

Our Working Party, the WP.6 has been working on market surveillance issues since 2002, when it held a first international forum. That successful event was followed by three others in 2005, 2007 and 2008.

These events were each attended by over 100 representatives from over 30 countries, as well as the European Commission, the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), the World Intellectual Property Organization, the World Trade Organization, the European Committee on Standardization (CEN), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and numerous business executives.

They generated growing commitment both by the authorities and by business to an efficient market surveillance system that could ensure that products fulfil mandatory requirements without endangering users, consumers or the environment and maintain fair competition.

To follow up on the concerns raised by the experts and the authorities a dedicated group was created within the UNECE: the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS).

The MARS Group has held yearly meetings in Slovakia from 2003 to 2012. In 2013 we met in Prague at the kind invitation of the Czech Republic. We are now meeting for the first time in Belgrade, and we would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade and Telecommunications of the Republic of Serbia for organizing this meeting. We are also thankful to the IPA 2010 Project “Strengthening of the Serbian System of Market Surveillance” and the GIZ-Open Regional Fund for South East Europe Foreign Trade Promotion for their assistance.

The work of the MARS Group has been very fruitful. In particular, its major outputs include, so far:

- The adoption in 2007, of Recommendation M on the “Use of Market Surveillance Infrastructure as a Complementary Means to Protect Consumers and Users Against Counterfeit Goods”;
- The adoption in 2011 of Recommendation N on “Good Market Surveillance Policies and Practices” which aims at guiding authorities in the set up and administration of a market surveillance system;
- The publication in 2011 of a “Glossary of Market Surveillance Terms” in English, French and Russian which will be useful in promoting an increased mutual understanding of national practices in the field of Market Surveillance
- The creation of a database of Market surveillance authorities which spans beyond the UNECE region to include also Brazil, and China, among others.

These deliverables were possible thanks to the unique approach of Working Party 6 to market surveillance. As many of you know, our Working Party has a broad mandate that encompasses market surveillance, as well as metrology, standards, technical regulations, conformity assessment, accreditation and related flanking issues – including risk management. This integrative approach is necessary, because all stakeholders need to be consulted in order to develop tools able to strengthen regulatory cooperation and facilitate the work of market surveillance authorities.

As the Chairperson of the WP. 6, I hope the MARS Group can be of assistance to national and regional market surveillance authorities in Member States, especially the Russian speaking ones, and I am very pleased that the EEC is represented here today.

I also hope that the MARS Group can work in closer partnership with other initiatives that are ongoing within the WP. 6, and in particular, the Sectoral Initiative on Equipment used in Environments with an explosive atmosphere. For those who are new to the WP. 6 activities, the Working Party is developing several initiatives to increase regulatory convergence at the global level in important sectors of economic activity. In the field of Equipment used in Explosive Environments we aim at increasing the safety of workers working in high-risk facilities and at the same time remove barriers to international trade. This sectoral initiative has expressed a continued need for guidance directed at authorities on how to deal with increased rates on non-conformity on the markets for these industrial goods and components. I hope the MARS Group can work more closely with this project in coming months.

Guidance for market surveillance authorities should be both cross-sectoral and specific to the industrial branches that are most affected. For this reason, I also encourage you and the MARS Group to continue to develop the General Market Surveillance Procedure. This guidance document will help authorities simplify and optimize their market surveillance tasks, allowing for sector-specific and country-specific adaptations. It will offer best practice in the preparation of market surveillance plans, as well as their implementation.

We have a very full agenda for the coming days. Today, this meeting starts with a frank discussion on recent developments in Market Surveillance in our countries and future plans for the work of the MARS Group. Tomorrow, we will join the Forum on Market Surveillance authorities of Serbia and South East Europe and we will hear presentations on the work of the authorities of the South East region. And finally on Friday we will conclude our work.

I really hope the coming days will be fruitful and will lay the ground for productive continuation of the work of the MARS Group going forward in the next few months. So, with this, I'd like to conclude, wishing you the best for the coming two days of work.