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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Technical Harmonization and
Standardization Policies

Thirteenth session, 10-12 November 2003

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA
of the thirteenth session of the Working Party on Technical Harmonization
and Standardization Policies**

**to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
starting at 10 a.m. on Monday, 10 November 2003**

In conjunction with this session, an International Workshop on Good Regulatory Practices and Regional Experiences will be held on 10 November during the afternoon session and on 11 November during the morning session.

Documents and registration forms for the thirteenth session can be found on the Internet at:
<http://www.unece.org/trade/stdpol>

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| 1. | Adoption of the agenda | TRADE/WP.6/2003/1 |
| 2. | Election of officers | |
| 3. | Matters arising from the fifty-eighth session of the Economic Commission for Europe and from the seventh session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development | TRADE/2003/306 |

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| | (f) Ad hoc Team of Experts on Quality Management Systems | TRADE/WP.6/2003/12 |

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| 9. | Market Surveillance | TRADE/WP.6/2003/13 |
| 10. | Metrology | |
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| 11. | Programme of work | TRADE/WP.6/2003/14 |
| 12. | Other business | |
| | - Revision of Terms of Reference of the Working Party | TRADE/WP.6/2003/15 |
| 13. | Adoption of the report | TRADE/WP.6/2003/16 |

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Provisional timetable for the discussion of agenda items	
Day One	Items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 4 (Workshop)
Day Two	Items 4 (Workshop continuation) 7, 8 (a, b)
Day Three	Items 8 (c, d, e, f), 9, 10, 11, 12,13

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ANNOTATIONS

Introduction

1. The provisional agenda has been drawn up by the secretariat on the basis of: (a) the programme of work of the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies; (b) the relevant discussions or decisions adopted by the Working Party at its twelfth session (October 2002), the Economic Commission for Europe at its fifty-eighth session (March 2003), the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development at its seventh session (May 2003); and (c) the agreements reached by the Bureau of the Working Party (office bearers, coordinators and rapporteurs) at its meeting in Geneva in March 2003.

Item 1 Adoption of the agenda

2. In accordance with the Commission's rules of procedure, the first item on the provisional agenda is the adoption of the agenda.

Item 2 Election of officers

3. In accordance with the Commission's rules of procedure and established practice, the Working Party is expected to elect a Chair and two Vice-Chairs. It is recalled that Mr. C. ARVIUS (Sweden), Mr. V. KORESHKOV (Belarus) and Mr. M. PODHORSKY (Slovakia) were elected as Chair and Vice-Chairs, respectively, at the twelfth session.

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

4. The secretariat will report orally on the discussions held and decisions adopted by the Commission at its fifty-eighth session and on the results of the discussions during the seventh session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (May 2003). The report of the Committee session will be made available to delegations (TRADE/2003/306).

Item 4 International Workshop on Good Regulatory Practices and Regional Experiences

5. In view of the problems posed by the existence of regulatory-related technical obstacles to international trade, the WP.6 Bureau at its March 2003 meeting suggested giving these issues particular consideration at the current session. It was noted that good regulatory practices for the preparation, adoption and application of technical regulations is a priority for countries to facilitate trade and that an exchange of information on these issues between countries and relevant bodies would be useful.

6. The Workshop on Good Regulatory Practices and Regional Experiences will take place on 10 and 11 November 2003, the first two days of the session. It will present regional and national experiences with governmental policies for the protection of consumers/users, the environment and other legitimate objectives and provide information on how these policies are transformed into technical regulations and on their implementation at the sectoral level. Special emphasis will be placed on the infrastructure needed at the national level and on the legal and economic aspects to be taken into consideration by Governments. A transparent and open debate should help countries to understand better the variety of alternative regulatory measures available, including those with the least trade-restrictive impact.

7. Representatives of national Governments and of regional groupings engaged in regulatory activities will be invited to share their experiences. Special emphasis will be placed on the situation in the Balkan countries with a view to developing insights into a number of practical problems which create obstacles to trade and economic cooperation in this subregion. It is also expected that an analysis of the current Balkan experience would allow the Workshop to concentrate on problem areas and possibly to establish pilot projects on subregional/regional convergence, the results of which might be of interest to all UNECE member States. The Workshop is also open to representatives of the private sector so as to ensure involvement of all major actors.

8. These discussions will provide an opportunity to understand better existing approaches and positions. They should stimulate conceptual thinking on good regulatory mechanisms and practices. The identification of means to address regulatory concerns that do not unnecessarily restrict business and efforts to arrive at a mutual understanding of the criteria for initiating a regulatory convergence dialogue could further facilitate trade in the UNECE region

9. Recommendations from the Workshop will be presented to the Working Party for consideration and approval.

10. As background documents for this agenda item, the Working Party will have the provisional programme of the Workshop (TRADE/WP.6/2003/2), as well as submissions and presentations on national and regional experiences.

Item 5 Review of developments in standardization activities and in the field of regulatory cooperation at the international, regional and national levels

11. National delegations, international and regional organizations, the European Commission and the Commonwealth of Independent States are invited to report on their standardization and regulatory activities. If such information is available sufficiently in advance of the meeting, it will be issued as document TRADE/WP.6/2003/3.

Item 6 Coordination

ECE Standardization List

12. It is recalled that after discussions at its eleventh session in 2001, the Working Party adopted the fifth revised version of the ECE Standardization List which was published in 2002 as ECE/STAND/20/Rev.5. International and regional standardizing organizations included in the List are invited to provide updated information on their activities in the sectors mentioned in the List.

Environment: governmental participation in standardization work

13. At its previous sessions the Working Party considered information on "Environmental protection: environmental management" with a view to conducting an in-depth study of government participation in related standardization work, as well as of national adoption/implementation of the resulting standards.

14. Such information was provided at the eleventh session by the delegations of the Czech Republic and Sweden (document TRADE/WP.6/2001/5) and at the twelfth session by the delegations of Slovenia and Turkey (document TRADE/WP.6/2002/4). The Working Party has found these submissions useful and invited other delegations to submit such information to the secretariat.

15. The information, if available sufficiently in advance of the meeting, will be issued as document TRADE/WP.6/2003/4, together with any proposals by the Rapporteur on Coordination for possible further action.

Item 7 Harmonization(a) Role of international standards in international trade(i) UNECE Recommendations on Standardization Policies

16. It is recalled that in 2002 a new edition of the UNECE *Recommendations on Standardization Policies* (ECE/STAND/17/Rev.4) was published. At its twelfth session, the Working Party invited delegations to submit their comments/proposals on any of these Recommendations that might need to be revised or updated.

(ii) Transposition of international standards

17. At previous sessions, delegations have discussed the importance of the use of international standards in member countries and of having access to information regarding the transposition of standards at a national level. In this context, WP.6 had suggested that national organizations and/or government bodies which are members of international and regional standardizing organizations and which vote for the adoption of standards or recommendations should consider making a commitment to provide information on whether (or to what extent) these adopted standards, etc. are transposed and used in their countries. This, in the opinion of the Working Party, would show the level of commitment of national organizations to the transposition of these standards and the extent to which international standards are used as a tool for facilitating international trade.

18. A proposal to this effect, directed to UNECE subsidiary bodies, was submitted to the UNECE Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development and endorsed by the Committee. The Working Party will be informed about contacts with other UNECE subsidiary bodies concerning this proposal.

19. At its eleventh and twelfth sessions, the Working Party considered information on national horizontal legislation concerning technical regulations, standardization and conformity assessment procedures in some UNECE member States: 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). The Working Party decided to continue exchanging such information and invited delegations to make further country submissions, adding to this information on market surveillance legislation and on their practices for preparing, adopting and implementing technical regulations (whether they are adopted at a parliamentary or ministerial level) and how the implementation of regulations is controlled to avoid any potential conflict of interests.

20. These submissions, if available sufficiently in advance of the meeting, will be issued as document TRADE/WP.6/2003/5, together with proposals for action from the rapporteurs on harmonization.

- (b) 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” - sectoral initiatives

21. The “International Model” has been included as a new UNECE recommendation (“L”) in the publication of UNECE Recommendations on Standardization Policies (ECE/STAND/17/REV.4); and has also been made available to delegations as a separate document (TRADE/WP.6/2002/7).

22. It is recalled that at its eleventh session, the Working Party, noting the market need and the interest of Governments in further reducing trade barriers and facilitating market access, stated that the “International Model” could contribute to such a process by providing a voluntary framework for establishing sectoral agreements between interested member countries.

23. At its twelfth session, the Working Party considered information from the ad hoc Team of Specialists on STandardization And Regulatory Techniques (“START” Team) concerning its activities to assist with initiatives from interested parties (e.g. regulatory authorities, industry, standardizers) based on the “International Model”.

24. In particular, information was provided on the “Telecom Industry Initiative” suggesting that a dialogue might be started with regulators on the basis of the draft CROs (“common regulatory objectives”, as suggested in the “Model”) that had been drawn up by telecom companies. These draft proposals were placed on the WP.6 web page (<http://www.unece.org/trade/stdpol>, see under “START” Team, then “Telecom Industry Initiative”). The Working Party expressed its general support for this project and invited Governments to participate in these activities.

25. At its thirteenth session, the Working Party will be informed of the activities of the “START” Team since the twelfth session, contacts with CIS countries, progress with sectoral initiatives and other related activities (document TRADE/WP.6/2003/6).

(i) “Telecom Industry Initiative”

26. This project was presented during the UNECE Workshop on “Trade, Business and Investment in a Wider Europe” held in Geneva on 7 April 2003 and was commended by participants as a practical effort to contribute to the facilitation of trade in the UNECE region.

27. As a result of invitations sent by the secretariat to UNECE Governments and relevant ministries, several countries expressed their interest in this project. A meeting was held in Geneva in May 2003 with regulators from interested member countries to discuss the proposed draft CROs for telecom products. Further information on this project will be provided at the current session.

(ii) Earth-moving machinery

28. At the “START” Team meeting in March 2003 representatives of the earth-moving machinery sector expressed their interest in following the pattern taken by the telecom industry, namely to prepare draft common regulatory objectives for certain types of machinery and equipment and submit them for comment and consideration to interested Governments. The “START” Team agreed to help industry representatives in starting this project under the general auspices of the WP.6.

Item 8 Conformity assessment

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

29. National delegations, international and regional organizations are invited to report on developments in conformity assessment at the international, regional and national levels. If such information is available sufficiently in advance of the meeting, it will be issued as document TRADE/WP.6/2003/7.

(b) Problems experienced by economies in transition regarding conformity assessment procedures

30. The Working Party will continue to consider problems in conformity assessment and, in particular, those faced by countries in transition.

(c) Accreditation

31. The Rapporteur on Accreditation will present a paper on the latest developments in this area and, in particular, ongoing work in both international organizations (e.g. the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation and the International Accreditation Forum) and regional organizations (document TRADE/WP.6/2003/8).

(d) Environmental standards and related certification

32. A paper on the latest activities of the ISO TC 207 (ISO Technical Committee on Environmental Management) will be presented for information to delegations as document TRADE/WP.6/2003/9.

33. It is recalled that at its twelfth session the Working Party discussed issues related to the emergence of new environment-related technical barriers to trade and invited delegations to submit relevant information for further discussion.

34. The Working Party will be informed of the results of the UNECE Seminar on Strategies to Stimulate and Promote the Sound Use of Wood and Other Forest-based Products as Environmentally-friendly and Renewable Materials. This Seminar was held in Poiana Brasov, Romania, from 24 to 28 March 2003.

35. At the Seminar, a proposal was made to WP.6 to look into the possibility of starting a project on the harmonization of construction standards and regulations as a means of promoting the sound use of wood. (The report of the Seminar is available on the UNECE website under: <http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/docs/sem-1/sem-1.htm>) The Working Party will be informed of developments related to this proposal.

36. It is recalled that at its twelfth session the Working Party was informed of the results of a Conference on international harmonization and equivalence in organic agriculture held in Germany (Nuremberg) in February 2002. An UNCTAD/FAO/IFOAM task force was established in February 2003 to look into harmonization and equivalence in organic agriculture. The Working Party will be informed of follow-up activities in this area.

(e) Policy issues regarding quality assurance

37. At its eleventh session, the Working Party, noting the usefulness and importance of governmental quality programmes as a means of raising awareness and promoting quality matters, agreed to continue considering these issues and invited interested Governments to provide information on their experience and proposals for any further initiatives. At its twelfth session, information was provided on quality policies and programmes in Ukraine (TRADE/WP.6/2002/12).

38. National delegations and international and regional organizations are invited to report on their experience in introducing and implementing quality policy programmes and promoting quality management standards and schemes (TRADE/WP.6/2003/10).

39. The Rapporteur on Quality will analyse the information provided and prepare proposals, as appropriate (TRADE/WP.6/2003/11).

(f) Ad hoc Team of Specialists on Quality Management Systems

40. It is recalled that a Team of Specialists on Quality Management Systems was established in February 2002 under the auspices of the UNECE Working Party on Industry and Enterprise Development (WP.8), on the understanding that this Team will also report to and work closely with Working Party 6.

41. A representative of the Team will report on its activities in 2003 and on proposed areas of cooperation with the Working Party (TRADE/WP.6/2003/12). More information on the Team can be found at the following Internet address: <http://www.unece.org/ie/quams.htm>.

42. The rapporteurs on quality will submit proposals to the Working Party on possible future joint activities with the Team of Specialists on Quality Management Systems (see document TRADE/WP.6/2003/11).

Item 9 Market Surveillance

43. Following the outcome of the International Forum on Market Surveillance held in conjunction with its twelfth session, the Working Party recommended that a team of experts be established on market surveillance to consider the “list of issues of concern and suggestions” brought forward during the Forum and other relevant issues in order to assist Governments in developing effective systems for controlling the conformity, to applicable standards and regulations, of products in the marketplace (TRADE/WP.6/2002/17, paragraph 34 and annex 2).

44. This recommendation by the Working Party was endorsed by the Committee at its May 2003 session.

45. At the invitation of the Government, the first meeting of the Team of Experts will be held in Slovakia in September 2003. The Working Party will be informed of developments (document TRADE/WP.6/2003/13).

Item 10 Metrology

Standardization of test methods

46. It is recalled that at previous sessions the Working Party has discussed proposals from the rapporteurs for metrology on preparing guidelines for methodologies for measuring procedures (document TRADE/WP.6/1999/15 and TRADE/WP.6/2000/16) and on modalities for such work (TRADE/WP.6/2001/16).

47. The rapporteurs for metrology will report to the Working Party on the progress of this project.

Item 11 Programme of work

48. The Working Party will have before it, for approval and completion, a draft programme of work (TRADE/WP.6/2003/14), which was prepared by the secretariat, taking into account the decisions of the Working Party at its twelfth session (8 October 2002), of the Committee at its seventh session (May 2003) and the agreements reached by the office bearers, coordinators and rapporteurs at their meeting in March 2003.

Item 12 Other businessRevision of Terms of Reference of the Working Party

49. At its meeting in March 2003 the WP.6 Bureau decided to suggest to the Working Party that it revise its Terms of Reference to reflect in a better way the current scope of WP.6 activities. It is recalled that the present Terms of Reference were adopted in 1996. The idea of such a revision was supported by the Committee at its May 2003 session, at which it asked its subsidiary bodies to take into account UNECE global mandates and, in particular, those related to sustainable development.

50. The Working Party will have before it, for comments and approval, a proposal for revised Terms of Reference prepared by the secretariat and WP.6 office bearers (TRADE/WP.6/2003/15).

Item 13 Adoption of the report

51. According to a somewhat modified practice advocated at the Bureau meeting in March 2003, which is used by other UNECE working parties, it is recommended that the Working Party, at its thirteenth session, approve only a list of the main decisions. This list, together with a descriptive part to be drafted by the secretariat in consultation with the office bearers, will constitute the final report of the session (TRADE/WP.6/2003/16).

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