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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and
Standardization Policies

Fourteenth session, 22-24 November 2004

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

**for the fourteenth session of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation
and Standardization Policies**

**to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 22 November 2004, starting at 10 a.m.**

In conjunction with the fourteenth session, two events will be organized: a Round Table on Regulatory Cooperation in South-east Europe (on 22 November 2004 in the afternoon) and an International Workshop on Quality Benchmarking (on 23 November 2004).

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

1. Adoption of the agenda TRADE/WP.6/2004/1
2. Election of officers
3. Matters arising from the fifty-ninth session of the Economic Commission for Europe and from the eighth session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development ECE/TRADE/340

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| 4. | Round Table on Regulatory Cooperation in South-east Europe | TRADE/WP.6/2004/2 |
| 5. | International Workshop on Best Practices for National Quality Award Schemes | TRADE/WP.6/2004/3
TRADE/WP.6/2003/10 |
| 6. | Review of developments in standardization activities and in the field of regulatory cooperation at the international, regional and national levels | TRADE/WP.6/2004/4 |
| 7. | Coordination

- ECE Standardization List |

ECE/STAND/20/Rev.5
TRADE/WP.6/2004/5 |
| 8. | Harmonization

(a) Transposition and use of international standards

(b) National horizontal legislation

(c) 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” – regional and sectoral projects |

TRADE/WP.6/2004/6

TRADE/WP.6/2004/7 |
| 9. | Conformity assessment

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

(b) Accreditation

(c) Other issues

(d) Policy issues regarding quality assurance (including work within the ad hoc Team of Experts on Quality Management Systems) |

TRADE/WP.6/2004/8

TRADE/WP.6/2004/9

TRADE/WP.6/2004/10

TRADE/WP.6/2004/11
TRADE/WP.6/2004/12
TRADE/WP.6/2004/13 |

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| 10. | Market surveillance | TRADE/WP.6/2004/14 |
| 11. | Metrology | |
| 12. | Programme of work | TRADE/WP.6/2003/15 |
| 13. | Other business | |
| 14. | Adoption of the report | TRADE/WP.6/2004/15 |

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Provisional timetable for discussion of agenda items	
Day One	Items 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 4 (Round Table)
Day Two	Items 5 (Workshop) and 8 (d)
Day Three	Items 8 (a, b, c, e), 9, 10, 11, 12,13,14

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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 Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies; (b) the relevant discussions or decisions adopted by the Working Party at its thirteenth session (November 2003), the Economic Commission for Europe at its fifty-ninth session (February 2004) and the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development at its eighth session (May 2004); and (c) the agreements reached by the Bureau of the Working Party (office bearers, coordinators and rapporteurs) at its meeting in March 2004.

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 thirteenth session.

Item 3 Matters arising from the fifty-ninth session of the Economic Commission for Europe and from the eighth 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-ninth session and on the discussions during the eighth session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (May 2004). The report of the Committee session will be made available to delegations (ECE/TRADE/340).

Item 4 Round Table on Regulatory Cooperation in South-east Europe

Background

5. It is recalled that the Working Party in conjunction with its thirteenth session held an International Seminar on Good Regulatory Practices and Regional Experiences on 10 and 11 November 2003. (The report of the Seminar is contained in document TRADE/WP.6/2003/16/Add.1).

6. During the Seminar, participants were presented with regional experiences and approaches in different parts of Europe, Asia and North America. A special session was devoted to regulatory developments in the Balkan region, with regard to legal, institutional and regulatory related obstacles to intra-regional trade.

7. As an outcome of the Seminar, the Working Party agreed on the necessity of continuing the dialogue and exchange of information on regulatory approaches. The objective was to improve mutual understanding and confidence-building between regulatory authorities and to encourage and call upon regulators to, whenever possible, implement the least trade-restrictive means of meeting legitimate objectives.

8. With regard to the special funding provided to the UNECE for the participation of Balkan countries in this Seminar and follow-up activities in that region, the Working Party thanked the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) for the funding it had provided, and confirmed its desire to continue to provide technical assistance to the Balkan States to enhance their understanding and use of good regulatory practice in accordance with the regulatory techniques laid out in the "International Model" (Recommendation "L").

Round Table

9. The purpose of the Round Table to be held on 22 November 2004 is to review the progress made in establishing a network of appointed representatives from the Balkan States and in further defining the needs and priorities for regulatory convergence, as well as for technical assistance programmes, in the region.

10. Representatives of Governments from South-east Europe and of their regulatory authorities will be invited to share their experiences on current regulatory-related issues with a view to facilitating trade and economic cooperation in this subregion.

11. As background documents for this agenda item, the Working Party will have the provisional programme of the Round Table (TRADE/WP.6/2004/2), as well as submissions and presentations on national regulatory experiences.

Item 5 International Workshop on Best Practices for National Quality Award Schemes

12. At its previous sessions, 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.

13. At its thirteenth session, the Working Party also considered a proposal for an integrated management scheme (for details see agenda item 9 (d)) prepared by the UNECE ad hoc Team of Specialists on Quality Management Systems (QMS Team).

14. The Working Party, noting the importance of the matters raised by delegates, agreed to organize with the QMS Team a Workshop devoted to quality matters and related matters of particular interest to countries in transition. The Workshop will be held in conjunction with its fourteenth session.

15. The purpose of the Workshop is to attract the attention of policy makers to the importance of quality assurance schemes as one of the tools to increase the quality of goods and services at a local level and to improve the competitiveness of companies on their export markets.

16. Quality awareness could be promoted inter alia through national/regional quality awards. Such schemes already exist in many UNECE countries and the Workshop is aiming at sharing experiences concerning these schemes.

17. Information will be provided on responses made so far to the questionnaire presented at the November 2003 WP.6 session (document TRADE/WP.6/2003/10). Delegations are invited to submit information on their national quality awards in the format indicated in this document.

18. Policy makers from ministries, representatives of quality associations and of quality awards committees, of public bodies and private companies will be invited to share their experiences.

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

20. As background documents for this agenda item, the Working Party will have the provisional programme of the Workshop (TRADE/WP.6/2004/3), as well as submissions and presentations on national and regional experiences.

Item 6 Review of developments in standardization activities and in the field of regulatory cooperation at the international, regional and national levels

21. 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, as well as technical cooperation programmes with other countries or regions. If such information is available sufficiently in advance of the meeting, it will be issued as document TRADE/WP.6/2004/4.

22. At its thirteenth session, the Working Party considered the draft text of an agreement between the 12 CIS member States on the foundations for the harmonization of technical regulations (document TRADE/WP.6/2003/3). The Working Party welcomed the agreement as a practical means of facilitating and expanding trade and integration in that region. It was pointed out that the CIS agreement could provide an example of regulatory cooperation for UNECE member States not only in the area of harmonized technical regulations but also in the more general context of harmonization of legal and other procedures affecting trade or economic cooperation.

23. The CIS Interstate Council for Standardization, Certification and Metrology will be invited to provide an update on the status of this agreement and any associated work plan for elaboration of sector-specific legislation for the 12 member States of this grouping.

24. Delegations will also be informed of the results of the “International Conference on Technical Regulations: national interests and international experiences”, organized by the Working Party in cooperation with Russian authorities in May 2004 in Kazan, Russian Federation.

Item 7 Coordination

ECE Standardization List

25. After discussions at its eleventh session in 2001, the Working Party adopted the fifth revised version of the ECE Standardization List, which was then published in 2002 as ECE/STAND/20/Rev.5.

26. The Working Party may wish to begin preparations for the next revision of the List. It may also wish to consider the possibility of introducing in the scope and format of the List areas and sectors where Governments see the need for an international dialogue on regulatory convergence matters, with a view to avoiding technical obstacles to trade.

27. 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

28. At its previous sessions, the Working Party considered information on “Environmental protection: environmental management” with a view to increasing the transparency of government participation in related standardization work, as well as the national adoption and implementation of the resulting standards.

29. Information has already been provided by the delegations of the Czech Republic and Sweden (document TRADE/WP.6/2001/5) and Slovenia and Turkey (document TRADE/WP.6/2002/4). The Working Party also invited other delegations to submit such information to the secretariat.

30. The information, if available sufficiently in advance of the meeting, will be issued as document TRADE/WP.6/2004/5, together with any proposals by the Rapporteur on Coordination for possible further action.

Item 8 Harmonization(a) Transposition and use of international standards

31. It was recalled that at previous sessions, delegations had discussed the importance of the use of international standards by member countries, as well as of having access to information regarding the transposition of standards at the national level. In this context, the Working Party considered the experience of national Governments and international organizations in establishing mechanisms to enable the implementation of international standards on a national level to be monitored.

32. At the thirteenth session, the delegation of Israel presented the national standardization and regulatory system, including mechanisms for the use of relevant foreign standards in their national regulations; and the representative of the International Electro-technical Commission (IEC) highlighted major findings of the IEC study on the transposition and use of IEC standards at a national level.

33. At the fourteenth session, delegations and standardization bodies will be invited to provide information on the transposition and use of international and regional standards in their countries by their member bodies.

(b) National horizontal legislation

34. The Working Party has, at previous sessions, 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 has decided to continue exchanging such information and invited delegations to make further country submissions, and adding to this further 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 conflicts of interest.

35. These submissions, if available sufficiently in advance of the meeting, will be issued as document TRADE/WP.6/2004/6, together with proposals for action from the Rapporteurs on Harmonization.

(c) 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” – regional and sectoral projects

36. 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).

37. The Working Party will be updated on the activities of the Team of Specialists on STandardization And Regulatory Techniques (“START” Team) to assist with initiatives from interested parties (e.g. regulatory authorities, industry, standardizers) and regions based on the “International Model”.

38. The Working Party will be informed of the status of its regional projects in the CIS (agreement on harmonization of technical regulations) and in the Balkans (UNECE/SIDA “South-East Europe Regulatory Project”) and of its sectoral initiatives” in the areas of telecommunications and earth-moving machinery (document TRADE/WP.6/2004/7).

39. Regarding the ‘UNECE Telecom Initiative’ project, it is recalled that at its thirteenth session the Working Party endorsed the establishment of a Telecom Task Force to manage this project and adopted terms of reference for the Task Force (TRADE/WP.6/2003/16/Add.2). It also requested the secretariat to invite all interested United Nations Member States (according to Annex C, Article 2.1, of Recommendation “L”) to join the “Telecom Initiative”. The invitation was sent in April 2004, inviting interested countries to join the project.

40. The Working Party will be informed of the progress with this project and the preparation of the draft CROs (“common regulatory objectives”, as suggested in the “Model”). These draft proposals may be consulted on the WP.6 web page (<http://www.unece.org/trade/stdpol> under “sectoral initiatives”).

41. At its thirteenth session, the Working Party also considered and endorsed a proposal from industry representatives for starting a new sectoral project, according to the “International Model”, in the area of earth-moving machinery. Regarding this ‘UNECE Earth-Moving Machinery Initiative’, the Working Party will be invited to consider its further development under the “START” Team, and to invite responsible national authorities in UNECE member States to inform the secretariat of their interest in participating in a regulatory convergence dialogue on the basis of the proposals prepared by the industry.

Item 9 Conformity assessment

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

42. National delegations, international and regional organizations are invited to report on trade-related aspects of developments in conformity assessment at the international, regional and national levels. International organizations are also invited to provide an update on the current situation with regard to international guides, standards, etc. If such information is available sufficiently in advance of the meeting, it will be issued as document TRADE/WP.6/2004/8. Information exchange on the state of play regarding mutual recognition agreements in force between member countries in the UNECE region will be conducted, inter alia, with regard to the enlargement of the European Union.

(b) Accreditation

43. The Rapporteur on Accreditation will present a paper on the latest developments in this area and, in particular, on ongoing work both in international organizations (e.g. the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation and the International Accreditation Forum) and in regional organizations (document TRADE/WP.6/2004/9).

(c) Other issues

Environmental management systems

44. 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.6/2004/10.

45. It is recalled that at its previous sessions 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.

Forestry

46. At its thirteenth session, the Working Party was informed about the status of its cooperation with the UNECE Timber Committee regarding forest certification.

Organic agriculture

47. Developments with regard to the activities of the UNCTAD/FAO/IFOAM International Task Force on Harmonization in organic agriculture will be presented for consideration by the Working Party.

- (d) Policy issues regarding quality assurance (including work within the ad hoc Team of Experts on Quality Management Systems)

48. At its thirteenth session, the Working Party considered a questionnaire on national quality models, awards and practices for SMEs (TRADE/WP.6/2003/10) which had been designed for the purpose of collecting information and preparing comparative analyses.

49. The Working Party also considered a paper containing a proposal for an integrated management system (document TRADE/WP.6/2003/12). Such a system would incorporate requirements regarding quality, the environment, labour, social, corporate and other related requirements/responsibilities which, among other things, would allow small companies to include these aspects in their work and at the same time reduce their certification costs.

50. A number of issues were discussed concerning Quality Management Systems (QMS), as well as the link between national quality awards and international standards. It was agreed that further work would be required to reach practical solutions in this area.

51. National delegations and international and regional organizations are invited to report on their experience in introducing and implementing quality policy programmes and provide information as requested in the questionnaire (TRADE/WP.6/2003/10), as well as on their views on the proposal for an integrated management system (TRADE/WP.6/2003/12). If such information is available sufficiently in advance of the meeting, it will be issued as document TRADE/WP.6/2004/11 for discussions at the session and during the Workshop (see also agenda item 6).

52. The Rapporteur on Quality will analyse the information provided and prepare proposals, as appropriate (TRADE/WP.6/2004/12).

53. It is recalled that an ad hoc 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 would also report to and work closely with Working Party 6.

54. A representative of the Team will report on its activities in 2004 and on proposed areas of cooperation with the Working Party (TRADE/WP.6/2004/13). More information on the Team can be found at the following Internet address: <http://www.unece.org/ie/quams.htm>

55. One of the co-founders of the Team, Working Party 8, has recently changed the scope of its activities and, as a result, has asked Working Party 6 to explore its interest in and the possibility of its taking over the activity of this Team. Delegations will be invited to share their views regarding this proposal.

56. On the basis of this discussion, the Working Party will consider the status of its cooperation with the Team and the possible format and scope of future cooperation, including the possibility of incorporating the activities of the Team into the Working Party's programme of work. The rapporteurs on quality will submit proposals in this regard (see document TRADE/WP.6/2004/13).

Item 10 Market surveillance

57. It is recalled that, based on 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 issues of concern.

58. In September 2003, at the invitation of the Government of Slovakia, a workshop on "Market Surveillance in the Context of a Wider Europe: Current Approaches and Future Directions" and the first meeting of the ad hoc group of experts was held. The new group was given the title "Advisory Group on Market Surveillance" (known as the "MARS" Group).

59. At its thirteenth session, the Working Party supported the activities of this new Group, and approved its terms of reference (TRADE/WP.6/2003/16/Add.2). It requested delegations to inform their market surveillance agencies of the proposals made by the Group and invited interested States to participate in the Group.

60. The Working Party will be updated on the activities of the Group, and in particular on its joint meeting with representatives of CEFTA countries' market surveillance authorities, which was held in Slovakia in April 2004 (document TRADE/WP.6/2004/14).

Item 11 Metrology

61. The rapporteurs for metrology will inform the Working Party of the latest developments in metrology and of ongoing work in international and regional organizations which might be of interest, in particular for countries in transition.

Item 12 Programme of work

62. It is recalled that at its thirteenth session, the Working Party also agreed to link the revision of its programme of work (and prioritization of the programme elements) to the UNECE budget cycle and to decide on its work programme on a two-yearly basis with regard to updates agreed during its sessions.

63. The current programme of work for 2004-2005 was outlined in the document of the thirteenth session (TRADE/WP.6/2003/15).

Item 13 Other business

64. The Working Party will consider the work of its coordinators and rapporteurs and decide on their future tasks and scope of activities.

65. The Working Party will be informed of tentative dates for its meetings in 2005 and 2006.

Item 14 Adoption of the report

66. It is recalled that at its thirteenth session, the Working Party agreed that during its annual session it would only approve a list of the main decisions, on the understanding that the descriptive part of the annual report would be drafted by the secretariat, in consultation with the office bearers, taking into account the contributions made during the session.

67. The Working Party will therefore approve a list of the main decisions taken at the session. The final report will be published as document TRADE/WP.6/2004/15.

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