



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2006/12  
9 May 2006

ENGLISH  
Original: ENGLISH, FRENCH  
AND RUSSIAN

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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

COMMITTEE ON TRADE

Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation  
and Standardization Policies

Sixteenth session  
Geneva, 19-21 June 2006  
Item 10 of the provisional agenda

**WP.6 VISION, MISSION, STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR 2006-2009  
AND WORK PLAN FOR 2006-2007**

Note by the secretariat

This document contains a revised proposal for the Working Party's general strategy for 2006-2009 and outlines its work plan for 2006-2007. At its annual sessions, the Working Party will decide on the details of the work items.

This paper was discussed at the fifteenth session of the Working Party. This revised document is submitted for further discussion and approval.

The ranking of priorities for 2006-2007 are: (1) Higher: National practices and transnational cooperation in the area of Technical Regulations; and Market Surveillance; (1) Lower: Metrology; and (3) Medium: All other programme elements.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Many countries remain on the periphery of the European and the global economy. These include countries of the former Soviet Union of a Southeast Europe, as well as most developing countries. One of the principal objectives of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is to help countries become better integrated into these large economic frameworks. For instance, UNECE provides or supports a capacity-building workshops and training in good practices and governance in various subjects. There are particularly important in the areas of regulatory harmonization and standardization as they help create tools for presenting technical barriers to trade, as well as contribute to regional trade and economies integration.

2. The UNECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and standardization Policies comprises between 50 and 70 specialists from all over the world. The Working Party' major concern is to encourage all 55 UNECE member countries, whenever possible, to develop, adopt and apply converging regulatory, standardizing and conformity assessment approaches, technical regulations and standards, as well as conformity assessment procedures. Its main objectives are the safeguard of public health and safety, improvement of the environment, promotion of scientific and technological cooperation while at the same time minimizing technical barriers to international trade resulting from disparate standards and technical regulations and their applications.

## **II. OUR VISION**

3. Our vision is to achieve a predictable transparent, least restrictive, and converging regulatory environment for citizens and economic operators both nationally and globally.

## **III. OUR MISSION**

4. To improve the current legal and administrative framework to enable economic operators in countries, irrespective of their level of development, to trade in safe and reliable products and services to achieve open market-access.

5. To accomplish this the Working Party will:

(a) Develop supporting recommendations and good practices;

(b) Facilitate trade and market access through:

(i) Providing a platform for increased awareness through information exchange on national regional and international experiences on regulatory and standardizing issues;

(ii) Stimulating a dialogue on regulatory cooperation and convergence;

(iii) Encouraging the participation of all countries in international standardization;

- (iv) Promoting the use of international standards and guides in trade and in the economy;
- (v) Encouraging scientific and technological cooperation by developing policies for standardization and related activities;
- (vi) Keeping the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade informed of the Working Party's activities and deliverables.

6. All the above WP.6 activities will fully support the United Nations Millennium Development Goals: to further develop "an open, equitable, rules-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading and financial system"; "To create an environment – at the national and global levels alike – which is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty"; and to help integrate sustainable development principles in national policies (<http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/area552e.htm>)

#### **IV. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS, 2006-2009**

7. In the period of 2006-2009, the Working Party will:
- (a) Identify least trade-restrictive means for regulatory, standardization and conformity assessment action related to products traded in member States;
  - (b) Exchange experience and share information on developments in regulatory, standardization, market surveillance, conformity assessment, metrology, consumer and environmental protection policies relevant to member States;
  - (c) Review current recommendations and develop new ones to promote good standardization and regulatory practices and approaches;
  - (d) Promote national implementation of the recommendations, providing capacity building to countries, as necessary;
  - (e) Strengthen partnerships with the private sector and civil society in pursuit of development, consumers/users protection and poverty eradication;
  - (f) Liaise and cooperate with other organizations and agencies;
  - (g) Use our "ECE Regulatory and Standardization List" of sectors and product areas of interest to member States (ECE/STAND/20/Rev.5) to identify sector and areas where Governments see the need for further work on international standards and are interested in regulatory cooperation.;
  - (h) Keep our recommendations on standardization policies updated (ECE/STAND/17/Rev.4) to take stock of latest developments. Collect and disseminate information on good practices in regulatory and standardization policy areas including on market

surveillance and consumer protection and draw up recommendations as requested and agreed by our member States for the use of regulators and other stakeholders in order to promote efficiency in their operations while ensuring a minimum of trade-restrictive effects;

(i) Provide upon request, to countries in transition, and when relevant, to developing countries advice and assistance in implementing standards-receptive regulatory regimes in different areas and sectors. In particular, the Working Party will, in cooperation with interested governments and agencies, put in place programmes of assistance based on our Recommendation “L” and its “International Model for Technical Harmonization” (the text can be found in English, French and Russian on the following webpage: [http://www.unece.org/trade/ctied/wp6/major\\_dochtm](http://www.unece.org/trade/ctied/wp6/major_dochtm);

(j) Continue to cooperate with a wide number of organization on an international, regional national level, including organizations from the United Nations family as well as the groupings such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the European Union (EU) and European Free Trade Association (EFTA). The Working Part will also explore the interest of the regional commissions of the United Nations and other regional groupings in developing projects in their regions, based on the experience of the Working Part, beginning with Africa and Asia;

(k) Work with the private sector and non-governmental organizations, drawing their concerns to the attention of governments; and support market-based regulatory projects in consultation with/from industry.

## **V. WORK PLAN, 2006-2007**

### **A. TECHNICAL REGULATIONS AND STANDARDIZATION**

#### **International standardization and definitions of terms**

##### Objectives:

(a) To review on a regular basis standardization-related international, regional and national issues pursued by member Governments and international, regional and national standardizing organizations;

(b) To facilitate national practices for implementing standards;

(c) To provide technical assistance and training, as required;

(d) To keep up to date the “ECE Regulatory and Standardization List” of sectors and product areas of interest to member States, and the criteria according to which the List was drawn up.

Work to be undertaken

(a) To provide a forum for exchanging information and experiences on issues of concern to UNECE and United Nations member States, international and regional organizations, and representatives of business and civil society;

(b) To collect information on the participation of member States' public authorities in international standardization activities related to environmental protection and management, and on the extent of countries' progress in adopting and transposing the resulting standards. (We will place this information in a special subsection of our website);

(c) To complete the sixth revision of the "ECE Regulatory and Standardization List" based on an ongoing dialogue with member countries and international standardization organizations;

(d) To explore the interest of other United Nations regional commissions in using the principles and criteria laid down in the List for identifying the interest of the member States in standardization and regulatory cooperation;

(e) To take account of the new definitions by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) related to the field of conformity assessment and to prepare a proposal for a complementary recommendation to Recommendation "J" on "Definitions" as contained in the publication "Recommendations on Standardization Policies (ECE/STAND/17/Rev.4).

**National practices and transnational cooperation in technical regulations**

Objectives:

(a) To review on a regular basis issues related to national practices and transnational cooperation in technical regulations within the UNECE region;

(b) To facilitate good regulatory practice and regulatory cooperation;

(c) To provide technical assistance and training, as required;

(d) To update existing recommendations and prepare new ones to respond to needs of member States for regulators cooperation and related actions.

Work to be undertaken

(a) To provide a forum for exchange of information and experiences on issues of concern to UNECE member countries, other United Nations member countries, international and regional organizations, representatives of business and civil society in the area of technical regulation;

(b) To collect information on national horizontal legislation, structures and practices and to post this information on a special subsection of the website;

(c) To pursue sectoral initiatives in the areas of telecom. earth-moving machinery and pipeline safety according to the “International Model for Technical Harmonization”;

(d) To support new sectoral or regional initiatives for projects using the mechanisms and principles of the “International Model for Technical Harmonization”, in cooperation with interested Governments, international organizations and private operators;

(e) To revise Recommendation “D” on “Reference to Standards”, as contained in publication “Recommendations on Standardization Policies (ECE/STAND/17/Rev.4);

(f) To receive, evaluate and, when appropriate and financially possible, respond to requests for training and capacity-building from interested countries and organizations both from the UNECE and from other regions interested in the Working Party’ activities on promoting good regulatory practices and regulatory cooperation and to continue working with donors to obtain extra budgetary means for financing such projects;

(g) To organize an “international forum on common regulatory language for global trade” in conjunction with the annual of the UNECE Committee on Trade (June 2006) and to ensure a follow-up raised at this forum.

## **B. CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT**

### Objectives

(a) To review and promote harmonized international conformity-assessment principles and practices and international arrangements for the acceptance of conformity-assessment results;

(b) To regularly review trade-related work on conformity assessment in other international and regional organizations.

### Work to be undertaken

(a) To continue to provide a forum for the exchange of information and experience on conformity-assessment issues of concern to UNECE member countries, other United Nations member countries, international and regional organizations, and representatives of business and civil society;

(b) To review standardization and conformity-related quality and environmental policy issues, including national quality policies, eco-labelling and the use of management standards and systems (e.g. ISO 9000 and 14000), with particular reference to the needs of business operators in transition economies;

(c) To respond to requests for technical assistance and training on national conformity-assessment and accreditation systems, with special emphasis on problems in countries in transition and, if resources permit, in developing countries;

(d) To consider the use of ISO 9001:2000 and other quality management schemes in public administration;

(e) To gather information and analyse governments' mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) entered into by UNECE member countries and to promote good practices in this area.

### **C. MARKET SURVEILLANCE**

#### Objectives

(a) To review and exchange information on national market surveillance approaches and practices in UNECE member States;

(b) To promote guidance on good practices, including institutional frameworks, ensuring implementation of the related United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection as set out in General Assembly decision 54/449 of 22 December 1999;

#### Work to be undertaken

(a) To consider preparing guidelines on good practices in market surveillance activities, following proposals by the Working Party's subsidiary body in this area (advisory group on market surveillance ("MARS" Group));

(b) To ensure a follow-up to the International Forum on market surveillance and consumer protection (October 2005);

(c) To consider the revised proposal for a new recommendation on the use of market surveillance as a means to protect consumers from counterfeit goods, elaborated by the "MARS" Group and discussed at the International Forum in October 2005.

### **D. METROLOGY**

#### Objectives

(a) To exchange information on national metrology policies and practices in UNECE member States;

(b) To consider possible ways of establishing criteria for metrological procedures and harmonized recalibration requirements.

Work to be undertaken

(a) To continue providing a discussion forum for metrology issues of concern, with special emphasis on countries in transition;

(b) To maintain contact with interested UNECE member countries and metrology organizations (e.g. International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML) and Euro-Asian Cooperation of State Metrology Institutions (COOMET) to explore their interest in developing a new recommendation on guidelines for the methodology for measuring procedures.

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