



UNECE ECTD: What's up this Autumn?

As Geneva is buzzing with meetings again, it is my pleasure to provide you with an update on what is planned for UNECE's Economic Cooperation and Trade Division (ECTD).

ECTD's prime mandate is to service a large normative machinery, producing recommendations, guidelines and standards – the type of soft law instruments and technical tools that can support countries in their efforts to maximize the benefits of international trade, investment and innovation. Between now and end 2023, ECTD will service the annual sessions of four Working Parties (WPs) and three Teams of Specialists (ToSs), here in Geneva, Switzerland.

In our Working Parties, delegates will have on their table for adoption:

- One *Recommendation* on Private Sector Participation in National Trade Facilitation Bodies (Recommendation No. 48; UN/CEFACT Plenary, 9–10 November 2023)
- Four new and ten revised *Agricultural Quality Standards* for e.g. asparagus, broccoli, kiwi, onions, peas, sweet potatoes, sweet chestnuts, dates, inshell pecan, pecan kernels, almond kernels, cashew kernels and certain parts of bovine meat (WP.7, 13–15 November 2023)
- One Gender and Salutation *Code Lists White Paper* (WP.6, 23–24 November 2023)

- One *Guide* on the Pros and Cons of Simplifying and Accelerating the Delivery of PPP Projects for the SDGs for Sustainable Economic Recovery and Reconstruction (WP.PPP, 30 November–1 December 2023)

In our Teams of Specialists, experts will provide their technical and policy expertise and deep-dive into:

- How to manage the interaction between innovation, experimentation and learning as strategic tools to promote transformative innovation for the digital and green transformations (ToS ICP, 22–23 November 2023)
- How to expand UNECE’s groundbreaking approach for transparency and traceability of ESG aspects in textiles and footwear to new sustainability hotspot sectors such as agri-food and minerals (ToS ESG TT VC CE)
- How to incorporate a gender perspective in standards for sustainability (WP.6 ToS-GRS, 27 September 2023)

ECTD will also be present throughout the Pan-European region, notably in UNECE’s 17 programme countries in Central Asia, Southern Caucasus, Western Balkan and Eastern Europe, supporting countries to harness the power of trade, innovation and investment for the Agenda 2030 and the United Nation’s SDGs. Among others, we will be in:

- Pržno, Montenegro, for our first ETIN Regional Conference on *The Role of Transformative Innovation in Supporting Green and Digital Transitions*, 20–21 September 2023
- Belgrade, Serbia, for our first in-person *Circular STEP Regional Policy Dialogue*, 18–19 October 2023
- Tashkent, Uzbekistan, for the *4th SPECA Working Group on Innovation*, held as part of the Innoweek, 18–19 October 2023
- Haifa and Tel Aviv, Israel, for our *SPECA Regional Training on Support Systems for Early-stage Startups*, 5–9 November 2023

We will also be in Bangkok, Thailand, co-hosting with UNESCAP our *41st UN/CEFACT Forum*, 2–6 October 2023.

ECTD will also provide country-specific capacity building and technical cooperation, including advisory services in and missions to our programme countries. Among others, we will deliver support on infrastructure investment/PPPs (Turkmenistan and Ukraine), innovation (Armenia and Ukraine) trade facilitation (Republic of Moldova) and agricultural exports (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan).

Last but not least, the ECTD team will engage in numerous networking and expert events, including:

- The 2023 WTO Public Forum, with one session co-organized by UNECE, and 3 others hosting UNECE colleagues, covering issue such as: *Harnessing Digitalization for Greener Supply Chains* and *How the Harmonized System of Codes can(not) support a circular economy*, this week in Geneva, Switzerland
- The High-level Summit of the Remaking Trade Project, in Villars, Switzerland, 16–17 September 2023
- The Economist Global Trade and Supply Chain Summit, Fireside chat: *Nothing left to hide—making products traceable in Dubai*, 19–20 September 2023
- The EURACTIV Conference with the TIC Council in Brussels: The EU’s Directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence - *Striking the right balance for business, consumers and investors*, 21 September 2023
- The Building Bridges Action Day, Fireside Chat *Innovate4SDGs: Financing for circular start-ups in emerging markets* in Geneva, Switzerland, 3 October 2023

- The XXVII World Road Congress, Foresight Session on *PPP and Sustainable Finance in Support of the SDGs*, Prague, Czechia, 3 October 2023
- UNFSS Academic Advisory Council and the World Trade Forum, hosted by the European University Institute in Florence, Italy, 12–14 October 2023
- The Venice Sustainable Fashion Forum hosted by Forum Ambrosetti in Venice, Italy, 26–27 October 2023

I hope you find our upcoming activities interesting and will find the time to join and contribute to UNECE's events and work streams.

With kind regards,

Elisabeth Türk

*Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe*
Email: elisabeth.tuerk@un.org

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Our mailing address is:

UNECE ECTD
Palais des Nations
Avenue de la Paix 14
Genève 1211
Switzerland

<https://unece.org>