

## **Relations With International Organizations**

### **WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION**

The World Trade Organization came into being in 1995. One of the youngest of the international organizations, the WTO is the successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) established in the wake of the Second World War.

So while the WTO is still young, the multilateral trading system that was originally set up under GATT is already 50 years old. The system celebrated its golden jubilee in Geneva on 19 May 1998, with many heads of state and government leaders attending.

The past 50 years have seen an exceptional growth in world trade. Merchandise exports grew on average by 6% annually. Total trade in 1997 was 14-times the level of 1950. GATT and the WTO have helped to create a strong and prosperous trading system contributing to unprecedented growth.

The system was developed through a series of trade negotiations, or rounds, held under GATT. The first rounds dealt mainly with tariff reductions but later negotiations included other areas such as anti-dumping and non-tariff measures. The latest round — the 1986–94 Uruguay Round — led to the WTO's creation.

The negotiations did not end there. Some continued after the end of the Uruguay Round. In February 1997 agreement was reached on telecommunications services, with 69 governments agreeing to wide-ranging liberalization measures that went beyond those agreed in the Uruguay Round.

In the same year 40 governments successfully concluded negotiations for tariff-free trade in information technology products, and 70 members concluded a financial services deal covering more than 95% of trade in banking, insurance, securities and financial information.

At the May 1998 ministerial meeting in Geneva, WTO members agreed to study trade issues arising from global electronic commerce. The next ministerial conference is due to be held in the United States in late 1999.

In 2000, new talks are due to start on agriculture and services and possibly a range of other issues.

### **Structure**

The WTO has more than 140 members, accounting for over 90% of world trade. Over 30 others are negotiating membership.

Decisions are made by the entire membership. This is typically by consensus. A majority vote is also possible but it has never been used in the WTO, and was extremely rare under the WTO's predecessor, GATT. The WTO's agreements have been ratified in all members' parliaments.

The WTO's top level decision-making body is the Ministerial Conference which meets at least once every two years.

Below this is the General Council (normally ambassadors and heads of delegation in Geneva, but sometimes officials sent from members' capitals) which meets several times a year in the Geneva headquarters. The General Council also meets as the Trade Policy Review Body and the Dispute Settlement Body.

At the next level, the Goods Council, Services Council and Intellectual Property (TRIPS) Council report to the General Council.

Numerous specialized committees, working groups and working parties deal with the individual agreements and other areas such as the environment, development, membership applications and regional trade agreements.

The first Ministerial Conference in Singapore in 1996 added three new working groups to this structure. They deal with the relationship between trade and investment, the interaction between trade and competition policy and transparency in government procurement.

At the second Ministerial Conference in Geneva in 1998 ministers decided that the WTO would also study the area of electronic commerce, a task to be shared out among existing councils and committees.

## **VIII. II. UNITED NATIONS**

The United Nations is central to global efforts to solve problems which challenge humanity. Cooperating in this effort are more than 30 affiliated organizations, known together as the UN system. Day in and day out, the UN and its family of organizations work to promote respect for human rights, protect the environment, fight disease, foster development and reduce poverty. UN agencies define the standards for safe and efficient transport by air and sea, help improve telecommunications and enhance consumer protection, work to ensure respect for intellectual property rights and coordinate allocation of radio frequencies. The United Nations leads the international campaigns against drug trafficking and terrorism.

Throughout the world, the UN and its agencies assist refugees and set up programmes to clear landmines, help improve the quality of drinking water and expand food production, make loans to developing countries and help stabilize financial markets.

### **UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (UN/ECE)**

The UN/ECE plays a major role in a large number of transport areas within Europe. Whenever people move things or travel, they benefit from half a century of work by the UN/ECE to create international standards, harmonize national regulations, simplify border crossings and coordinate the development of road, rail and inland waterway transport systems and infrastructures.

To date, over 50 international Transport Agreements and Conventions and over 100 Vehicle Regulations have been negotiated under the auspices of the UN/ECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC) and its subsidiary bodies.

The international harmonization of traffic regulations and road signs and signals has been a permanent endeavour of the UN/ECE Inland Transport Committee since its creation in 1947 with the objective of facilitating international transport while improving its safety and environmental performance. The Conventions, European Agreements and Protocols established under the auspices of the UN/ECE have recently been thoroughly revised and updated with the intention of introducing stricter safety requirements, and their adaptation to new technological developments.

Road safety and the limitation of air pollution and noise caused by motor vehicles are permanent concerns of the UN/ECE. The UN/ECE has therefore established international technical regulations for road vehicles, and their equipment and parts, such as brakes, seat belts, windshields and exhaust pipes. Over 100 regulations established by the UN/ECE provide for equal safety requirements, and set environmental protection and energy saving criteria for governments and vehicle manufacturers in 32 countries. Moreover, these regulations reduce manufacturing and research costs, and remove obstacles to the international trade of motor vehicles.

To facilitate and develop the international movement of goods, the UN/ECE has negotiated a number of conventions to simplify and harmonize specific procedures at border crossings. One of the UN/ECE's most valuable contributions is the Convention on International Road Transport (TIR) signed in 1975. Under this system no frontier checks of the goods transported are made between the Customs offices of departure and arrival. This facilitates and speeds up transport, an important issue in, for example, the transport of perishable goods. While originally elaborated for European road transport, the TIR system has gradually been extended to other areas of the world, in particular the Middle East and North Africa.

The harmonization of transport infrastructures is another major area of activity of the UN/ECE in the field of transport. International infrastructure agreements provide the UN/ECE governments with the legal framework to construct and develop coherent international transport networks for road and rail. These include the following:

The European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR), signed in 1975

The European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC), signed in 1985

The European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC), signed in 1991, and the Protocol to the Agreement, signed in 1997

The European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance (AGN), signed in 1996.

Recommendations covering the transport of dangerous goods, including hazardous wastes and substances, are issued and regularly revised by a Committee of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the secretariat of which is in the UN/ECE.

These recommendations serve as a basis for national regulations as well as for international legal instruments covering the transport of dangerous goods by sea, air, rail, road and inland

waterways all over the world. The UN/ECE is responsible for the consistency between these instruments among them and between them and the Recommendations, and for the development of the Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) and by Inland Navigation (ADN).

The Inland Transport Committee has organized every five years road safety campaigns known as "Road Safety Week in the UN/ECE Region" in order to promote and stimulate concerted action to improve road safety in all countries of the region. The Third Road Safety Week took place from 1 to 7 May 2000.

The UN/ECE also gives technical assistance to the countries of central and eastern Europe who participate in activities undertaken within the Trans-European North-South Motorway (TEM) and the Trans-European Railway (TER) projects. Workshops, round tables and training courses for experts from the transition economies have been organized in the context of these two projects.

#### **IV. ECO ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION**

The ECO was established in 1985 as a trilateral organization of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey to promote multi dimensional regional cooperation with a view to creating conditions for sustained socioeconomic growth in the Member States. Its aims and objectives as its modes of operation were identical to those of its forerunner, the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) which remained in existence from 1964 to 1979. Subsequently, the organization was restructured and revived under the present name ECO.

The Treaty of Izmir signed in 1977 as the legal framework for the RCD and later adopted as the basic Charter of ECO was modified to provide a proper legal basis to ECO's transition from RCD at the Ministerial Meeting held in Islamabad in June 1990. Following the amendment in the Treaty of Izmir ECO was fully launched in early 1991.

The break-up of the former Soviet Union led to the independence of Republics of Central Asia and Caucasus. In their bid to open up to the outside world and as a manifestation of their urge to revive their historic affinities with the peoples of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, six of these Republics; namely Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan along with Afghanistan sought the membership of ECO and were admitted into the organization. The participation of these new Members in the activities of the Organization commenced after their formal accession to the Treaty of Izmir at an Extraordinary Meeting of ECO Council of Ministers held in Islamabad on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1992.

With its expansion in November 1992, from a 3 to 10-Members' Organization, ECO gained a new dimension and new role. Accordingly, there was a consensus at all levels of ECO Meetings that in order to enhance the effectiveness of ECO, fundamental changes were required in the structure and functional methodology of the organization. The fifth meeting of the Council of Ministers held in Ashgabat in January 1995 established a panel of eminent and competent persons to consider the issue of the reappraisal of the Treaty of Izmir and restructuring of ECO.

The Eminent Persons Group (EPG) after comprehensive deliberations finalized several recommendations and documents for submission to the ECO Council of

Ministers. The Council of Ministers approved the Group's recommendations in the form of ten documents on ECO's new organizational set up and functional methodology in Ashgabat on 11th May 1996.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on reorganization and restructuring of ECO was signed by the Foreign Ministers of ECO Countries at Ashgabat during the Summit Meeting on 14 May 1996. In pursuance of the above mentioned MOU, the Council of Ministers decided to hold an Extraordinary Session of the Council of Ministers in the city of Izmir for signing the revised Treaty of Izmir and Agreement on the Legal Status of the Economic Organization (ECO).

The Extraordinary Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers was held in Izmir, Turkey on 14 September, 1996, to finalize ECO's basic documents including its fundamental Charter, the revised Treaty of Izmir. The Council of Ministers also approved the Implementation Plan on Reorganization and Restructuring of ECO and witnessed the signing of the Treaty of Izmir and the Agreement on the Legal Status of ECO by the Ministers/Authorized Representatives of ECO Member States.

In the wake of the above, the following ten documents are being implemented to give affect to the new organizational structure of the ECO, beginning in 1997.

**1. Treaty of Izmir (amended)**

**2. Organizational Structure of ECO**

**3. Organizational Chart of ECO Secretariat**

**4. Agreement on Legal Status of the ECO, National Representatives and International Staff**

**5. Agreement between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and ECO relating to the Rights, Privileges and Immunities of the ECO Secretariat**

**6. Rules of Procedures of ECO**

**7. Functional Methodology of ECO**

**8. Economic Cooperation Strategy for the ECO Region**

**9. Staff Regulations of ECO Secretariat**

**10. Financial Regulations of ECO Secretariat**

**SECI SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN COOPERATION INITIATIVE**

The impetus behind the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) is encouraging cooperation among its participating states and facilitating their integration into European structures. SECI is not an assistance program.

It does not interfere with, but rather complements existing initiatives. SECI endeavors to promote close cooperation among the governments of the region and to create new channels of communication among them.

Furthermore, SECI attempts to emphasize and coordinate region-wide planning, identify needed follow-up and missing links, provide for better involvement of the private sector in regional economic and environmental efforts, help to create a regional climate that encourages the transfer of know-how and greater investment in the private sector, and assist in harmonizing trade laws and policies.

### **Structure**

SECI brings together regional decision makers to discuss mutual economic and environmental concerns through joint projects, meetings, conferences and project groups organized by the Agenda Committee, which is the motivating force behind the initiative. The Agenda Committee comprises the SECI National Coordinators, highranking government officials from each Participating States. The Agenda Committee is responsible for identifying common areas of concern relating to the economy and environment of the region, as well as proposing short lists of priorities on the basis of which projects will be planned and implemented.

SECI cooperates closely with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE), as well as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The ECE provides technical assistance to SECI and the needed expertise to the project groups. It brings together experts from the member countries and experts from international financial institutions under the auspices of the Coordinator.

The SECI Coordinator facilitates the creation of project groups which will make specific recommendations for action.

The Coordinator presents recommendations made by ECE to the Agenda Committee and leads the effort in their implementation. The Coordinator also mobilizes financial resources from bilateral and multilateral sources, including the private sector, as well as encourage the involvement of supporting states such as the US and EU that are willing to work together with SECI to achieve its goals.