Economic and Social Council

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Trade

Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies
Twenty-second session
Geneva, 7-9 November 2012

Report of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies on its twenty-second session.

Note by the secretariat

Summary

At its twenty-second session, the Working Party:

- launched the publication: "Risk Management in Regulatory Frameworks"

- held a Workshop on "Education on standards-related issues"

- approved a revised recommendation I "Introducing Standard-related issues into Educational Curricula"

- held a High-Level Segment on Regulatory Cooperation discussing President Obama's Executive Order of May 2012 on "Regulatory Cooperation", ongoing efforts towards regulatory approximation between the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Commission, and regulatory cooperation in the context of APEC.

Introduction

1.   The Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) held its twenty-second session from 7 to 9 November 2012. On 8 November, the meeting included a workshop entitled "Introducing Standards-related issues into educational curricula" and on 9 November, a Panel discussion on Regulatory Cooperation.

2. The following countries were represented: Belarus, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Spain, Slovakia, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine and the United States of America.

3. The meeting was also attended by a representative of the European Commission (EC).

4. The following United Nations body and specialized agency participated: UNISDR, UNIDO, ITU.

5. The following inter- and non-governmental organizations participated: Ingénieurs du Monde, International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), International Laboratory Accreditation Co-operation (ILAC), International Organisation for Legal Metrology (OIML), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN), IECEx Certification System and European Committee on Electrotechnical Standardization (CEN-CENELEC).

6. Observers present at the invitation of the secretariat included representatives of private-sector companies, associations and civil-society organizations from various regions.

7. The Director of the UNECE Trade and Sustainable Land Management Division and the Chair of the Working Party opened the meeting. They praised the work of WP.6, which they said directly contributed to advancing the goals of the United Nations, including the management of risks that confront our communities and sustainable development. Cooperation with other institutions would be of paramount importance for doing this. They also emphasized the recent achievements and challenges that WP.6 faced, making special reference to its limited resources.

I.   Adoption of the agenda

Documentation   ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2012/1 – Annotated provisional
                  agenda

8. The Working Party approved the provisional agenda.

II.   Election of the officers

9. In accordance with the Commission's rules of procedure and established practice, the Working Party elected Ms. M. Stoldt (Germany) as Chair, Mr. V. Koreshkov (Belarus) and Mr. J. Mihok (Slovakia) as vice-chairs and Mr. C. Arvius as Senior Adviser to the Bureau.

10. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to the outgoing Chair, who had been at the helm of the Working Party with dedication and enthusiasm for eighteen years. His actions had brought to WP.6 recognition and credibility throughout the UNECE region and beyond. The outgoing Chair and the new Bureau assured delegates that they would continue to work closely together.

III. Matters arising and areas of priority action for the Working Party

Documentation: ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2011/15 - Report of the Working
Party on its twenty-first session

ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2012/3 – Report of the annual
planning meeting of UNECE WP.6

11.   The secretariat introduced the report of the previous session and detailed progress made under the various work items intersessionally.

12.   The Working Party adopted the report and that of the Annual Planning Meeting of the WP.6 activities.

13.   The Director of the Trade and Sustainable Land Management Division informed delegations that member States had started a Review of the 2005 ECE Reform. The ongoing review aimed at ensuring that ECE continued to respond to the priorities of the member States. The process was expected to conclude in early 2013, so that decisions taken could be adopted at the UNECE spring session.

14.   During the review, member States had expressed their continued support for the work undertaken by WP.6. It was therefore likely that the WP.6 activities, and the resources allocated to the WP.6 within the secretariat would not be adversely affected by this process.

IV. Panel session on "Risk management in regulatory systems"

Documentation: ECE/TRADE/390 - "Risk Management in Regulatory
Systems"

ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2012/5 - Report on the activities
of the Group of Experts on Managing Risks in
Regulatory Systems

15.   The session was opened by the Chair of the WP.6 Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM) and Chair of the ISO TC "Risk Management", who officially launched the publication on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems. He praised the publication, which promoted a systematic approach and a framework for effective decision-making for governments in their regulatory work. He encouraged authorities to use these tools to ensure that the level of regulation was appropriate to address risks without causing unnecessary burdens and barriers to international trade.

16.   He added that the book was fully in harmony with the ISO standard "ISO 31000", which many countries had adopted as a national standard. The ISO standard provided a common language and approach to manage risks effectively and could be used by regulators to ensure that the regulatory process was transparent and inclusive in addressing risks.

17.   The secretary of WP.6 set the publication in the context of the activities and mandate of the Working Party.

18.   The Coordinator of GRM Group reported on the work the Group had done in 2012, which included organizing several webinars, adding five new members to the Group, developing two draft recommendations and carrying out research on EU and New Zealand legislation in the sector of electrical appliances. He also reported on his participation in the

EU panel on Risk Management, presenting the book to EU Parliament members. He presented the plan for activities of the GRM Group in the next year towards implementing the recommendations. The Working Party adopted the Progress report on the activities of the Group of Experts on Managing Risks in Regulatory Systems.

19. Presenting the publication in more detail, he said that the book was about how to build a regulatory framework that resulted in regulations proportionate to risks, and used risk management tools as an underlying process of any regulatory frameworks. He said that it was important reading not only for policymakers but also for businesses, to learn how to participate more actively in regulatory processes; for standardization bodies to prioritize their activities to the most critical risks and for conformity assessment bodies and market surveillance authorities to enhance coordination with other regulatory stakeholders.

20. The President of the G31000, a non-profit organization, explained that his organization had been created in a social network to raise awareness of the ISO 31000 standard. He presented a survey undertaken by his organization on the use of ISO 31000.

21. The Director of the Belarusian State Institute for Standardization and Certification introduced an expert system for assessing risks associated with standardization activities. He explained that standardization activities were risky as such, since they resulted from agreements and compromises while adopting decisions.

22. He said that the expert system could support decision-making by experts. Replying to a question, he explained that determining the acceptable level of risks in the risk-management process was a key issue. The level was determined by experts on the basis of coefficients that were dependent on specific types of risk. The system was updated regularly to make sure that the data and the coefficient were realistic.

23. A question came from the floor to the authors of the book, who were asked to which extent there was a need to promote the discoveries of the book (training and education) to see the impact of its results. The Chair of the panel replied that the main challenge was to reach legislators, and, in particular, to get them to understand the concept, the importance and use of its implementation, and then to talk to regulators. He gave an example of Australia where the process of introducing the concept of regulatory Risk Management both at federal and state levels had been successful.

24. The GRM Coordinator added that the last webinar had approved the idea of creating education courses for regulators with support of one of the members, a representative of the Institute of Risk Management in London, United Kingdom, but that there was still a need for an institutional framework.

25. The Working Party adopted the report of the activities of the GRM Group.

26. In closing the session, the Chair of the Working Party thanked the contributors to the panel session, and the authors of the book.

V. Workshop on "Introducing Standards-related issues into Education Curricula"

Documentation: ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2012/6 - Concept note for the Workshop on "Introducing Standards-related issues into Education Curricula", including a proposed model programme on standardization

ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2012/7 - Draft Revised Recommendation I "Education on standards-related issues"

27.   The Chair said that education on standardization, as a concept, brought together education and standardization as follows. Education was the foundation of economic development for countries and a thread that accompanied every one of us from childhood, through university and during our professional careers. Standardization was an unseen foundation of society, which preserved our safety yet was often only apparent to the public during catastrophes. She said it was essential to introduce standardization into the curricula of not only technical, but also non-technical, education programmes.

28.   She said that education and capacity-building were high priority activities within her organization, the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB), which had a number of ongoing projects in this domain, in collaboration with universities. In particular, the PTB had developed:

(a) an international graduate school of metrology

(http://igsm.tu-bs.de);

(b) an online course on quality infrastructure for sustainable development specifically suited for young professionals in trade and industry ministries in countries that were members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (www.ptb.de/de/org/q/q5/flyer/2011-12-08%20saarc %20flyer%20green%20final%20web.pdf);

(c) guides on a number of subjects including technical regulations, the national quality infrastructure system, accreditation, metrology, etc., which are available in several languages at: www.ptb.de/en/org/q/q5/pub.htm;

(d) a series of studies documenting the impact of interventions on quality infrastructure on growth, trade, innovation etc. based on a common methodology (www.ptb.de/de/org/q/q5/docs/broschueren/broschuere_Guide%207_measuring_the_impac ts_of_quality_infrastructure_e.pdf);

(e) weekly classes for young schoolchildren to introduce them to technical subjects.

29.   Speaking on behalf of the Executive Secretary, the Deputy Executive secretary of the UNECE noted that the United Nations had started pressing for education on standards as early as 1970. However, more than 40 years had passed with very limited progress.

30.   He encouraged Governments to do more to encourage universities and training institutions to increase and diversify the offer of courses and programmes in the area of standards.

31.   He pointed to the need to promote courses that highlighted the role that standards could play both for business efficiency and for addressing major policy issues. For example: climate change and global warming, measuring progress towards a more

sustainable use of resources, and integrating small and remote production hubs into global supply chains.

32.   Speaking on behalf of the Minister of Education of the Moscow Region, the rector of Moscow State Regional University, explained that in the Russian Federation, Federal State Educational Standards created a common educational space. Within this framework, universities could customize their programmes to respond to the needs of students and the job market.

33.   Federal State Educational Standards, he explained, did not include a requirement to include standardization as a specific subject, either as a separate programme or as a component of other disciplines. However, an analysis of curricula undertaken by the Ministry showed that standardization was taught in several universities and educational institutions but the offer was still insufficient.

34.   As a result of this analysis, the Ministry would make recommendations for reform, in particular concerning the inclusion of the basics of standardization in the programmes of higher professional education as well as of bachelor's degrees. This would start with a pilot project in the Faculty of Economics in Moscow State Regional University.

35.   The Secretary General of IEC said it was time for the next generation of executives, engineers, entrepreneurs, lawyers and regulators to better understand the strategic benefits of standardization. He said that tomorrow's leaders should have the competences to sit at the table where the rules for global trade are written and not let others write them instead. While education was expensive, not educating tomorrow's experts and leaders might cost economies and industries their competitive edge.

36.   He said that Europe was currently lagging behind and that many other countries-- especially in Asia--had developed strategies on education in standardization. Several European institutions were now showing their support for education about standardization. The European Council had encouraged Member States to improve the position of standardization in education programmes and academic curricula.

37.   IEC was playing its part, together with ISO and ITU, to actively promote the dialogue between academic institutions and the international standards community. Every year, the three organizations held the "Academic Week" and jointly participated in the activities of the Conference of the International Cooperation for Education about Standardization (ICES).

The perspective from academia

38.   The moderator of the session, the vice-president of the European Academy for Standardization (EURAS), said that standardization was starting to become a subject for mainstream courses, and was no longer only taught at a postgraduate level.

39.   The Dean of the Academy of Standardization, Metrology and Certification said that the Russian Federation had a track record of more than 50 years in teaching and training on standardization. She introduced the country's system of higher education, noting that standardization was present in education curricula in the form of special modules; special professional re-training; research programmes; and PhD programmes.

40.   Technical universities played a leading role in training bachelors and masters in standardization and metrology (with about 500 graduates per year) as well as quality management (with about 2,000 graduates per year). Standardization, Metrology and Certification courses were not compulsory for economists or lawyers. Economists may elect management courses which cover this subject. For lawyers, the offer was very scarce.

41.   The curriculum for managers included a reasonable "Standardization, Metrology and Certification" course, as well as a number of courses related to management systems, which

focused heavily on standards. Professional re-training helped fill the gaps of mainstream educational curricula and helped experts keep up to date with the developments of what is a dynamic and rapidly developing discipline. However, there was still a shortage of specialists in this field.

42.   An associate professor of standardization from the Rotterdam School of Management said that this shortage was also felt in Europe, where it was due mainly to: (a) the image of standardization as a dull subject, (b) the already overloaded university curricula, and (c) the fact that few professors and deans of faculty had expertise in the subject or were aware of its importance.

43.   To address these challenges, countries need to: (a) increase industry involvement, both to supply expertise to academia and to make its needs better known and understood, (b) include standardization in final attainment levels as compulsory, and (c) give teachers access to appealing examples and attractive teaching methods, such as the curriculum developed by the UNECE.

44.   He added that these actions should be developed within a coherent national policy and action plan, with appropriate resources and a national steering group, including representatives of government, industry and academia.

45.   A professor of Berlin University of Technology shared a success story from that university, where a growing number of students graduated from the standardization course, and simultaneously also received a DIN certificate.

46.   He agreed that, in general, it was hard to introduce new courses into curricula. To compete with existing courses, standardization needed: a clearly expressed demand from the industry; excellence in research; and the promotion of the course and subject matter within all faculties. Additional factors of success were: guest lectures, interactive presentations and close relationship to practice, including industry and national standardization bodies.

47.   Speakers agreed that an action plan for including standardization into educational curricula should take into account the structure of the national standardization system and education system, resulting in an appropriate combination of a "top-down" and "bottom-up" approach.

48.   Although a common format for education on standardization at the international level still appeared premature to several experts, in the future a formal common certificate could be introduced allowing experts to perform in the international standardization system. In concluding the debate, the session coordinator added that there were many free modules available online which could be used by professors.

Role of standards-setting bodies

49.   The IEC General Secretary, who moderated the session, noted that standard-setting bodies were impacted by the quality of education on standardization, since educated experts would produce better standards. He said that standardization bodies provided the very subject matter for courses in standardization. For these reasons, IEC/ISO/ITU and CEN/CENELEC all promoted the dialogue actively with academic institutions.

50.   The representative of ISO said that education was an important priority for his organization. This was reflected in their strategic plan. ISO encouraged university professors to participate in the standardization processes and attempted to connect to students by stimulating their interest and curiosity.

51.   Particularly important initiatives were: (a) the ISO award, which honours excellence in the work of universities, (b) the WSC Academic day, (c) developing and making available a significant number of case studies on the economic benefits of standards based

on a common methodology, and (d) providing access to a repository of teaching materials on standardization.

52.   ISO also cooperated with the University of Geneva by organizing a "Master's degree in Standardization, Social Regulation and Sustainable Development". The Director of that programme presented the concept of the Master's degree, which was unique of its kind in Europe, as it married the themes of sustainable development, participatory governance, and standardization.

53.   There was more demand for the course than the university was able to fulfil, and students did not find the content dull. The course had an interdisciplinary pedagogical orientation, including sociology, economics and other areas. The programme prepared students for work in international development agencies, NGOs, international organizations, national and international standard-setting bodies.

54.   The vice-president of CENELEC presented his organization's master plan on Education about Standardization. The objective of the master plan was to increase the number of people who understood the value of standards; to increase the competency of those who wanted to participate in the standards-making process; and to bring education on standards on the political agenda in Europe.

55.   The CENELEC master plan was based on the organization's policy on education in standardization, which had been adopted in 2010, and was effected through an annual implementation plan. The document: (a) defined "education about standardization", (b) presented the context and the challenges; (c) defined who the stakeholders were and (d) proposed main work streams and activities, both at a European level and at a national level.

56.   The plan combined two complementary approaches: top-down actions—i.e. working with intermediaries such as universities and research bodies to increase the offer of courses—and bottom up actions, i.e. actions to directly stimulate the interest of students and teachers. It also included three work streams: build capacity; engage key stakeholders; and reach target groups.

57.   It was open to cooperation with ISO, IEC and ITU as well as all stakeholders. Under the plan, in June 2012, CEN/CENELEC co-organized with ETSI in Brussels, the first European conference on education about standardization, attended by more than one hundred experts from national standards bodies, business community, academia, and authorities.

58.   The Chief of the ITU-T Study Groups Department explained that in 2010 ITU had decided to open its membership to academia and at present there were 49 academic institutions were ITU-Member Bodies. An ITU Ad hoc Group on Education about Standardization had been established and had held its first meeting during the Joint ITU-GISFI-DS-CTIF Standards Education Workshop (Denmark, October 2012). A second one will be held in Kyoto back to back with the Kaleidoscope conference in April 2013.

59.   Other activities undertaken by the ITU to raise awareness about standardization in the academic world were as follows:

        (a) the World Standards Cooperation Academic day organized together with ISO and IEC;

        (b) the publication of inputs from universities in the ITU-T Technology Watch Reports;

        (c) an award for the best paper on standardization;

        (d) having professors and students as observers in the ITU standards-development process;

(e) a series of lectures open to academia and students;

(f) an internship program.

Perspective of governments

60. The Vice-Dean of Mechanical Engineering Department of the Technical University of Sofia gave an overview of courses taught on quality management, metrology, management systems and other standardization-related subjects. She said that the university also has a PhD programme in standardization. She stressed the role of governments in supporting education bodies to participate in the standardization processes.

61. The representative of the European Commission concurred with other speakers that standardization was an essential policy component and that education had great potential to strengthen the standardization system, with a positive impact on development and innovation.

62. Recent initiatives taken at the European level had been as follows: (a) an EC communication on industrial policy, which clearly recognized the need to increase investment in human capital and skills (http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/industrial-competitiveness/industrial-policy/index_en.htm); and (b) a communication on "Rethinking education", which provided policy guidance to Member States, where standardization would be included as one of the key competences (http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking_en.htm).

Outstanding issues at the European level included: (a) the need for increased harmonization across the EU countries, although education was a national responsibility; and (b) a strategy to more effectively involve national standardization bodies in developing the content of educational modules on standardization.

63. A representative of UNIDO described her organization's activities in the area of capacity-building and education. The UNIDO research institute was currently developing courses on quality infrastructure, applying the "3 C" approach, which focused on competitiveness, conformity with market requirements and connectivity.

64. Additionally, UNIDO and the ISO had jointly developed a publication on conformity assessment ("Building trust"), which could be used for training purposes. UNIDO was supporting three training centres that provided educational services on testing, metrology and calibration, as well as on food testing, in Central Asia, Caucasus and the Western CIS.

65. The delegation of Belarus presented the work of the institute for qualification improvement in standardization, metrology and quality management. The institute cooperated with the national standards body of Belarus, Gosstandart, and also provided additional education for adults. It had a two-year programme for students, with a higher education diploma as well as a number of short courses. The programme included 500 hours in the class and 500 hours of work that students performed on their own. It featured courses on metrology, standardization and quality management.

The way forward: novel initiatives and the UNECE contribution

66. The moderator of the session, a professor at Hamburg University, Germany, noted the increased interest of stakeholders, including the standards-development bodies, in academic education on standardization.

67. An associate professor of Chubu University, Japan, presented her university's experience in teaching standardization. She then presented two board games that had been entirely developed from concept to final product by the students. One was aimed at familiarizing the public with symbols related to environmental standards; the other at showing the role of standards in everyday life. The two games – which many delegates had

played during the lunch break - were given as a gift to the UNECE secretariat from the students of the Chubu University.

68.   A representative of Porto Polytechnic Institute, Portugal, presented the master's degree programme of the Porto Institute in Integrated Management Systems, which included courses on quality management, audits and integrated management systems. One of the courses also presented the Portuguese quality system (e.g. standardization, metrology).

69.   She then presented "Project Juventude", which was launched in Portugal in 2008/2009 to promote a better awareness of the strategic importance of standardization to young people and to increase their familiarity with standards, including by developing educational cartoons.

70.   In France, the Ministry of Education was partnering with the national standards-setting body (AFNOR), to create a national network of trainers in standardization. To achieve the goal, it was important to provide access to standards at a very low price for educational purposes and provide teachers with valuable educational material.

71.   In a written note read out by the secretariat, the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia expressed its support for the efforts to include standardization in academic education. The Ministry also pointed out that such programmes should be voluntary.

72.   A representative of the Ministry of Education of Sweden said that, in her country, higher education institutions themselves decided on the structure of educational programmes. She said that it was not up to the government to make recommendations or encourage institutions to give a special course or introduce items into existing courses. Instead, other stakeholders, such as standardization bodies, the business community, etc. should express the needs in education on standardization and communicate these needs to the educational institutions.

73.   Several delegations expressed support for the point raised by Sweden.

74.   The secretariat then presented the "Model Programme on Standardization", (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2012/6) and invited delegations to comment on the document.

75.   One comment had been received in writing from the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova and was read out by the representative of that country. Expressing broad support for the document, the Ministry wished that the module on metrology could be broadened by introducing information on measurement standards, physical dimensions and units. Other aspects, in particular concerning the standards-development process and conformity assessment, should also be added.

76.   The WP.6 Vice-Chair expressed his support for the UNECE model programme UNECE. He reported that Belarus had carefully considered the document and had decided to implement a standardization programme in universities.

77.   The Belarus delegation then put forward several suggestions to improve the text of the document as presented by the secretariat. These would be reflected in a revised version to be distributed at a later stage. The delegation of Germany said that it found the programme to be very helpful and noted that issues related to standards and patents should be considered in the programme.

78.   A professor of the Erasmus University noted that the UNECE document was a good compromise but suggested adding modules on the role of standardization in innovation, and the role of science in standardization, and more emphasis on the standards-development process.

79.   A professor of TU Berlin suggested that the programme's title should be changed to reflect that the curriculum focused not only on standards but also other elements, including regulations and quality infrastructure. He also suggested that if the curriculum were to be adapted to different audiences, the balance between the different modules should be changed accordingly.

80.   In concluding the workshop, the Working Party:

- Thanked speakers and participants for their contributions.

- Decided that a new initiative on "education on standardization" should be established under the START team and entrusted the secretariat to initiate the necessary consultations to involve interested stakeholders in this project.

- Encouraged delegations to send further comments on the programme and on the text of the recommendation I by the end of December.

- Provisionally adopted the Recommendation I with a few amendments and requested the secretariat to upload it on the UNECE website:

- (http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=30034)

- Requested the secretariat to invite other UNECE sectoral committees and working parties (besides UN/CEFACT) to contribute to this cross-sectoral initiative.

- Also requested the secretariat and the Bureau to consider the feasibility of preparing and publishing a compilation of good practices (from governments, academia, standards-setting bodies, etc.) in this area.

V. Regulatory cooperation

A.   High-level segment on regulatory cooperation

81.   The representative of the United States said that when the Unites States regulatory approaches diverged from those of trading partners, unnecessary burdens and costs could be imposed on exporters, producers and consumers. The Executive Order 13609 (EO 13609) of the President, "Promoting International Regulatory Cooperation", seeks to reduce those costs by addressing unnecessary differences in existing regulatory requirements and preventing the creation of new ones. It was also intended to help promote good regulatory practices internationally, such as public consultation and regulatory impact assessment (RIA). The international regulatory cooperation effort was embedded into United States domestic efforts.

82.   A new institutional framework for international regulatory cooperation had been established, and the responsibility for coordinating those activities lay with the interagency Regulatory Working Group. The Executive Order also put new obligations on other regulatory agencies, including:

        (a) reporting annually on "international regulatory cooperation activities that were are reasonably anticipated to lead to significant regulations", as part of each agency's overview of regulatory priorities;

        (b) including in their retrospective plans to reform existing regulations certain regulatory reforms that would "address unnecessary differences in regulatory requirements between the United States and its major trading partners." Such a review could be initiated by agencies based on evidence provided by public stakeholders.

83.   United States activities in international regulatory cooperation included bilateral partnerships: (a) the High-Level Regulatory Cooperation Forum with the European Union, (b) the High-Level Regulatory Cooperation Council with Mexico and (c) the Regulatory Cooperation Council with Canada. The United States also participated in the work of international organizations, such as Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

84.   Responding to the question raised by the Chair of the GRM Group on how risk-management tools were applied within the United States regulatory system, he said that these executive orders stated explicitly that one had to base regulations on evidence and, where appropriate, an assessment of the risks to be addressed by regulations. There was also reference to RIA, as well as to other risk-management techniques. Regulatory activities in the US were based on longstanding practices of risk assessment and management.

85.   The Minister for Technical Regulation of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) presented Commission's achievements and ongoing work in standards and technical regulation. Achievements included the approval of the following: (a) a unified list of products subject to mandatory conformity assessment; (b) a schedule for the development of the Customs Union technical regulations and interstate standards; and (c) the Commission's rules of procedure in this area.

86.   The Commission's regulatory practice supported public consultation. Consultative committees and subcommittees—which included vice-ministers, business representatives and other stakeholders—prepared documents drafts, which were posted on the website for public review for a period of at least 60 days.

87.   Comments were received from the Customs Union, the CIS countries and other trading partners. Comments and suggestions on the draft technical regulation were also uploaded for public information. The documents were then discussed at least twice by an Advisory Committee that also reviewed the results of the regulatory impact assessment.

88.   When a new technical regulation was adopted, a corresponding list of standards for the fulfilment of the regulation requirements and for testing compliance with the requirements was drawn up. The list—which was also subject to public consultation—included preferably "interstate" standards adopted on the basis of international or European standards, except for cases when standards did not correspond to the regulator's goals or failed to take into account climatic and geographical specificities.

89.   The principle of mutual recognition applied to any test and any conformity assessment performed by a certification body in any of the three member States. A unified register of certification bodies and testing laboratories, as well as a register of issued certificates and declarations of conformity, was available online.

90.   Accreditation bodies worked independently on the basis of ISO standards ISO /IEC 17000 and in accordance with Decision № 768/2008/EC and Regulation (EC) № 765/2008. Efforts were ongoing to harmonize the Customs Union countries' national accreditation systems and to ensure international recognition of conformity assessment results.

91.   A common market surveillance system had been set up for the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space. It included independent national bodies responsible for surveillance in their country; an information system detailing such bodies and their operational scope; the development of national surveillance programmes and a common system of training for inspectors.

92.   Some more specific agreements relating to market surveillance were still being prepared. They specified requirements for market participants, e.g. producers, suppliers, and for stakeholders that perform conformity assessment. The next step would be to create an IT system to inform the market participants on procedures and hazards. Work was also

ongoing towards creating a policy of unified measurements on the territory of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space.

93.   The Customs Union considered international cooperation as an area of high importance, with an ultimate goal to realize the principle of "one requirement, one test and one certificate". It cooperates actively with Germany and with international standards bodies, including with IEC, especially on issues related to conformity assessment, methods of testing in radio-electronic objects, workshops and hands-on learning.

94.   The Chair of the APEC Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance (APEC SCSC) presented regulatory cooperation activities within the APEC framework.

95.   Regulatory cooperation aimed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of regulations and to build public trust. It was carried out within the Sub-Committee, which aimed at promoting alignment with international standards and conformance systems. The Sub-Committee had organized a number of activities including in the sectors of commercial buildings, electrical equipment, and the smart grid.

96.   It had recently focused on education, organizing a Conference on Innovative Education about Standardization and contributing to the WSC Academic Day in Bali, Indonesia. A new project including a training and exchange programme would start in 2013.

97.   Another important subject for the Sub-Committee was to develop a methodology to assess equivalence of technical regulations and standards, which should be based on the comparison of requirements and indicators used in conformity assessment. A conference on the equivalence of technical regulations and standards had been held in Moscow, in December 2012. In reply to a question from the house, the APEC representative said that risk management tools could be useful to determine equivalency, because if the level of remaining risk was the same, two regulations could be considered as equivalent.

98.   The representative of OECD asked how the benefits of regulatory cooperation could be quantified and how divergences that appear in the implementation of harmonized standards could be addressed.

99.   The representative of the United States said that there was not much information on the quantification of benefits. The approach of the United States, together with Mexico and Canada, was to rely on submissions from public stakeholders. The United States Administration expected to be able to develop some quantifiable estimates. Some regulations with impacts on the international trade would go through a cost-benefit analysis, so estimates would become available. Aggregate estimates, however, are unavailable.

100.   The United States representative recognized that divergences in how regulations were enforced could create unnecessary differences in regulatory systems of trading partners. In the post-regulation phase, examples of concrete action included the sharing of test results and providing common application procedures.

101.   A representative of the Russian Union of Manufacturers and Entrepreneurs (RSPP) explained that her organization, whose members create more than 60% of the country's GDP, has a dedicated committee on technical regulation, standardization and conformity assessment. It aimed at involving the industry in technical regulation reform in the Russian Federation and at increasing international cooperation in this field.

102.   She said that in 2011 her organization had formed the "Task Force 8". It strove for an EU-Russian Federation common market space, and increased mutual recognition of testing and certification of products.

103.   In 2012, the Task Force had developed recommendations for the approximation of the EU and Russian technical regulations system, both regarding so-called "horizontal

issues" (standardization, accreditation, market surveillance, conformity assessment) and technical regulations pertaining to specific industrial sectors of high priority. The recommendations would be presented in the form of a "White Book" to a summit meeting of Russian and EU leaders in December 2012.

104.   The organization was also actively engaged as a stakeholder in the negotiations between CEN/CENELEC and Rosstandard concerning their cooperation agreement (see below).

B. UNECE Sectoral Initiatives

Documentation: ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2012/8 - Progress report on
Sectoral Initiative on Telecom
ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2012/9 - Progress report on the
Sectoral Initiative on Earth-Moving Machinery
ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2012/10 - Progress report on the
Sectoral Initiative on Explosive Environments
Equipment

105.   In 2012, the Sectoral Initiative for Equipment in Explosive Environments continued promoting the Common Regulatory Objectives (CROs) that had been adopted by the Working Party in 2009. A presentation of the CROs had been made at the International Conference on Equipment and Services in Explosive Atmospheres in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in March 2011. The Emirates Authority for Standardization and Metrology (EASM) expressed interest in applying elements of the CROs in its legislation, in conjunction with IEC international standards and the IECEx-Scheme.

106.   Within the RSPP Task Force 8, a Working Group had been formed to develop proposals for the reform of technical regulation for this sector of the Customs Union and of the European Union. The Working Group had made a recommendation to both partners on using the CROs for the adaption of the legislation in the future.

107.   The 8th meeting of the Sectoral Initiative, which had taken place in Calgary, Canada, in September 2012, showed the strong support for the UNECE initiative by the IECEx community, IEC, the business sector and regulators. The Sectoral Initiative intended to organize workshops for regulators in South America, Europe and Asia.

108.   The "Telecom Initiative" had developed a proposal to apply the UNECE International Model to products within the Information and Telecommunications sector. Seven CROs had then been adopted by the Working Party in 2004. The CROs were good examples of trade-friendly regulations for these types of products; however, there had been little interest among United Nations Member States in implementing this approach in national legislation.

109.   The UNECE International Model can potentially find its use in the context of WTO negotiations in the sector of telecommunications, and this is the focus of the work within the Telecom Initiative for the moment.

110.   In 2003, the Working Party had set up an Earth-Moving Machinery (EMM) Sectoral Initiative. In 2004, the Sectoral Initiative had adopted a first model regulatory framework, which had been revised in 2009. More recently, it had begun work on a model certificate of conformity and on addressing "Risk Management" and "Market Surveillance". Since 2004, the EMM Sectoral Initiative has conducted training seminars to promote the project in China, India, the Russian Federation, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, the Republic of Korea and Viet Nam. The Sectoral Initiative is continuing to provide assistance to all of these areas.

111.   The Working Party adopted the Progress Reports on the Sectoral Initiatives on Explosive Environments, on Telecom and on Earth-Moving Machinery.

VI.   Standardization and regulatory practice

112.   The Secretary-General of IEC highlighted the important role of standards for regulators, and their wide use in governmental practice. For example, the World Bank stipulated the use of IEC international standards when it provided loans for capacity-building. He encouraged regulators to participate more extensively in the standards-development process, including by submitting proposals for new standards if needed.

112-1. IEC ran some programmes that could be used by governments to verify the safety and quality of products that entered their markets. These included the programmes IECEE E3 (electrical energy efficiency) and global motor labelling for industrial motors. He praised the results of the cooperation between UNECE and IEC and especially the IECEx system, referring to the first international conference on Equipment and Services in Explosive Atmospheres held in Dubai in February 2012.

113.   The delegation of Belarus added that in 2015 the IEC General Assembly would be held in Belarus.

114.   The Deputy Head of Rosstandard presented achievements and challenges for standardization in the Russian Federation. One of its main strategic directions was support to sustainable development, and its three major pillars: economic growth, environmental integrity and social equity.

115.   Cooperation with international and regional organizations was strong, in particular with IEC, ISO, CEN/CENELEC, EASC and APEC. Russian standards were 45% harmonized with international ones. For adopting international standards, translation into Russian was a longstanding and continuing concern.

116.   Russian experts participated in developing more than 60% of ISO and IEC draft standards. The most active sectors in which the Russian Federation was represented included oil and gas, IT, mechanical engineering and nanotechnologies. However, there were just a few technical committees and sectoral committees headed by Russians in the international standardization system. The Russian Federation would be hosting the ISO General Assembly in 2013.

117.   The Russian Federation was negotiating a cooperation agreement with CEN/CENELEC, which was expected to be signed by the end of 2012. The agreement would allow the Russian Federation to participate in developing CEN and CENELEC standards and vice versa. The country would adopt CEN/ CENELEC standards and withdraw any conflicting standards.

118.   Most of technical regulations of the Customs Union were based on EASC Interstate Standards. The Russian Federation participated in most technical committees of EASC. In 2012, EASC had adopted about 1,300 interstate standards, most of which had been developed by the Russian Federation. There had been a great increase in the number of interstate standards.

119.   The CEN/CENELEC representative provided an overview of their portfolio of standards and an update on current activities. These were focused on:

        (a) supporting national members in the implementation of the new regulation on European Standardization;

(b) international cooperation, particularly as regards strengthened cooperation with ISO and IEC and support for regulatory initiatives such as free trade agreements;

(c) technology and innovation, in particular SMART grids, energy efficiency;

(d) providing tools, services and expertise to small and medium-sized firms.

120. Another important development was the preparation of a cooperation agreement with Rosstandard, expected to be signed at the end of 2012. It would be part of a large network of agreements that CEN/CENELEC had with Europe's most important trading partners.

121. The aims of the agreement were: to make knowledge transfer possible and easier, and to enhance bilateral trade and investment opportunities by encouraging the use of identical standards in priority areas identified by industry players. Sectors that had expressed particular interest were: construction products (e.g. Eurocodes), medical devices, railways, and oil and gas.

122. The representative of the European Commission presented the "EU Standardization Package". The package comprised a "Political communication with a strategic vision on standardization for the next decade" (COM 311/2011) and a "Regulation on European standardization" (EU 1025/2012), which had been adopted by the European Council in October 2012. The regulation entered into force on 1 January 2013.

123. The regulation was set in the context of the EU "2020 Strategy" and built upon the success story of European Standardization. It aimed at:

(a) Promoting earlier availability of requested harmonised standards;

(b) Increasing the inclusiveness of standardisation process, especially as regards the representation of SMEs, societal stakeholders, academia and authorities;

(c) Confirming the role of standardization as a policy tool to support Union legislation and policies on both products and services;

(d) Reviewing ICT standardization, by allowing reference to selected ICT technical specifications in public procurement; (e) Aligning procedures for use of harmonized standards supporting Union harmonization legislation;

(e) Improving the legal basis for the financing of standardization, specifically as regards national standards bodies and European stakeholders' associations.

124. The regulation would require implementation work in the short, medium and long term, including a new Committee, a notification system for all stakeholders, and the adoption of a new vademecum on European standardization.

IX. Review of recent developments in conformity assessment and accreditation

125. The Chair of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) explained that ILAC and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) were global networks of accreditation bodies and other organizations involved in conformity assessment.

126. The two organizations aimed at: developing and harmonizing accreditation practices; promoting accreditation as an effective mechanism for providing confidence in goods and services; and supporting newly established accreditation systems.

127. IAF and ILAC maintain multi-lateral mutual recognition arrangements and strove to expand their coverage into all economies of the world. Currently the ILAC MRA had 77

signatories representing 65 economies, over 90% of global GDP, while the IAF MLA had 55 signatories, representing 52 economies. There were more than 43,000 ILAC accredited laboratories and about 6,600 ILAC accredited inspection bodies.

128.   The representative of ISO provided an update of ongoing work within the Committee on conformity assessment (ISO/CASCO). Current priorities in ISO/CASCO included: making participation more accessible to developing regions; monitoring the effectiveness of accredited management system certification; and promoting the use of the ISO/CASCO toolbox to regulators.

129.   Recent achievements included the publication of a guide on Good Practices on Market Surveillance and a standard applicable to bodies operating certification of persons.

130.   The representative of IEC presented recent IEC activities in the field of conformity assessment, focussing in particular on developments under the IEC conformity assessment schemes. The Quality Assessment System For Electronic Components (IECQ System) was responding to the growing problem of counterfeit electronic components; the International Electrotechnical Commission for Electrical Equipment (IECEE) had broadened its activities related to risk management and signed a memorandum of understanding with ILAC and IAF; the IECEx had continued its partnership with UNECE by organizing joint promotion activities to raise awareness of the UNECE common regulatory framework for equipment used in environments with an explosive atmospheres. The IEC representative added that work was underway to start new conformity assessment activities in the fields of wind turbines; marine energy converters and installations and systems approach.

X.   Market surveillance

131.   The Chair of the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS Group) reported briefly on the 10th anniversary meeting of the Group, held in Bratislava in September 2012. The meeting had discussed the achievements of the Group over the ten years of its existence, and plans for future activities.

132.   She then introduced the different information systems that market surveillance authorities could use in their work. In the European Union, these included the EU rapid alert system (RAPEX); the RASFF (Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed); the Rapid Alert System for medicinal products; and the Internet-Supported Information and Communication System for pan-European market surveillance (ICSMS). Information contained in the "Export Helpdesk" could also be of assistance. These databases contained information on the results of tests already conducted by partner countries and could save time and resources and the duplication of tests.

133.   Within the context of the Customs Union, the Integrated Information System of foreign and mutual trade (IISFMT) is a searchable database that includes information on products subject to mandatory conformity assessment, reference standards for customs union technical regulations and of the CU, and a register of the accredited laboratories and certifications bodies.

134.   She proposed the following elements could be part of the work of the MARS group for the future:

(a) the ongoing work within the European Union and the Customs Union;

(b) the development of a new publication with examples of market surveillance practice worldwide (with examples from EU, US, Asia, Africa, the CIS);

(c) regulatory equivalency within UNECE, exchange of best practice, including the guidelines developed for the purposes of Risk Assessment by MSAs;

(d) to support the work of the sectoral initiatives (CRO);

(e) further work on the Recommendation M;

(f) to explore the possibility of interlinking of the information resources used by market surveillance authority in the UNECE for further development of the UNECE market surveillance database.

135.   The convenor of the Market Surveillance Model Initiative explained the current status of the work. The model had been created in 2007, and refined in consultation with the MARS Group and other stakeholders.

136.   Recent updates referred to the sampling procedure. The extended model proposed the definition of "non-conformity rate" as the onset for reducing non-conforming products and counterfeit products on the international market. Future work could also focus on a "cost model" and "optimal survey sampling" techniques.

137.   A representative of ISO then introduced the ISO Committee on consumer policy (ISO/COPOLCO), which addressed consumer protection issues through standards. It organized annual workshop at different locations, the latest had been held in May 2012 in Fiji on the topic "How do consumers know what they are getting?", with 145 participants from 22 countries. UNECE had been represented at the workshop by one of the delegates of the GRM Group.

138.   The meeting had discussed the extent of the problem of counterfeiting and possible solutions. It had decided to create an ad hoc group that would investigate current initiatives against counterfeiting; perform a gap analysis and make recommendations for the 2013 COPOLCO plenary meeting.

139.   The representative of OECD spoke about current developments under the OECD Working Party on Consumer Product Safety, which had been created in 2012 to promote cooperation between Members and non-Members on product safety issues of mutual interest. The Working Party had adopted and started implementing a 10-point action plan to strengthen information sharing on product safety and launched a global portal on product recalls globalrecalls.oecd.org . The Working Party was now planning to further refine the portal, adding further languages, countries (including non-members) and stakeholders.

XI.   Metrology

140.   The representative of OIML gave a brief update on developments in his organization, which had seen the accession of seven corresponding and one full member in 2012. The OIML Conference, which is the main body of the Organization and met once every four years, had been held in October 2012 in Bucharest. It had, notably, approved the revision of a recommendation on "Considerations for a law on metrology".

141.   OIML had continued its activities in support of developing countries which included: an annual Round Table for Regional Legal Metrology Organizations; and the participation in assistance projects funded by e.g. UNIDO and others, such as the AFRIMETS metrology summer school.

XII.   Capacity-building

142.   No discussion under this item.

XIII. Other business

143. The Working Party set the dates for its twenty-third session: from 18 to 20 November 2013.

XIV. Adoption of the report

144. According to established procedure, the Working Party approved a list of decisions taken at its session. The list of decisions is available at: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/wp6/documents/2012/Decisions.pdf. It requested the secretariat, 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.