat on market surveillance activities;
- ▶ Requested the secretariat to initiate discussions with the EU with a view to sharing experience regarding an information-exchange system on dangerous products in the UNECE region as a basis for market surveillance cooperation;
- ▶ Welcomed the initiative of the Nordic Council for possible further activities in market surveillance and noted that there was potential for synergies with the existing plans of the "MARS" Group and the Working Party to draw up general guidelines for market surveillance under the auspices of UNECE. The Working Party, therefore, welcomed cooperation in this matter.
- ▶ Supported the idea of organizing, in cooperation with interested organizations, a second International Forum on Market Surveillance in conjunction with its fifteenth session in October 2005. The secretariat and the Chairman of the "MARS" Group were requested to work out the detailed preparation for this forthcoming Forum.

Item 11 Metrology

103. The Rapporteur for Metrology (Mr. E. De Leer) reported on the latest developments in metrology area on a regional and global level. The representative of OIML highlighted the current work of his organization, new recommendations under preparation and revision, preparations for implementation of the OIML Mutual Acceptance Agreement, etc.

104. The Working Party thanked the Rapporteur for this presentation and requested that he provide the Working Party with his views on the feasibility of drawing up proposals for a UNECE recommendation in this field.

Item 12 Programme of work

105. The Chairman drew to the attention of delegations that the Working Party at its thirteenth session had agreed (a) to link the revision of its programme of work (and prioritization of the programme elements) to the UNECE budget cycle, and (b) to decide on its work programme on a two-yearly basis, with updates to be agreed during its sessions.

106. The current programme of work for 2004-2007 was outlined in a document submitted to the 13th session (TRADE/WP.6/2003/15).

107. The Working Party confirmed the general medium-term directions of work as outlined in document TRADE/WP.6/2003/15 taking into account current tasks agreed upon during the 14th session.

Item 13 Other business

108. The secretary of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development informed the Working Party about the Committee's recent practice of organizing its sessions parallel to sessions of its subsidiary bodies and about a Committee proposal to have such arrangements with WP.6 in 2006.

109. The Working Party:

- ▶ Agreed to the proposal from the Committee to hold its annual session in 2006 in parallel to that of the Committee (tentatively May 2006) and to organize on this occasion an International Forum on regulatory cooperation and related international standardization matters in cooperation with the Committee and other interested Principal Subsidiary Bodies of UNECE;
- ▶ Thanked its coordinators and rapporteurs for their work;
- ▶ Confirmed the following appointments of rapporteurs and coordinators:

<u>Rapporteurs:</u>	COORDINATION	MS. M. SAUNDERS	United States of America
		MS. O. MANAFOVA	Bulgaria
	HARMONIZATION	MR. C. ARVIUS	Sweden
		MS. L. ROMANOVSKA	Czech republic
	METROLOGY	MR. V. GEDROVICS	Latvia
		MR. E. DE LEER	Netherlands
	QUALITY	MR. P. KALYTA	Ukraine
		MR. A. HUSSEINI	Canada
	ACCREDITATION	MS. R. RING	Hungary
	MUTUAL RECOGNITION	MS. M.-C. PONCIN	France

<u>Coordinators:</u>	LIAISON WITH THE CIS INTER-STATE COUNCIL ON STANDARDIZATION, METROLOGY AND CERTIFICATION	MR. V. KORESHKOV	Belarus
	MARKET SURVEILLANCE	MR. D. PODHORSKY	Slovakia
	TELECOM INITIATIVE	MR. N. ENCARNÇÃO	Switzerland

- ▶ Entrusted the Working Party Office Bearers with taking the necessary actions to fill the existing vacancies for Rapporteurs;
- ▶ Took note of the tentative dates for its fifteenth session, 24 to 26 October 2005, and its sixteenth session in May 2006.

Item 14 Adoption of the report

110. According to the procedures established at its thirteenth session, the Working Party approved a “List of Decisions” at the fourteenth session. The secretariat was requested, in consultation with the Office Bearers, to complete the descriptive part of the report, taking into account the contributions made and the discussions held during the session.

111. The final report, including the list of decisions taken at the session, is contained in the current document (TRADE/WP.6/2004/15).

* * * *