

**International Regulatory Co-operation
and International Organisations**



The Case of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)



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By the UNECE Economic Cooperation and Trade Division



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Foreword

This study was developed in the framework of OECD work on international regulatory cooperation (IRC). It is part of a series started in 2014 that provides detailed overviews of the structure, governance, instruments and processes of international organisations (IOs) in support of international rule-making and standard-setting. To date the series includes the cases of the OECD, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

The case studies complement the report on *International Regulatory Co-operation: The Role of International Organisations in Fostering Better Rules of Globalisation*, which compares the governance modalities and rule-making processes of 50 different IOs in enabling IRC between their Members. They aim to illustrate with greater in-depth and specific evidence the key features, challenges and successes of IOs in setting global rules, and to point out more subtle features of individual organisation that cannot stand out from a broader comparative analysis.

This work is the result of a two-year process that involved discussions on the role of IOs in fostering better rules of globalisation as part of meetings convened annually by the OECD since 2014. It benefitted from the strong commitment of a core group of organisations composed of the FAO, IMO, ISO, OECD, OIML, UNECE and WHO established to provide strategic guidance and specific inputs to the project. The work built on a joint methodology and structure to ensure comparability across case studies; and on an innovative partnership between the OECD, the five IOs involved and the Nanterre Centre of International Law (CEDIN).

The OECD prepared the common structure used to develop the studies and organised the technical workshops bringing together the IOs and the CEDIN to guide the structure and substance and discuss the progress made and challenges faced in the research and drafting phases. In addition, the OECD ensured the quality control by reviewing the different drafts of the case studies and managing the circulation of the final draft to OECD delegates and the 50 IOs involved in the work.

A number of CEDIN students, under the direction of Professor Jean Marc Thouvenin, former Director, contributed closely to the development of the case studies and carried out an internship in the IOs under study to get acquainted to their functioning. The five IOs dedicated staff to work on the case studies, provided access to their processes and information to the students and ensured internal coordination for a comprehensive view of the variety of their practices.

The case study of UNECE was drafted by Lorenza Jachia, Economic Affairs Officer at UNECE with research assistance from Diakite Aboubacar, intern at the organisation and student at the Nanterre Centre of International Law (CEDIN). The author wishes to thank: Ms. Virginia Cram-Martos, Director of the UNECE Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, for her supervision and substantive input, Ms. Monika Linn, Principal Advisor to the UNECE Executive Secretary for her helpful comments, and UNECE colleagues from substantive divisions for their valuable contributions.

This work was developed as part of a joint project on the rule-making of international organisations under the leadership of Rolf Alter, Director for Public Governance and Territorial Development and Nicola Bonucci, Director for Legal Affairs. It was co-ordinated by Céline Kauffmann, Deputy Head, under the supervision of Nick Malyshev, Head of the OECD Regulatory Policy Division. The OECD review team in charge of quality and comparability control comprised Caroline Breton and Céline Folsché (Legal Affairs), Marianna Karttunen and Céline Kauffmann (Regulatory Policy Division). The case study was prepared for publication by Jennifer Stein.

The work on IRC in international organisations is being conducted under the supervision of the OECD Regulatory Policy Committee, whose mandate is to assist both members and non-members in building and strengthening capacity for regulatory quality and regulatory reform.

The Regulatory Policy Committee is supported by staff within the Regulatory Policy Division of the Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate. The OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate's unique emphasis on institutional design and policy implementation supports mutual learning and diffusion of best practice in different societal and market conditions. The goal is to help countries build better government systems and implement policies at both national and regional level that lead to sustainable economic and social development. The directorate's mission is to help governments at all levels design and implement strategic, evidence-based and innovative policies to strengthen public governance, respond effectively to diverse and disruptive economic, social and environmental challenges and deliver on government's commitments to citizens.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ADR	Agreements on the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road
AND	Agreements on the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways
ARSO	African Regional Organization for Standardization
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
CCAC	Climate and Clean Air Coalition
CEB	Chief Executives Board for Coordination
CEDIN	Centre de droit international de l'Université de Paris Ouest Nanterre
CEN	Centre Européen de Normalisation
CENELEC	European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization
CEP	Committee on Environmental Policy
CES	Conference of European Statisticians
COFFI	Committee on Forests and Forest Industry
CHLM	Committee on Housing and Land Management
CICPPP	Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CSE	Committee on Sustainable Energy
EASC	Euro-Asian Council for Standardization, Metrology and Testing
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EEC	Eurasian Economic Commission
EECCA	Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ENVSEC	Environment and Security Initiative
EPR	Environmental Performance Review
EU	European Union
EURAS	European Academy on Standardization
EXCOM	Executive Committee of the UNECE
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GA	General Assembly
GA	Global Assessments
GHS	Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals
GRP	Good Regulatory Practices
GTRs	Global Technical Regulations
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IAF	International Accreditation Forum
IATA	International Air Transport Association
ICC	International Chamber of Commerce
ICTSD	International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development
IEA	International Energy Agency
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
ILO	International Labour Office
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INC	International Nuts and Dried Fruits Council
IOs	International Organisations
IPR	Innovation Performance Review
IRC	International Regulatory Co-operation
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency
IRU	International Road Transport Union
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITC	Inland Transport Committee
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITS	Intelligent Transport Systems
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit

MEA	Multilateral Environment Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OASIS	Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PPP	Public-Private Partnerships
RPTC	Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation
SAD	Single Administrative Document
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEE	South-East Europe
SCTCS	Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards
TDG	Transport of Dangerous Goods
THE PEP	Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme
TINA	Transport Infrastructure Needs Assessment
TIR	Convention on the international transport of goods by road
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UN/CEFACT	United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDA	United Nations Development Account
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UN-ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNFC	United Nations Framework Classification for Fossil Energy and Mineral Reserves and Resources
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
WEF	World Economic Forum
WHO	World Health Organization
WRI	World Resources Institute
WWF	World Wide Fund for the Nature
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

This case study describes the way UNECE runs and supports international regulatory co-operation (IRC): the underlying institutional context, the organisation's governance and structure, the different IRC processes and their impacts, successes and challenges. UNECE is one of five UN regional commissions and serves as the platform for a variety of IRC norms setting and rule making processes that meet the needs of its membership, in particular as regards economic integration, sustainable development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, adopted by UN Member States in October 2015.¹

The mandate and geographic scope of UNECE have evolved extensively since its establishment in 1947. Starting with only 18 members and the initial mandate of helping the reconstruction of post-war Europe, UNECE counts today 56 members from Europe, North America and Asia and has adjusted its areas of work to respond to the priority of sustainable development in a complex and rapidly evolving geo-political environment.

To deliver on its diverse mandate the UNECE has a decentralised governance structure, with different substantive committees carrying out different IRC processes across the organisation, with different resulting IRC tools.

The UNECE is a forum for information exchange. It hosts demand-driven policy dialogue on topical issues, supported as necessary by data collection and classification, and policy analysis. This dialogue may then lead, when and if appropriate, to the development of a variety of instruments, including recommendations and policy guidance, and the development of legally and non-legally binding instruments. It also supports co-ordinated action by Member States on issues of concern, in particular in the context of global UN processes.

This study also presents examples of how the organisation contributes to the uptake and implementation of the results of its IRC activities, through its technical co-operation activities and the assessment of Member States' policies in specific sectors. Additionally, the study shows how UNECE, as part of the UN Secretariat, engages in structured processes to set strategic directions for its activities, including in relation to IRC, and to monitor their quality, timeliness and reporting accuracy.

The context of regulatory co-operation

The main objective of the UNECE is to pursue sustainable development, regional co-operation and economic integration. Regulatory co-operation activities under the umbrella of UNECE are very diverse considering the size of the secretariat (around 200 staff). The sectors covered are broad in scope, ranging from environment, sustainable energy, and forests, to transport, trade, innovation and competitiveness, or housing and land management. Many of these are institutionally crowded sectors, in which UNECE is brought to collaborate closely with other organisations. Additionally in a number of these sectors, UNECE covers issues for which it is the only existing intergovernmental forum.

Short history of the development of UNECE

To understand the reason for the diversity of the UNECE IRC activities, it is useful to go back to the early days of the UNECE. The organisation was created to support post-war reconstruction and promote the integration and economic co-operation of European countries. The decision was taken on the basis of a recommendation to establish a “Temporary Sub-Commission on the Economic Reconstruction of Devastated Areas” made during a London meeting in July 1946.²

Following the immediate post-war period, UNECE functioned effectively as the only platform for co-operation between countries in Europe and North America divided by the Cold War. The UNECE provided a neutral forum to discuss common concerns and policy matters of interest to all, regardless of ideological divide. It owed its success to being part of the UN family, to its professional secretariat, and to the availability of translation and interpretation to and from Russian. As the cold war came to an end, UNECE became the institution of choice to support the economic transition of former planned countries.³

More recently, UNECE has refocused its activities to give priority to sustainable development. Throughout its seventy year history, UNECE has effectively adapted to a changing socio-economic and political environment, within its region and globally, while remaining faithful to its historical function of fostering co-operation and economic integration.

Areas of work and intended objectives of regulatory co-operation within UNECE

The main objective of the UNECE is to pursue sustainable development and regional co-operation and integration through three interrelated functions:

- *Policy dialogue*: UNECE provides a neutral platform for dialogue on economic, social and environmental issues;
- *Normative work*: UNECE facilitates the development and negotiation of new norms, standards and conventions; and
- *Technical co-operation*: UNECE improves the national capacity of countries to implement global and UNECE legal instruments, norms and standards.

UNECE IRC activities support its Member States in the implementation of Agenda 2030 and its sustainable development goals (SDGs) and targets. Below, some illustrative examples of how IRC processes – serviced by the UNECE Secretariat – integrate issues related to the achievement of SDG targets:

- The Environment for Europe process and its ministerial conferences, taking place every five years, support the goals and targets related to a green economy;
- The Espoo Convention and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment provide a framework for the comprehensive integration of environmental and health concerns into a wide range of policies, legislation, programmes, plans and development activities in all economic sectors;
- The Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers provide an institutional framework to assist countries in achieving the SDGs by implementing commitments on access to information, public participation and access to justice;
- The Water Convention and its protocols cover the entire water cycle and, therefore, comprehensively address all of the targets under SDG Goal 6 (“Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”) (UNECE, 2016a);
- The Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs (ATP Agreement) contributes to several of the SDG goals including Goal 1 and Goal 12 (“Zero Hunger” and

“Responsible Production and consumption”) by reducing wastage and food losses during transport,⁴

- UN/CEFACT develops, maintains and supports global instruments for trade facilitation and e-business, which help businesses, trade and administrative organisations around the world conduct more efficient trade and e-business processes, contributing directly to Goal 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth) (UNECE, 2015a).

As a multidisciplinary organisation, UNECE hosts regulatory co-operation activities that are very diverse, exceptionally so considering the small size of its secretariat. The sectors covered are as follows:

- Economic Co-operation and Integration, including Public-Private Partnerships and Innovation
- Environmental Policy
- Forestry and Timber
- Housing and Land Management
- Population (with a focus on aging)
- Sustainable Energy
- Trade, including Trade Facilitation, Regulatory Co-operation and Agricultural Quality Standards
- Transport including vehicles construction regulations and the classification of dangerous goods
- Statistics

In each of these areas, UNECE provides a forum for discussion on some of the most topical and challenging issues, ranging from intelligent transport systems, to carbon capture and storage, to developing better statistics, to measuring migration and the impact of disasters and climate change, to quote only a few eye-catching areas of work. It is important to note that for a number of important issues UNECE is the only existing intergovernmental forum.⁵

International and domestic regulatory landscapes and the position of UNECE

There are a number of areas where the UNECE’s work fits into a crowded regulatory landscape, therefore calling for co-operation with different international and regional bodies. Overall, well over a hundred organisations take active part in the activities of the UNECE. These include:

1. Organisations within the “UN family”⁶
2. Other international organisations⁷
3. Regional organisations and entities⁸
4. Civil society organisations⁹
5. Industry associations¹⁰
6. Academia and research institutions¹¹

Co-operation with these partner organisations can take a number of forms. At a minimum, it involves the exchange of information through the respective secretariat and participation in one another’s meetings. Other forms of co-operation include the production of joint reports and publications, the organisation of joint meetings or joint technical assistance projects, or even the preparation of joint instruments. At the time of writing, UNECE had also concluded around 50 Memoranda of Understanding, some of which are of importance for the UNECE IRC activities.¹²

Some of these organisations run joint bodies with UNECE such as:

- The Steering Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals of the Conference of European Statisticians with participation from the OECD and Eurostat;
- The Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management;
- The Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) in which the UNECE Environment and Sustainable Transport Divisions and the WHO/Europe compose the joint secretariat.

An important partner of the UNECE are the other UN regional commissions. While UNECE plays a wider role as regards IRC and particularly the development of soft and hard law tools than do its counterparts, co-operation is strong especially as regards technical assistance activities aimed at capacity-building for implementation.¹³

Main characteristics of regulatory co-operation in the context of UNECE

As an organisation with a diverse membership and a small secretariat, the UNECE develops and supervises the implementation of a large number of IRC tools that are widely used within its region and beyond. Its governance mechanisms are adapted to the different constituencies that come together to work under its umbrella. This section highlights the diversity of the governance structure mechanisms within the UNECE and the way they are adapted to the needs of the constituencies which the organisation brings together.

The UNECE's IRC activities are based on a shared "core approach": they are demand-driven and supported by solid analytical and technical expertise. They are characterised by a structured policy dialogue, which starts with the exchange of information and best practice among Member States and relevant stakeholders.

The organisation has an important convening power. In 2014, UNECE held 270 meetings with 15 539 participants, with similar numbers in 2015 (277 meetings/15 478 participants), and this is without counting WebEx meetings, teleconferences and meetings outside of its Geneva premises.

The deliverables of UNECE's IRC activities are multi-faceted: at one end of the spectrum are recommendations, adopted as the result of formal and informal consultations among members. At the other end, binding Conventions enter into force after adoption and ratification by Member States and which are developed and maintained by Treaty Bodies.

This section is divided in two parts. The first reviews the structural characteristics of the UNECE – membership, structure, resources – and discusses how they contribute to realising its IRC goals. The second part presents UNECE's binding and non-binding IRC tools. The analysis is necessarily partial, in view of the large number and diversity of tools developed within the UNECE.

Governance arrangements and operational modalities

As described below, within UNECE, the main platforms for regulatory co-operation are provided by the sectoral committees, their subsidiary bodies, as well as the other regulatory co-operation bodies that are serviced by the organisation. IRC activities are member-driven: participation by UN member countries that are not members of UNECE and by a large diversity of stakeholders is nevertheless quite active.

Membership and participation

The UNECE comprises countries within Europe, North America and Asia.¹⁴ UNECE's membership is quite diverse, spanning countries with high to medium human development. Overall, the UNECE region brings together 1.26 billion people (2013), i.e. 20% of world population, with a combined GDP of USD 44.1 trillion, an average GDP per capita of USD 35 000, and a surface area of 47 million km² (i.e. 35% of land above water).¹⁵

Notwithstanding it being a regional organisation, all United Nations Member States have a right to actively participate in the work of UNECE and, in fact, many of them do so (see below for more details about participation by non-members).

Evolution of membership

At the outset, in 1947, the UNECE was composed of 18 Member States,¹⁶ including 17 from Europe plus the United States. The first wave of expansion came in 1955 with the accession of Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Romania and Spain. In the following years Cyprus and other European countries as well as Canada joined the UNECE so that it had thirty-four Member States in 1991. Between 1991 and 1995, membership increased by 21 more countries from the Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) region as the result of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia.¹⁷ Then, in 2004, the addition of Montenegro brought the final count to 56 Member States.

As a demand-driven organisation, the evolution of the UNECE membership and of the needs of this membership in a changing economic, social and political context, has led to changes in the focus of the activities of the organisation, as discussed above.

Participation in UNECE’s IRC activities

The main actors that drive the IRC processes in UNECE are experts and policy makers from the Member States’ regulatory and policy bodies, Ambassadors or other delegates representing Member State governments, along with representatives of civil society, other international organisations, the business community, academia, independent experts, the civil society, as well as regional bodies. IRC tools developed within the UNECE benefit – as discussed above – from its partnerships with other organisations and also from the inputs of a broad range of stakeholders (see below for illustrative examples). These are important assets for the discussion of both technical and policy issues.

Participation of Non-Members

The UNECE Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure provide that “any Member of the United Nations” and “representatives of any intergovernmental organisation” may take part in a consultative capacity which refers to a matter in relation with its speciality¹⁸ allowing the Commission to determine the conditions of their participation to its work, “including the question of voting rights in the subsidiary bodies of the Commission”.

Most UNECE sectoral committees have a number of UN members from outside the UNECE region in attendance and contributing to the discussions and the development of their IRC tools. Among the bodies in which participation by countries outside the UNECE region is most active are the:

- Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies which have 29 legal instruments with, as contracting parties, UN Member States beyond the borders of the UNECE region. Seventy five per cent of UN Member States are contracting parties to at least one of these legal instruments. Among these is the Convention on Road Traffic which harmonises road signals globally and has 74 contracting parties from all five world continents.
- Conference of European Statisticians where, for example, two of the Bureau members are from Mexico and New Zealand.¹⁹
- UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), which has bureau Members from India and Nigeria and which, during the period 2014-2016, will have held two of four expert fora in India (October 2014) and Thailand (September 2016).

Broad participation translates into internationally relevant IRC tools. For example:

- Two of the UNECE Environmental Conventions are open to accession by UN member countries that are not members of UNECE.
- In Transport, UNECE ensures the administration of three international UN Agreements on motor vehicles (the 1958 and 1998 Agreements on regulations for new vehicles, including performance requirements, and the 1997 Agreement on rules for periodical technical inspections of vehicles in use). These agreements are open to accession by non-UNECE UN Member States and have active participation by a number of non-European countries (i.e. Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa, Thailand, and Tunisia are contracting parties to the 1958 agreement).
- The Convention on the international transport of goods by road under cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention) has 70 Contracting Parties, and covers the whole of Europe reaching out to North Africa, the Near and Middle East as well as parts of Asia, including China.²⁰
- UNECE manages a global system for the classification of dangerous goods (chemicals, explosives) and a global convention on the rules governing their transport.
- In sustainable energy, UNECE has developed a classification of mineral resources and fossil fuels adopted or tested in over 60 countries all over the world.
- In statistics, UNECE has produced global recommendations, standards, and methodologies for example, for national accounts, and the population census used all over the world.
- In the field of trade and transport, UNECE has developed and maintains the five digit coding system UN/LOCODE (e.g. CHGVA for Geneva, Switzerland) and its code list (with over 60 000 entries) that is used worldwide to identify locations used in world trade and transport.

Structure of the organisation

UNECE has a plenary organ which meets every two years – “the Commission” – and an executive organ – “the Executive Committee” or “EXCOM” – which assumes the governing function between sessions of the Commission. The substantive work of the UNECE is mostly carried out by

its Substantive Committees which, themselves, have subsidiary bodies, as well as in other bodies related to specific instruments (such as conventions).

An important feature of the governance structure of UNECE is that some of the bodies serviced by the Secretariat report to the Meeting of the Parties to a Convention or to a Protocol. It is the case of UNECE environmental conventions, also known as multilateral environmental agreements or MEAs.

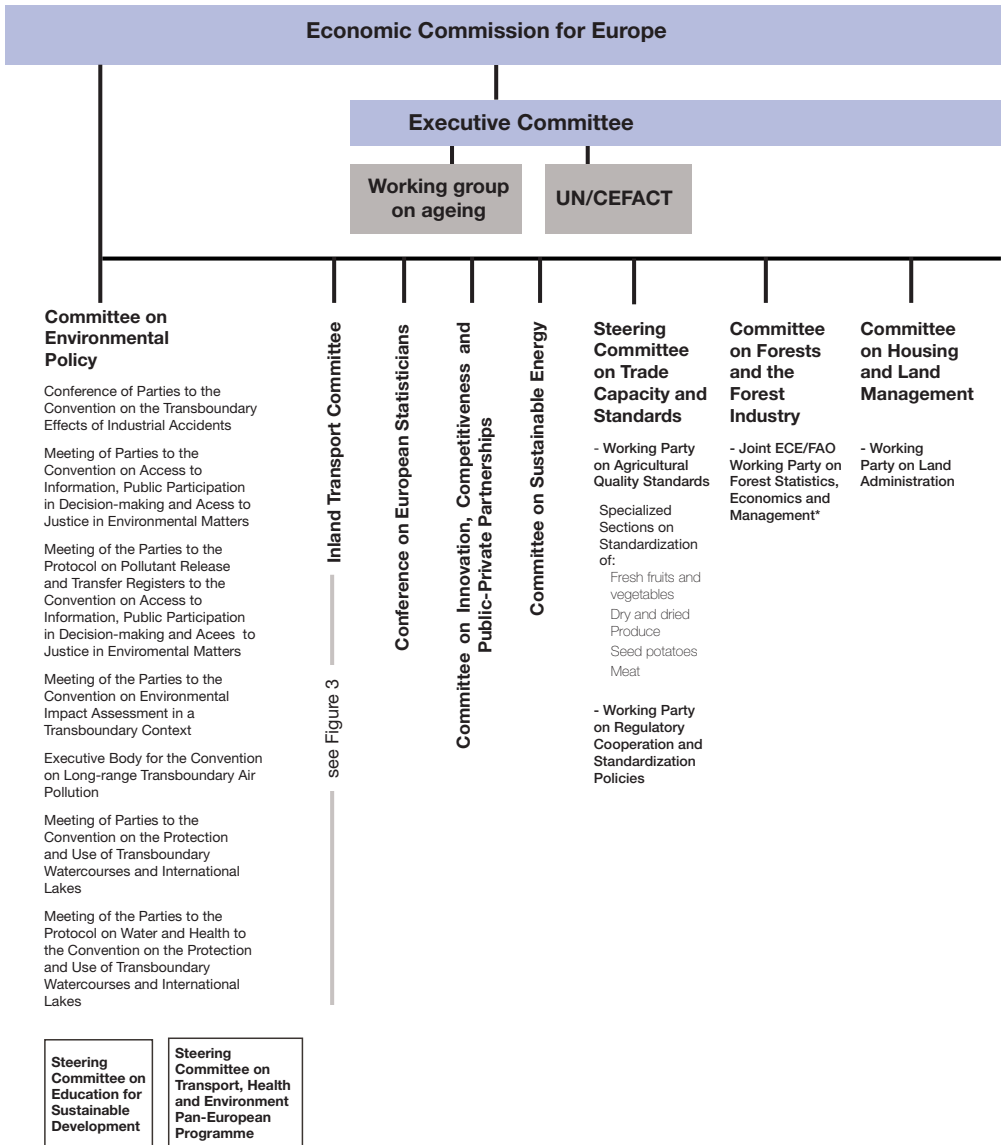
Governing bodies

The governing bodies of UNECE are the Commission and the ‘EXCOM’. The Commission holds its session every two years during which the UNECE Member States elect one country from among its members to hold the chair and two additional countries to hold the vice chair positions for the subsequent biennium and the following Commission session.²¹

The EXCOM was established by the UNECE Member States on 2 December 2005, as one result of an extensive reform that created a new governance structure. The EXCOM is the intersessional governing body of the Commission (Art. 17 of the UNECE Rules of Procedure, E/ECE/778/Rev.5). It supervises the implementation of the general guidance set by the Commission, and prepares the sessions of the Commission.²²

It is also mandated: “(a), to review, evaluate and approve in due time the Programme of work of the sectoral committees (...) (b), to approve the set-up, renewal, discontinuance, terms of reference and work plans of groups under the Sectoral Committees (...), (c) to examine with the chair and vice-chairs of the Sectoral Committees their report on the implementation of their Programme of Work and other relevant issues (d), to ensure coherence between sub-programmes, inter alia by encouraging horizontal communication within the organisation (e), to deal with all matters related to programme planning, administrative and budget issues, including extra budgetary funding (f), to discuss with the Executive Secretary initiatives taken by the Secretariat and the work undertaken by the Office of the Executive Secretary.”

Figure 1. Intergovernmental structure of the UNECE (as of 2 March 2015)²³



Source: UNECE (2015), www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/oes/nutshell/2015/AR_2014_-_Intergovernmental_Structure_2015.JPG, 2 March (accessed 4 October 2016).

The Sectoral Committees

The core regulatory co-operation activities of the Commission are carried out by its seven Sectoral Committees as well as three other intergovernmental bodies (UN/CEFACT, the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards and the Working Group on Aging) (Figure 1).

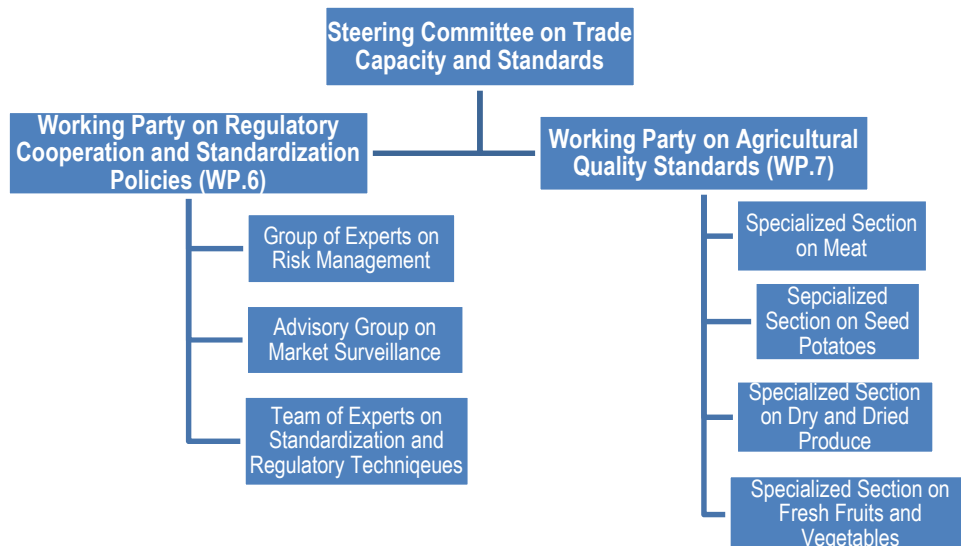
The Commission is responsible for deciding upon the programme of work of its subsidiary bodies. These are granted the necessary degree of autonomy to perform their respective functions.

Each sectoral committee is led by a Bureau, composed of a Chairperson and several Vice-Chairpersons. The chairpersons or, if they are unable to do so, the vice-chairpersons are invited regularly by the EXCOM to report on the Committees' activities (Art. 4 of Rules of Procedure of EXCOM, ECE/EX/3/Rev.1).

The subsidiary bodies to the sectoral committees

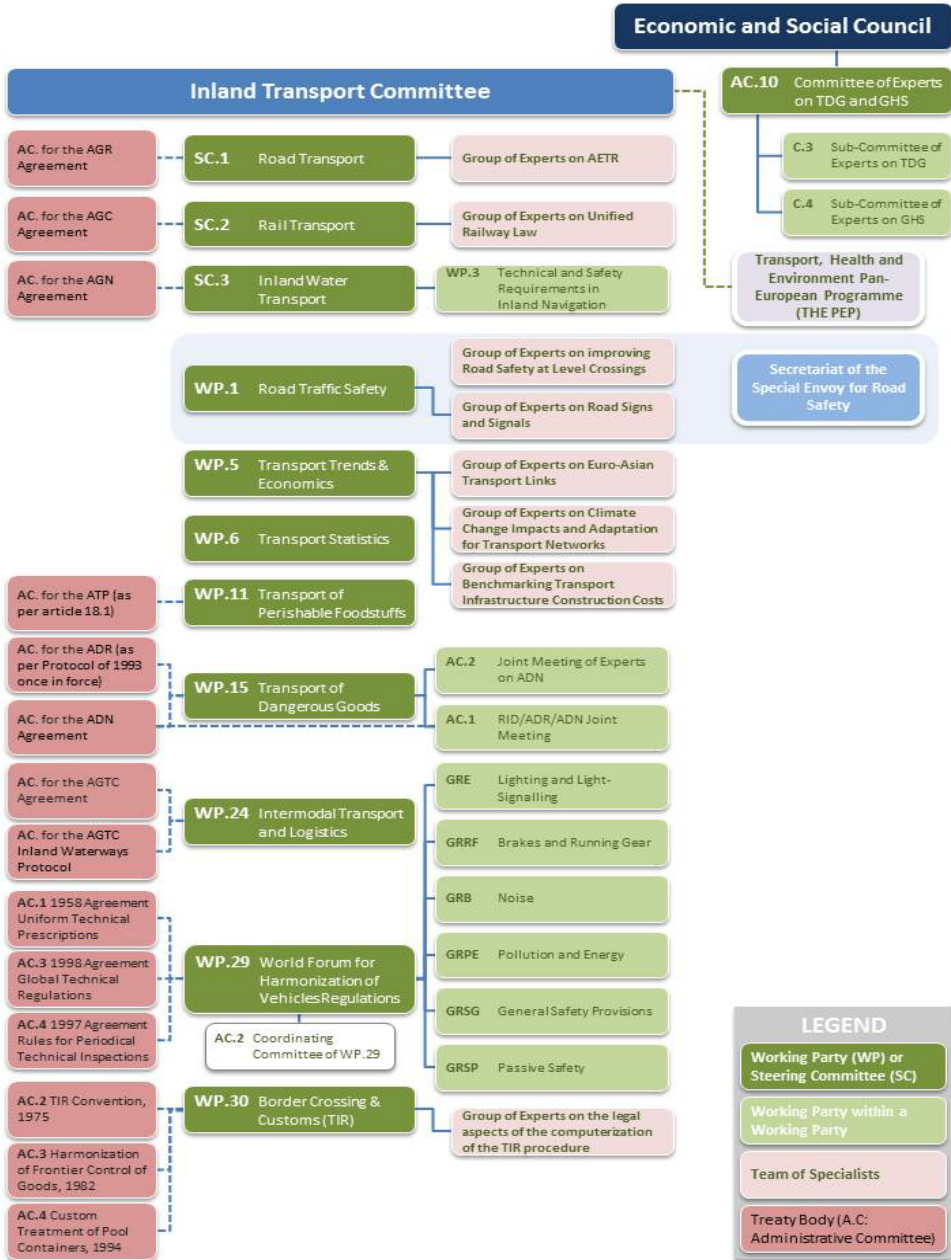
Most UNECE IRC activities take place in Working Parties, Task Forces or Teams of Specialists that report to one of the UNECE substantive Committees. Some of the subsidiary bodies have themselves other subsidiary bodies that formally report to them.

Figure 2. **The Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards and its subsidiary bodies**



Source: UNECE Secretariat.

Figure 3. Bodies serviced by the UNECE Transport Sub-programme



Source: UNECE Secretariat.

For example, the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables develops agricultural quality standards to facilitate international trade in fresh produce. These standards are endorsed by the parent body of the Specialized Section, the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7). The Working Party reports to the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (SCTCS), which formally approves the report of the Working Party and, by doing so, the SCTCS endorses the standards produced by the WP.7 and its specialised sections, including on fresh fruits and vegetables. In turn, the SCTCS reports to the EXCOM and to the Commission.²⁴

To deal with transport issues, the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) is assisted by 20 Working Parties. Their work programmes and operating methods are regularly reviewed by the ITC. These Working Parties are intergovernmental bodies which are subsidiary to the ITC. All ITC Working Parties report to the annual session of the ITC. They are established by the Executive Committee upon the recommendation of the ITC and are authorised by the ITC to address a major cluster of recurrent activities within the transport sub-programme under the responsibility of the ITC.

As further examples, Figures 2 and 3 above present – respectively – the governance structure of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards and that of the Transport Sub-programme.

Other bodies serviced by the UNECE Secretariat

In addition to servicing the bodies that directly report to the Commission, through the Sectoral Committees, an important activity of the UNECE is to service bodies that report, instead, to ECOSOC or to their respective Treaty bodies.

Under the Environment sub-programme, the UNECE Secretariat services treaty bodies whose members are those countries that have ratified (i.e. “are parties to”) the respective Convention and/or its protocols. These bodies have their own governance structures and their parties make up the memberships.

In addition to servicing Inland Transport Committee (ITC) and its subsidiary bodies, the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division serves the ECOSOC Committees of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (Box 1). It also services the Administrative Committees of eight UN legal instruments. These Committees are bodies composed of the Parties to the respective legal instrument and, as such, are not subsidiary bodies of the ITC.²⁵

Together with the UNECE Environment Division and the World Health Organization (WHO) – Regional Officer for Europe, the Sustainable Transport Division also co-services the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP). THE PEP operates under the authority of the High-level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health and reports, on an annual basis, to the Regional Committee of WHO/Europe and to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

Box 1. Transport and dangerous goods

In this area, highly specialised ECOSOC and UNECE Bodies have closely intertwined responsibilities in the development of policies, norms and standards that help Member States prevent accidents to persons or property and damage to the environment, while making international trade in chemicals and dangerous products as safe as possible. Their work contributes not only to harmonising relevant regulations, but also to ensuring that these are consistent with work safety regulations, consumer protection regulations, storage regulations, environment protection regulations, etc.

To advance these goals, since the early 50s, the United Nations has developed mechanisms for the harmonisation of hazard classification criteria and hazard communication tools taking into account different transport conditions for all modes for transport. In addition, the UNECE administers regional agreements that ensure the effective implementation of these mechanisms in the transport of dangerous goods by road, rail and inland waterways.

This area of work is overseen not only by the UNECE Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, which reports to the Inland Transport Committee (ITC), but also by the ECOSOC Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals and its subsidiary bodies, namely the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS).

The decision-making processes at UNECE

Each UNECE body in the UNECE has its own background and history, and they have each adapted to the unique characteristics of the sector that they service: different bodies follow distinct processes to develop binding and non-binding tools, from the stage of a preliminary proposal to the publication and maintenance phase.

As an example, Figure 4 details the IRC process followed by UN/CEFACT (and, with minimal variations, by the Team of Specialists on PPPs and its International Centre of Excellence in PPPs).

Figure 4. UN/CEFACT Standards Development Process



As a general rule, within UNECE and its subsidiary bodies, decisions are made by consensus (Art. 17 of ECE/EX/3/Rev.1 Terms of Reference of the EXCOM). There is nevertheless a provision that – if voting is necessary, decisions at the level of the Commission are made by a majority of the members present and voting (Art. 39), and that in the event of a tied vote, a second vote has to be organised. If no majority can be reached, the decision is rejected (Art. 43).

Again, at the level of the subsidiary bodies, most decisions are made by consensus, but voting is foreseen in the ToRs of a number of them, and has been used on occasion (see Box 2 for additional details).

Box 2. Decision-making rules in different UNECE intergovernmental organs

Decisions are primarily made by consensus in UNECE, but voting is foreseen in the decision making rules of some of the subsidiary organs.

- Under the Working Party on Road Transport, “decisions made by the Working Party shall as a priority be based on consensus. In the absence of consensus, decisions shall be made by a majority of the members of the ECE, present and voting”;
- Under the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution “decisions on substantive matters shall, as a last resort, be taken by a three-fourths majority vote of the Parties present and voting, except where the Convention, applicable Protocol or these rules provide otherwise”;
- Under UN/CEFACT: “If consensus cannot be reached, the matter will be put to a vote. For voting purposes, a majority of formally nominated delegations of United Nations Member States to UN/CEFACT shall constitute a quorum, and delegates must be present in the meeting that puts the matter to a vote.”
- Under the Committee on Implementation established under the Espoo Convention to review compliance by the Parties with their obligations under the Convention, “if all efforts at consensus have been exhausted, and no agreement reached, the decision shall, as a last resort, be adopted by a three-fourths majority vote of the Parties present and voting at the meeting”.

The Secretariat

The UNECE Secretariat is fairly small, in comparison with other IOs (OECD, 2016), with 229 staff members as follows: 128 professional staff, 71 administrative staff and 30 extra budgetary staff (which are both administrative and professional).²⁶ It is based in Geneva, Switzerland. The Staff of UNECE is part of the Secretariat of the United Nations. The Executive Secretary, together with the Division Directors, is primarily responsible for the timely and effective implementation of the UNECE programme of work, including on IRC and he reports directly to the Secretary General of the United Nations.

The UNECE Secretariat facilitates the IRC activities of the organisation in different ways. For example, it provides organisational support (e.g. calls meetings, prepares agendas, and drafts background notes, reports and information documents) and is also requested, depending on the specifics of each programme, to *inter alia*: undertake independent data collection and/or policy analysis, assist in the implementation of the organisation's instruments, represent the organisation at the official meetings of other organisations, etc.

Budget

For the biennium 2016-17, the UNECE budget is approximately EUR 72 million. UNECE is a part of the United Nations secretariat. As such, UN Member States do not contribute separately to the UNECE budget; instead this is financed *via* contributions earmarked for UNECE within the overall budget of the UN organisation. The UNECE budget is set out in two key documents: the Programme Budget and the Strategic Framework. Specifically, the Budget details the funding needed by the organisation to achieve the objectives and results contained in the Strategic Framework. An analysis of these documents confirms how IRC processes – as defined by OECD (2013 and 2016) – represent the bulk of the UNECE's work. Over the 2010-2014 period, a large majority (81%) of UNECE outputs consisted of preparing documents for and servicing meetings.

The UNECE regular budget is complemented by voluntary contributions,²⁷ primarily given to support technical co-operation activities. Technical co-operation activities are important to support the IRC processes within the UNECE because these projects are largely aimed at building the capacity of Member States to implement IRC instruments developed within the UNECE (see dedicated section below).

Forms of international regulatory co-operation

IRC in the UNECE is supported by exchange of information, statistical analysis and data collection, research and policy analysis. UNECE IRC work consists mainly of developing, keeping up to date and assisting in the implementation of binding and non-binding tools (classifications standards, guidelines, recommendations, conventions, protocols, treaties). In addition to this, the UNECE also has the possibility for Members to resort to dispute settlement under its five UNECE Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

Since its creation, UNECE has provided a forum for the negotiation of 226 legally binding international instruments: 210 have been developed and are serviced within the transport sub-programme and 16 in the environmental policy programme (Table 1). Binding instruments take various forms such as conventions, protocols and regulations. Non-binding instruments include recommendations, political declarations, model treaties or laws, non-binding guidance and good practice documents. The organisation has also facilitated the development of hundreds of voluntary international standards, classifications, action plans and recommendations. These are complemented by guidance documents and collections of good practices.

Table 1. **Type of instruments by sub-programme**

Type of instruments by sub-programme	Not binding	Binding
Environment Sub-programme	45	16
Timber and Forestry Sub-programme	2	
Housing and Land Management Sub-programme	36	
Economic Cooperation and Integration Sub-programme	25	
Trade Sub-programme	606	
Statistics Sub-programme	51	
Transport Sub-programme	20	210
Energy Sub-programme	7	

Source: Responses to the Authors' questionnaires to UNECE staff.

Exchange of information

The exchange of information among members is at the basis of all UNECE IRC processes. Member States and other stakeholders share national experiences, good practice and lessons learned at the regular meetings of the intergovernmental bodies, as well as at conferences,

seminars, and workshops organised at the organisation's headquarters in Geneva, in UNECE Member States and occasionally in countries beyond the UNECE region. Sharing information and data has obvious benefits, in all areas, as it leads to a better mutual understanding, facilitates the uptake of good practices and is a pre-requisite for all cross-border activities from trade, to investment, to co-ordinated policy making.

For example, the UNECE Water Convention provides a forum for the exchange of information between riparian parties, which can be critical to the management of transboundary bodies of water and the prevention and management of floods and other natural and man-made disasters.²⁸

Statistics

The UNECE Statistical Division maintains an online statistical database based on data collected directly from Member States and, in part, from the databases of other international organisations (such as Eurostat, the OECD, the International Labour Office (ILO) etc.). The database makes available, free-of-charge, online data on the 56 member countries in a wide range of domains (economic, population and gender, sustainable development, transport and forestry), along with country profiles for each country in the UNECE region.

The bulk of statistical work in UNECE is about addressing emerging challenges in official statistics through joint international work, which aims at:

- Co-ordinating international statistical work in the region;
- Developing standards, guidelines and recommendations on statistical methodology through dedicated task forces;
- Building capacity to improve national statistics and help countries reinforce their statistical systems;
- Collecting and disseminating internationally comparable statistics.

In addition to activities carried out by the statistics sub-programme, data collection and statistical work is also carried out by other sub-programmes. Examples include:

- The Forestry and Timber Sub-programme, which collects data on: surface areas covered by forests, employment and value added in the forest sector, illegal logging and forest fires, etc;

- The Transport Sub-programme which, through its Working Party 6 on Transport Statistics, sets the standards and methodology for the gathering of transport statistics and collects data on: road, railway and waterway traffic and fleets, railway employment, road accidents, transport infrastructure including pipelines, etc.;
- The Population Unit which collects data to compile the “Active Ageing Index”, a tool that supports measuring the level to which older people live independent lives, participate in paid employment and in social activities, and their capacity to age actively;
- The Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators, a cross-sectoral body under the joint supervision of the Environment and Statistics sub-programmes that acts to strengthen environmental reporting in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South-East Europe (SEE).

Finally, all UNECE sub-programmes collect and process data relative to the implementation and use of the IRC tools that they develop.

Policy analysis

UNECE Member States mandate the UNECE Secretariat to undertake policy analysis, when relevant. Some of this analytical work represents a regular feature of a sub-programme’s activities: for example, the Forestry and Timber sub-programme publishes annually the “Forest Products Annual Market Review”, a comprehensive analysis of forest markets in the UNECE region. Other regular research under this sub-programme includes, among others: the “Forest Resources Assessment”, published with FAO in 2005, 2010 and 2015.

The secretariat also carries out policy analysis in advance of important conferences. For example, the Regional Report on CIS cities, co-authored by UN/HABITAT and the UNECE (UNECE/UNHABITAT, 2016), is an input to the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III).

Classifications

The UNECE is involved in the development of classifications in selected fields. The two most important are:

- The Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS), which sets out a classification of chemicals by types of hazard and proposes harmonised hazard communications elements, including labels and safety data sheets. It contributes to SDG 5 “Ensuring healthy lives”.

- The United Nations Framework Classification for Fossil Energy and Mineral Reserves and Resources (UNFC) is an internationally applicable scheme for classifying and evaluating energy and mineral reserves and resources and, currently, the only classification in the world to do so. It allows a common international understanding within and across commodity classes, and can be applied at global, national, industrial, institutional or financial level. Adopted, adapted or tested in over 60 countries from all over the world, UNFC is currently being extended to include renewable sources of energy and provides tools to support decision-making for the realisation of Goal 7 on “Affordable and clean energy”.²⁹

Additionally, in the statistics sub-programme, UNECE maintains a classification of international statistical activities.³⁰ Within the same sub-programme, the Task Team on Big Data has developed classifications for Social Networks, Traditional Business Systems and the Internet of Things. In the transport sub-programme, classifications are developed for the purpose of transport statistics.

Legal instruments

Transport

The 58 international legal instruments, including agreements and conventions³¹ serviced by the Transport sub-programme are legally binding for the States who are Contracting Parties to them. Taken together, these instruments – some of which are applied also by countries outside the UNECE region – create an international legal and technical framework for the development of international road, rail, inland waterway and combined transport in the UNECE region and beyond. This framework has contributed to a high level of efficiency, safety, environmental protection and sustainability in transport, through the harmonisation of national regulations in a large and varied number of areas.

The UNECE legal instruments in the field of transport can be mapped to three categories:

- Those pertaining to specific infrastructures: in particular vehicles and operational procedures for the following three transport modes: road, rail and inland waterways transport, as well as multi-modal and combined transport;
- Those related to specific issues of passenger transport and of goods transport, as well as those regarding the transport of special cargoes, such as dangerous goods or perishable foodstuffs;

- Those addressing a variety of border crossing problems and procedures.

Among the deliverables from the transport sub-programme are:

- The “World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicles Regulations”, WP.29, aims at the worldwide harmonisation or development of technical regulations for vehicles and for providing uniform conditions for periodical technical inspections:
 - The “1958 Agreement” which has 138 Regulations annexed to it, which are in force and encompass technical requirements, type-approval, mutual recognition of approvals and conformity;
 - The “1998 Agreement” which has 16 United Nations Global Technical Regulations (UN GTRs) associated with it, including performance-oriented test requirements. Unlike the 138 Regulations under the 1958 Agreement, these do not contain administrative provisions for type approvals and their mutual recognition;
 - The 1997 Agreement on periodical technical inspections of vehicles in use, under which Contracting Parties reciprocally recognise international inspection certificates.
- The TIR Convention facilitates the international carriage of goods from one or more customs offices of departure to one or more customs offices of destination and through as many countries as necessary, while allowing for the vehicle or the container to remain sealed throughout the TIR transport, thus avoiding the need to re-inspect goods at border crossings;
- The Conventions on Road Traffic and on Roads Signs and Signals of 1968, thanks to which road signs are universally understood and which are supported by the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1).

These deliverables are kept constantly up to date: for example, under the 1958 Agreement alone, about 1 to 3 new Vehicle Regulations and 70 to 90 amendments to existing Vehicle Regulations are approved per year.

Environment

The international legally binding instruments serviced by the Environment sub-Programme, address key challenges related to air pollution, environmental impact assessment, industrial accidents,

transboundary bodies of water and public participation in environmental decision-making.

The UNECE has negotiated five environmental conventions, also known as multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), all of which are in force. These are:

- the 1979 Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (Air Convention),³²
- the 1991 Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention),³³
- the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention),³⁴
- the 1992 Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention),³⁵ and
- the 1998 Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention).³⁶

The five conventions have been supplemented by a number of protocols, including: eight protocols under the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution;³⁷ the 1999 Protocol on Water and Health,³⁸ the 2003 Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment,³⁹ the 2003 Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs)⁴⁰ and the 2003 Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters (not yet in force).⁴¹

The governing bodies of the UNECE MEAs are serviced by the UNECE Secretariat, which also helps member countries put these norms and rules into practice by organising seminars, workshops and advisory missions, by publishing guidance and compilations of good practice, and by monitoring implementation.

Some UN Member States that are not members of the UNECE participate actively in the activities of the Environment sub-programme. Importantly, two of the five MEAs – the Water Convention and the Aarhus Convention – are open to the accession of non-UNECE UN Member States, while others are in the process of being opening for accession by third countries.

This body of international environmental law is supported by a large number of soft law instruments.⁴²

Non-binding instruments

A variety of non-binding instruments are developed under the umbrella of the UNECE. The different categories of non-binding tools (good practice, guidelines, recommendations, standards, etc.) are heterogeneous rather than following an organisation-wide classification. Together, they form a body of expertise and good practice in strengthening the quality of public administrative action and regulatory quality in a number of different domains. Below are some examples, with no pretention of being exhaustive.

Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

The UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) is another UNECE body with a broad remit. It serves as the UN focal point for trade facilitation recommendations and electronic business standards, covering both commercial and governmental business processes. UN/CEFACT's principal focus is on facilitating national and international transactions, through the simplification and harmonisation of processes, procedures and information flows.

The main deliverables of UN/CEFACT are the following voluntary tools:

- Trade Facilitation Recommendations;
- Electronic Business Standards;
- Technical Specifications; and
- Implementation Guides.

Among the most important results of the IRC work undertaken by UN/CEFACT are:

- The UN Layout Key for Trade Documents, which is the foundation for the EU's Single Administrative Document (SAD) as well as a multitude of other documents used in international trade (bills of lading and freight forwarders' invoices among others);
- UN/EDIFACT, the international standard for electronic data interchange;
- UN/LOCODE, the United Nations Locations Code, managed and maintained by the UNECE, and the product of a wide collaboration; used worldwide to assign five characters codes to trade and transport related locations;⁴³ with its use being required by one IMO convention;

- Recommendations related to the establishment and maintenance of a Single Window (UNECE Recommendations 33, 34 and 35), and
- The UN Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide (<http://tfig.unece.org>).⁴⁴

Agricultural quality standards

The Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) develops standards to encourage high-quality production, improve profitability and protect consumer interests. UNECE standards are used internationally by Governments, producers, traders, importers, exporters and international organisations. They cover a wide spectrum of agricultural products: fresh fruit and vegetables, dry and dried produce, seed potatoes, meat, cut flowers, eggs and egg products.⁴⁵ They are used by the OECD in the development of explanatory brochures for agricultural standards, together with other standards, such as those of the Codex Alimentarius.

The UNECE standards and good practices are adaptable to local and regional conditions, and are based on an inclusive standard development process open to all UN Member States. In addition, UNECE has extensive experience in assisting inspection services and conducting capacity-building activities.

Regulatory co-operation and standardisation policies

As of 2016, the UNECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) had adopted 16 recommendations which foster transparency, accountability and inclusiveness in regulatory processes, standards and standards-related issues.⁴⁶ These include, among others, the WP.6 Recommendations on “Reference to standards” and “Risk management in regulatory frameworks” which foster the use of international standards and risk management tools for the development and implementation of technical regulations; aim at increased proportionality between risks and the stringency of regulatory intervention.

Taken collectively, the WP.6 recommendations contribute to lower costs, facilitate trade and improve access to critical technologies, while protecting the health and safety of consumers and workers, and preserving our natural environment. To achieve these goals, the Working Party also develops common regulatory frameworks in specific sectors. In addition, it promotes initiatives on crosscutting issues such as: market surveillance, education on standards and standards-related issues, and strengthening the management of disaster risks through the implementation of standards and the enforcement of regulations.

Sustainable energy

In the energy sub-programme, an example of soft law is the Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Use in Coal Mines (2010). This document aims to provide guidance to mine owners and operators, government regulators, and policy makers in the design and implementation of safe, effective methane capture and control in underground coal mines. It is intended primarily to encourage safer mining practices in order to reduce fatalities, injuries, and property losses associated with methane. Another example is the guidance document on “Policy Practices for Promoting Energy Efficiency”.

Statistics

In the area of statistics, in addition to the activities mentioned above, the CES develops recommendations and guidelines (40 in total), which set out good practices for national and international statistical offices. In particular, the CES has approved a set of norms and models for statistical production which includes six international standards, three International Classifications as well as compilations of good practices (e.g. Best Practices in Designing Websites for Dissemination of Statistics).⁴⁷

Other important deliverables under this work programme are recommendations and Guidelines. Recent examples include: the “Guide to Measuring Global Production” (2015); the “Conference of European Statisticians’ Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing” (2015); “Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment” (2015); “Guidelines on statistical business registers” (2015); the “Conference of European Statisticians’ Recommendations on Climate Change-Related Statistics” (2014); on “Indicators of Gender Equality” (2014); and on “Measuring Sustainable Development” (2013). Work is ongoing to develop guidelines on measuring extreme events, measuring human capital, measuring poverty and ageing-related statistics.

In the area of statistics in particular, UNECE aims to bring together cutting edge expertise, practical experience and current policy priorities. An evaluation report of UNECE from 2016 cited a representative of an active non-UNECE country stating that participation in the CES was an opportunity to be exposed to innovative thinking, tools and methodologies on statistics (OIOS, 2016).

Public-Private Partnerships

The UNECE Team of Specialists on Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) develops good practices and standards, including model contracts for specific infrastructure sectors and subsectors. Among the standards under

development in 2016 were: “Zero Tolerance to Corruption in PPP Procurement”, “PPPs in Health Policy” and “A Comparative Review of PPP Legal Provisions in CIS Countries”. There is also a 2008 best practice publication: “A Guidebook on Promoting Good Governance in Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)”.⁴⁸

Innovation policy

The “Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies” develops best practice related to the creation of a supportive environment for innovative development and knowledge-based competitiveness in UNECE Member States. Deliverables from this work area include Policy Documents on: “Smart Specialization Strategies”, “Innovation in the public sector” and “Aligning Entrepreneurship and Innovation Policies”.⁴⁹

Transport sub-programme

The Transport sub-programme – in addition to the legal instruments reviewed above – has also developed a large body of recommendations, guidelines and best practice that represents a reference for policy makers in the region and beyond. One notable example, among many, is the 2015 publication “Together with UNECE on the road to safety” which details specific policy actions which can be undertaken to curb road traffic death and casualty rates and contribute to the realisation of SDG 3, Target 6 “By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents” (UNECE, 2015b).

Dispute resolution under the UNECE Multilateral Environmental Agreements

The only instruments that provide for dispute settlement in UNECE are the five UNECE MEAs and Protocols which foresee an extra-judicial mechanism, as follows: “If a dispute arises between two or more Parties about the interpretation or application of this Convention, they shall seek a solution by negotiation or by any other method of dispute settlement acceptable to the parties to the dispute”. If no settlement can be found, all UNECE MEAs except for the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, invite Parties to submit their disputes to the International Court of Justice, or to an organ established in accordance with the procedure set out in an Annex to the Convention in question.

Tools and mechanisms to ensure quality of UNECE IRC instruments and support implementation

As an integral part of the UN family, the organisation participates in UN-wide policies and processes that ensure the quality of its activities. These include: the UN Accountability Framework and UN “Programme Performance Reviews”. Additionally, UNECE is subject to evaluations and audits by several UN bodies. These help ensure that UN standards are upheld in all areas of the organisation’s work and are a precious instrument to guide the organisation as it adapts to a changing environment and the changing needs of its membership.

To enhance the quality of rulemaking, both within the organisation and by Member States, UNECE has also developed tools that promote public consultation and *ex ante* and cost-benefit analyses. These tools are developed primarily to assist governments in their regulatory functions at the national level. On occasion, stakeholder engagement and cost-benefit analyses have also been used to assist Member States in the development and adoption of UNECE IRC tools.

The UNECE ensures the implementation of its large body of IRC tools through different ways: Member State assessments, specific compliance tools for legally binding instruments and technical co-operation activities. Member State assessments are undertaken at the request of the country to be reviewed. They provide a snapshot of the achievements and challenges of the country in a specific domain and a measure of the uptake of specific UNECE instruments. They may be used by the country as the basis for soliciting technical assistance by donors to support further implementation of UNECE IRC tools. Technical assistance activities conducted by the UNECE specifically target implementation of the organisation’s IRC tools. They mobilise and empower local and regional actors to enact these instruments in their constituencies. As such, these activities are an important complement to the organisation’s legal instruments, norms and standards.

Accountability

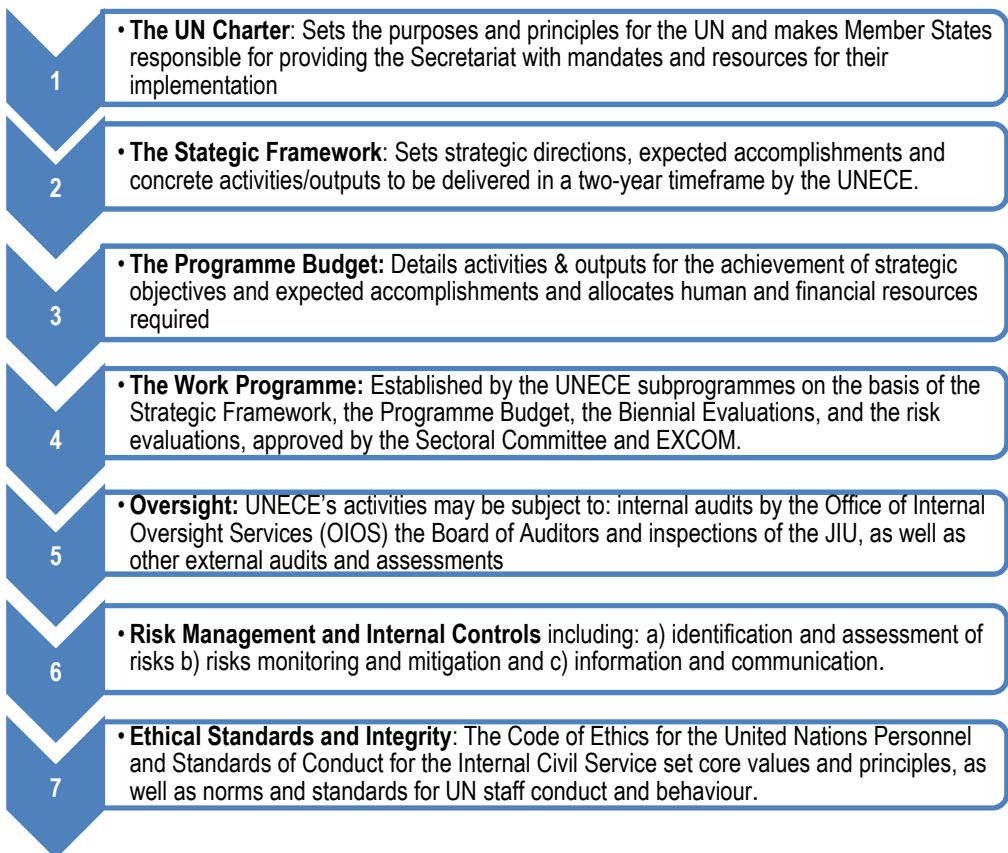
To foster and ensure quality in the delivery of its mandate, including as regards IRC activities, the UNECE has developed an “accountability framework”, in line with relevant UN policies. In this context, accountability is defined as “the obligation of the Secretariat and its staff

members to be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken” (UNECE, 2011).

This framework engages the organisation to:

- “Achieve objectives and high-quality results in a timely and cost-effective manner;
- Fully implement and deliver on all mandates to the Secretariat;
- Responsible stewardship of funds and resources;
- Evaluate all aspects of performance”. (UNECE, 2011)

Figure 5. **The UNECE Accountability Framework**



Source: UNECE (2011), “United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Accountability Framework”,

www.unece.org/fileadmin/dam/open_unece/accountabilty/ece_accountability_framework-11oct2011.pdf (accessed 4 October 2016).

The UNECE Accountability Framework is based upon the UN Charter, the Strategic Framework, the Programme Budget, the Work Programme, the Oversight function, Risk Management and Internal Controls and Ethical standards and integrity.

Ex ante, the UN Charter, the Strategic Framework, the Programme Budget – together with considerations based on the organisation’s risk management – are all elements which inform the Work Programme, which in the UNECE has a large component related to the development and implementation of IRC activities (Figure 5 above).⁵⁰

UNECE instruments fostering public consultations within Member States

The single most important instrument for promoting public participation in the UNECE is the Aarhus Convention. The Convention “grants the public rights and imposes on Parties and public authorities obligations regarding access to information and public participation and access to justice” and also forges a new process for public participation in the negotiation and implementation of international agreements.⁵¹ The UNECE maintains an online “Compendium of case studies of good practice on promoting public participation in international forums” aimed at the promotion of good practices at the national and international level.⁵²

Additionally, public consultations at the national level are required under the Espoo Convention on “Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a Transboundary Context”, which is intended to help make development sustainable by promoting international co-operation in assessing the likely impact of a proposed activity on the environment. The UNECE’s “Guidance on Public Participation in Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context” describes a wide range of opportunities for establishing public participation, i.e. ensuring that national Environmental Impact Assessment procedures permit public participation (Article 2.2 of the Convention of Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context), along with good practice for notification of the transboundary impact of an activity, etc. (Bonvoisin, 2009). Additionally, the Espoo Convention’s “Kiev Protocol” on “Strategic environmental assessment (SEA)” foresees that SEAs be undertaken much earlier in the decision-making process than the EIAs foreseen under the Convention, and provides for extensive public participation in government decision-making in numerous sectors.⁵³

Consultation process in the development of UNECE tools

As regards the consultation process leading up to the adoption of IRC tools in UNECE, there is no uniform practice for stakeholders' engagement across the organisation. Nevertheless, this is a practice that is actively pursued by a number of UNECE bodies. In particular, wide public consultation is systematic in the UN Centre Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) and the UNECE International Centre of Excellence on Public Private Partnerships (ICoE PPPs). The ICoE PPPs is currently developing international standards for PPPs that will identify models and templates for critical projects that have a real social and economic transformation impact in the fight against poverty and climate change. Once the project team has developed a final draft of a standard, it is published on the ICoE website and the public's comments are invited and taken into account. This effective means of public consultation has been modelled on UN/CEFACT's rules of procedure, which have integrated comments from a large number of stakeholders in its standards on trade facilitation and electronic business for over a decade.

Other UNECE bodies also actively seek and manage inputs from external stakeholders. For example, in 2015, to foster engagement with external stakeholders, UNECE, in partnership with the "Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety," held a multi-stakeholder consultation on road safety, where the newly appointed UN Special Envoy for Road Safety presented his objectives and Action Plan.

Ex ante and cost-benefit analysis

UNECE develops tools that allow its members to conduct impact assessments for policymaking choices. It does not apply such tools systematically for its own IRC activities, except in selected cases because it does not have dedicated resources to carry out a systematic process of *ex ante* analysis of its standards, guidelines and other legal instruments. Examples include:

- The UNECE PPP Readiness Assessment Tool: a diagnostic tool, aimed at the assessment of the readiness of a government's legal, policy, and financial frameworks for the delivery of PPP projects.
- ForFITS (For Future Inland Transport Systems): a tool for modelling the impact on CO₂ emissions of different policy options developed by the Sustainable Transport Division. It is primarily focused on CO₂ emissions from inland transport, including road, rail and inland waterways.

- The Espoo convention provides practical tools that help national Governments choosing among a portfolio of possible national policies, in order to identify the one, which is expected to yield the highest net benefit for the attainment of policy goals.

A notable example of how cost benefit analyses have been undertaken before the adoption of a specific legal instrument is the “Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone” adopted in 1999 under the UNECE Air Convention and revised in 2012. This protocol is the first binding agreement to include emission reduction commitments for fine particulate matter and it was negotiated on the basis of a careful assessment of *inter alia* the health effect of air pollution and the cost of the different possible abatement techniques foreseen under the Protocol.

More generally, the Air Convention itself, in addition to laying down the general principles of international co-operation for air pollution abatement, has set up an institutional framework bringing together research and policy, providing the basis for political decision making based on scientific and analytical inputs from the academic and expert communities.

Ex post evaluation of UNECE activities

In the UNECE and all organisations that are part of the “UN family”, one fundamental instrument for monitoring *ex post* performance quality, including as regards IRC activities, is the annual “Programme Performance Report”. The report compiles annually an overview of results achieved and lessons learned, while identifying obstacles to implementation, and areas where improved co-ordination of activities across departments could be desirable.⁵⁴ This report is compiled by the Secretariat of the Committee for Programme and Coordination – a subsidiary organ of ECOSOC and of the UN General Assembly – based on submissions received from the entire UN Secretariat.

Additionally, the UNECE, as a member of the United Nations Evaluation Group, undergoes evaluations in accordance with the guiding principles of the norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations System. These evaluations enable the Secretariat and Member States to engage in discussions and consultations with a view to increasing the programmes’ effectiveness. Evaluations are conducted in a transparent and inclusive manner and are made available on the organisation’s website.

In addition to evaluations, UNECE is subject to: internal audits by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the Board of Auditors; inspections by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), as well as other external

audits and assessments. One recent evaluation was conducted by the OIOS in April 2016 (more details on this evaluation are given below).

Assessment of Member States

The UNECE engages in national assessments of its Member States' policies and practices in specific sectors, as illustrated by the examples below. These help further the implementation of UNECE's good practices and recommendations and, at the same time, promote a better mutual understanding of regulatory and administrative practices and constraints.

Conducted at the level of the Committees, or their subsidiary organs, assessments document the impact of implementation and the potential for improved implementation performance for legal instruments or non-binding standards and guidelines, projects and programmes.

Evaluations conducted under the Environment Sub-programme

The Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference of 1993 established the Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs) process, which was then integrated into the regular programme of the Committee on Environmental Policy in 1996. The third cycle of EPRs started in 2013. This cycle focuses on improving environmental governance and financing in a green economy context, strengthening co-operation with the international community and environmental mainstreaming in priority sectors. Undertaken at the request of the country concerned, the EPRs involve an in-depth analysis including a study mission.

Since its establishment, 24 UNECE Member States, or about half of the UNECE membership, have gone through the process, with several countries going through two or three review cycles.⁵⁵ The process has also been promoted as an approach for non-members: for example, an EPR of Morocco was concluded in 2014.⁵⁶ The Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, in 2016, reaffirmed its support for UNECE EPRs; acknowledged the important contribution of the EPR, over the past 20 years, as an effective and practical policy tool; and highlighted the role it can play in supporting the achievement and monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals in the pan-European region.⁵⁷

This is complemented by the Programme on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, which assists the UNECE Member States by:

- Setting up and undertaking the sustainable operation, with the European Environment Agency, of the pan-European Project to reinforce regular environment assessment process;

- Participating in the preparation of policy-making-oriented environmental assessments;
- Giving advice for making national monitoring programmes a better tool for environmental policy.

Quite different from the EPRs, region-wide evaluations also have been conducted to evaluate the implementation of the Water Convention.⁵⁸

Innovation Performance Reviews (IPR)

Innovation Performance Reviews (IPRs) are established under the auspices of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships. Like the EPRs, they are initiated at the request of countries concerned, and they aim to improve the regulatory and institutional framework for innovation. The IPRs present the main results of a participatory policy-advisory exercise and provide a set of recommendations and policy options which are proposed in order to stimulate innovation activity in the country. The first review was published in 2011, and four countries have been reviewed to date.⁵⁹

Country profiles on Housing and Land Management

The Committee on Housing and Land Management has been conducting “Country Profiles” for Member States since 1994, with 16 countries reviewed since then. These Country Profiles are an analytical tool for Governments, covering five main areas: the framework that has been used for the housing sector’s transition from public to private ownership in countries with economies in transition, the existing housing stock and new housing construction, the institutional framework, the legal framework and the financial framework. Initiated at the request of a Member State, they give an overview of progress made in housing and land management policies.⁶⁰

Studies on procedural and regulatory barriers to trade

Since 2010 the UNECE Committee on Trade (now the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards) has carried out demand-driven assessments of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in countries with economies in transition, with a view to helping them address non-tariff barriers to trade.

The findings and recommendations emerging from these studies are intended: to serve as a basis for decision-making by the concerned national governments and their development partners; identify targeted interventions;

support discussions among member States; and provide input to decisions on the Steering Committee's overall programme of work.

The Needs Assessment Studies follow a common methodology that helps identify:

- Key regulatory and procedural barriers to trade;
- Conflicting policy objectives related to trade development and trade facilitation;
- Shortcomings in existing public-private sector consultative mechanisms related to the development and implementation of regulatory policies;
- Shortfalls in the existing trade-support institutional framework (understood as comprising infrastructure, trade support organisations and state agencies, including those that support quality control);
- Procedures and regulations that could be improved through:
 - Systematic simplification: the elimination of all unnecessary elements and duplication in formalities, processes and procedures;
 - Harmonisation: the alignment of national formalities, procedures, documents, information, and operations with acceptable international commercial norms, practices and recommendations;
 - Standardisation: the implementation of internationally recognised standards including in documentary and information requirements.

Four countries have been reviewed to date, namely: Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.⁶¹

Global assessments of national statistical systems

The aim of the Global Assessments (GAs) of national statistical systems in the countries of EECCA and SEE is to provide an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the institutional, organisational and technical capacity of these countries to produce official statistics that comply with international and European guidelines and recommendations. GAs are carried out in co-operation with Eurostat and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), and are used by various donors active in the region, such as the World Bank. The GA reports represent a unique tool for

providing a clear picture of the state of development of official statistics in a country and help national authorities better programme the long-term development of statistics, and international donors to focus their technical co-operation activities on the identified needs. Since 2009, GAs have been conducted in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Ukraine, resulting in action plans to improve national statistics.⁶²

Monitoring and compliance enabled by UNECE Committees

In certain sectors, the UNECE has special procedures under which the Committees may serve as *fora* to consider concerns on a Member's compliance with its obligations and potentially find a solution. This is the case in particular under the MEAs and the Aarhus Convention.

Compliance under the UNECE Multilateral Environmental Agreements

The five MEAs and a number of their protocols have an Implementation or Compliance Committee⁶³ whose members are elected by Member States. The Committees:

- Consider communications related to specific issues of compliance;
- Prepare, at the request of the Meeting of the Parties, a report on compliance with or implementation of specific provisions of the Convention or Protocol;
- Monitor, assess and facilitate the implementation of and compliance with reporting requirements.

A review by one of the Implementation Committees can be triggered in four ways:

- A Party makes a submission concerning its own compliance,
- A Party makes a submission concerning another Party's compliance,
- The Secretariat makes a referral to the Committee, or
- A member of the public sends a communication concerning the compliance of a party.

The review of the Committee is meant to assist Parties in developing an accurate analysis of their situation; provide recommendations to the Parties on how to improve their situation; and, if necessary, seek support from donors, specialised agencies and other competent bodies.⁶⁴

Compliance under the Protocol to the Aarhus Convention on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

Under the Protocol to the Aarhus Convention on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, “referrals by the secretariat” are foreseen: “when the Secretariat (...) becomes aware of possible non-compliance by a Party with its obligations under the Protocol, it may request the Party concerned to furnish necessary information about the matter. If there is no response or the matter is not resolved within three months of the request, or such longer period as the circumstances of the matter may require, but in no case later than within six months, the secretariat shall bring the matter to the attention of the Committee, which shall consider the matter as soon as practicable”.

Enhancing implementation through technical co-operation

Technical co-operation activities are of key importance to empowering and enabling member States to implement the UNECE’s legal instruments, norms and standards as a means of promoting integration in the region and the world economy and progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other internationally agreed development goals.

The UNECE’s technical assistance activities are undertaken upon the request of the beneficiaries. They are focused on countries with economies in transition, and especially the least advanced among them: from 2006 to 2017, 37 out of 56 projects targeted the four poorest economies in the UNECE region. These activities are results oriented and are undertaken in co-operation with other organisations and stakeholders, including the academic community and NGOs, as well as other regional organisations.

Technical co-operation activities fall into two broad categories:

- Advisory services: aimed at assisting the recipient countries with policy-related issues, the implementation of the UNECE legal instruments, regulations and norms, and formulation of specific technical co-operation projects/programmes;
- Capacity-building activities (workshops, seminars, study tours and training) for assisting countries to implement and UNECE legal instruments, regulations, norms and standards.

Technical assistance activities are financed primarily by extra-budgetary funds. There is also a limited amount of regular budget funding from the “Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation” (RPTC).

Along with extra-budgetary contributions, a source for financing technical co-operation activities is the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) established by the General Assembly in 1997.⁶⁵ Many of the UNDA projects undertaken by UNECE have been carried out in partnership with other UN agencies, programmes and funds, as well as other United Nations regional commissions.

Another important component of the technical assistance activities of UNECE are the UNECE Regional Advisers financed by the RPTC budget. These 4-5 professionals operate within the UNECE sectoral sub-programmes and:

- Promote the use of UNECE deliverables and internationally recognised standards and best practices in the countries of EECCA and SEE;
- Help initiate and implement capacity-building in countries with economies in transition;
- Assist countries with economies in transition in the formulation and implementation of policies aimed at the achievement of internationally agreed development goals.

Assessment of the impact and success of regulatory co-operation through UNECE

UNECE has received overall positive feedback as regards its IRC activities. In a survey carried out by OIOS in 2015 to “evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of UNECE, and the extent to which it is fit for purpose to support Member States with the 2030 agenda for sustainable development”, 82% of sectoral committee members and 88% of staff rated UNECE as effective in helping develop standards and technical recommendations (OIOS, 2016).

Similarly, “72% of sectoral committee members (...) rated UNECE as effective in the development of legally binding regulations, standards and technical recommendations” (OIOS, 2016). The same survey appraised favourably the UNECE’s servicing and administration of legally binding conventions, praising, in particular, its ability to sustain a network of convention bodies, such as implementation committees and working groups; organise meetings and sessions; prepare documents, agendas and reports; and collect and disseminate information between participants.

Servicing conventions has meant ensuring that legal instruments evolve and stay up-to-date and seeking further ratifications when appropriate, which is crucial to maintaining their continued relevance. On the other hand, servicing such a large number of bodies in distinct and highly specialised areas has – according to this same report – affected the UNECE Secretariat’s ability to work across sectors and sub-programmes.

OIOS (2016) also praises UNECE’s conventions for their positive impacts on global public health and safety, democracy and cross-border trade (Table 2).

As another measure of the impact of UNECE activities in IRC, (OIOS, 2016) highlights that: “In the wider scheme of international legal frameworks, UNECE’s conventions and agreements have influenced other regional and global instruments such as European Union Directives. In environment, the Water Convention influenced the EU Water Framework Directive.⁶⁶ In transport, the Agreements on the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) and by Inland Waterway (ADN) were

integrated into the EU Directive on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, and the rules set out by the ADR and the ADN were extended to national transport operations in all EU countries. UNECE environmental conventions have inspired the normative content of international instruments, for example, the UNECE 1998 Aarhus Protocol on Heavy Metals which influenced the Minamata Convention.”

Table 2. Examples of positive global outcomes resulting from UNECE conventions

UNECE Convention	Year	Positive outcome
Agreement concerning the adoption of uniform technical prescription for wheeled vehicles equipment and parts	1958	Enhanced safety for car occupants and pedestrians
TIR Convention	1975	More efficient cross-border trade
Aarhus Convention	2001	Enhanced public access to environmental information
Air Convention	1979	Reductions of airborne emissions in the UNECE region

Source: OIOS (2016), “Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services of the Evaluation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe” www.unece.org/fileadmin/dam/open_unece/evaluation/evaluation_reports-with_sps/programme-wide_docs/oios-ied_final_report_evaluation_of_ece.pdf (accessed 4 October 2016).

Overall, 73% of respondents to the sectoral-committee-member survey indicated that in the past five years their country had used one of these UNECE products. Respondents indicated that UNECE had effectively facilitated critical norms, standards and conventions through its ability to convene and guide the discussions and decisions of global experts in the wide range of sectors that it is engaged in.

The large majority of members of sectoral committees also rated UNECE highly in the performance of its secretariat role. Specifically, 89% of respondents rated the secretariat support provided by the UNECE as excellent or good. More in detail, a majority (80% or more) rated that support as being excellent or good with regard to the quality and timeliness of information provided, the responsiveness of staff and the servicing of meetings.

On the other hand, OIOS (2016) also identifies challenges for the organisation, some of which are relevant to the IRC activities of the organisation discussed in this report. In particular, the report points to the fact that – while many UNECE IRC tools have been adopted and have been useful in non-UNECE countries – UNECE still lacks a common

understanding and clear strategy on its global reach beyond its regional role.”. Further, OIOS (2016) notes that – looking to the future – UNECE risks losing its strong capacity to service the intergovernmental bodies where IRC tools are shaped because it lacks an institutional knowledge sharing mechanism. The UNECE management has now completed a mapping exercise of its intersectoral and inter-divisional activities with a view to strengthening synergies and promoting increased collaboration among sub-programmes. It is currently developing an effective way of capturing, storing, sharing and integrating the knowledge it generates into its work programme and activities.⁶⁷

Conclusion

This case study has highlighted the UNECE's role in the area of IRC within the UN system in the context of the implementation and measurement of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In particular this case study has described the organisation's history, membership and governance structure. It has also illustrated through examples chosen from all of the organisation's sub-programmes:

- The large number and diversity of actors – from within the UNECE region and also beyond its region – that participate in the development of the UNECE IRC toolbox;
- The variety of instruments of co-operation it maintains with partnering international and regional bodies;
- The diversity of the sectors in which the organisation is engaged, and the diversity of the IRC tools it develops.

The UNECE has been rated highly by members of its sectoral committees for its provision of secretarial support services to its numerous intergovernmental and treaty bodies, in particular as regards the quality and timeliness of information provided, the responsiveness of its staff and the servicing of its meetings. A recent internal audit also underscored the positive impact of UNECE's IRC activities both directly – by for example reducing pollution, deaths on the road and facilitating international trade – and indirectly, through its impact on national, regional and global norms and standards.

The UNECE is a multi-disciplinary organisation and its IRC activities are demand-driven and adapted to the needs of the different constituencies it services. This has created challenges in sharing knowledge between different parts of the organisation, compounded by the scarcity of secretariat resources. To respond to this challenge the organisation has mapped out its intersectoral and inter-divisional activities with a view to strengthening synergies and promoting increased collaboration among sub-programmes. The implementation of an improved knowledge management system is also being pursued.

In spite of it being a regional organisation, non-UNECE countries use UNECE standards, accede to its Conventions, participate in its IRC work, and benefit from its technical co-operation activities. This is testimony to the value ascribed to UNECE's work by non-UNECE countries. Building on this, the UNECE will foster a discussion both within and beyond the organisation on how to respond to demands from beyond its region, and how to balance this with its regional role.

A growing component of UNECE IRC activities is being developed to support the efforts of the organisation's members to implement and measure the 17 SDGs of Agenda 2030 and the related targets. The UNECE IRC work is seen – by both members and non-members – as instrumental for translating the new framework into concrete measures. Looking to the future, the organisation will be challenged to further strengthen its contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular through its IRC activities. The cross-cutting nature of many of the SDGs will make the organisation's efforts to work more effectively across sub-programmes a key factor of success in this endeavour.

Notes

1. United Nations “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” A/RES/70/1.
2. Resolution 36 (IV) of ECOSOC.
3. www.unece.org/oes/history/history.html.
4. www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/conventn/UN_Transport_Agreements_and_Conventions.pdf.
5. One example among many of UNECE activities that are unique is the Convention on “Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters” (Aarhus Convention), and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (the Kiev Protocol), the only legally binding international instruments on environmental democracy, hailed by then Secretary-General Kofi Annan as “the most ambitious venture in the area of environmental democracy so far undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations”.
6. Including among others the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and its Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe), and the other UN regional commissions.
7. Such as the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).
8. Such as the Centre Européen de Normalisation (CEN), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and its subsidiary bodies such as the Euro-Asian Council for Standardization, Metrology and Testing (EASC), the European Commission and its statistical office, Eurostat, the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), the European Union (EU).
9. Such as the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS); the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Economic Forum (WEF).
10. Such as the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the

International Nuts and Dried Fruit Council (INC), the International Road Transport Union (IRU).

11. These include Universities, research organisations such as the European Academy for Standardisation (EURAS), the Russian Academy of Science, the Russian Academy for Standardisation, Metrology and Certification.
12. For example, the Memorandum of Understanding between IEC, ISO, ITU and UNECE in the field of electronic business, www.unece.org/fileadmin/dam/oes/mou/2000/24march2000_iec_iso_itu.pdf.
13. As one example, UNECE provides the secretariat to the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) which is the focal point for trade facilitation recommendations and electronic business standards in the United Nations. UN/CEFACT works closely with UN/ESCAP through the UNNEXT network to conduct training, knowledge sharing, and application of international standards in the developing countries and transition economies from Asia and the Pacific, www.unece.org/trade/unnext.html.
14. The current membership of the organisation is as follows: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan.
15. UNECE Statistical Database, data for 2013.
16. Belgium, Belarus, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Luxembourg, Norway, Netherlands, Poland, United Kingdom, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United States of America, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.
17. Various accessions: in 1991 (Israel, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), in 1992 (Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia) and in 1993 (Macedonia, Monaco, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, San Marino, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).
18. Please see: Art. 11 and 12 of the UNECE Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure, Fifth revised edition, (E/ECE/778/Rev.5) www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/oes/mandate/Commission_Rev5_English.pdf
19. The Conference of European Statisticians steers UNECE work in statistics and has six international organisations as permanent observers

on the Bureau, representing the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the OECD, the United Nations Statistics Division and the World Bank.

20. www.unece.org/tir/welcome.html.
21. E/ECE/778//Rev.5 Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic Commission for Europe, Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure, p.6 www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/oes/mandate/Commission_Rev5_English.pdf. For example, at the 2015 session of the Commission, Kazakhstan was elected as Chair, with Latvia and Switzerland as Vice-Chairs. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission also serve as the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the EXCOM for the period of the biennium.
22. For more details on the UNECE reform, which established the EXCOM, see: www.unece.org/oes/nutshell/2005, www.unece.org/oes/nutshell/2005-2006/reform.html.
23. THE PEP Steering Committee is jointly serviced by the Environment and Sustainable Transport Divisions.
24. It should be noted that some of these bodies supervise more than one subsidiary body. WP.7 for example also supervises the activities of three additional “Specialised Sections” that work on the standardisation of meat, seed potatoes, and dry and dried produce). And the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards supervises, alongside the WP.7, the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) which has three subsidiary bodies.
25. Historically, most UN legal instruments in the field of transport have been developed by the UNECE Member Countries before extending their application beyond UNECE membership.
26. In August 2016.
27. In addition to voluntary contributions, a smaller percentage of technical co-operation activities are funded through earmarked resources from the UN Budget, under the UN Development Account (UNDA) and the United Nations Regional Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC) budget.
28. See Article 13 of the Water Convention that encourages concerned parties to exchange “reasonably available data on environmental conditions of transboundary waters, experience gained in the application and operation of best available technology and results of research and development”.
29. Initially developed in the UNECE in 1992, UNFC was soon extended to deliver on an ECOSOC Resolution and became a UN-wide tool managed by the UNECE. The system was developed through co-operation and collaboration among UNECE and non-UNECE member countries, and a wide range of

different stakeholders (UN agencies, IOs, Intergovernmental bodies, professional associations and the private sector).

30. This classification is used *inter alia* in the Global Inventory of Statistical Standards, maintained by the UN Statistical Division in New York, by Paris21 for coordinating capacity building activities, and in the Standard for Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange.
31. The list of the 58 International Agreements by category is available on UNECE website: www.unece.org/trans/conventn/legalinst.html.
32. Entered in force on 10 September 1997.
33. Entered into force on 19 April 2000.
34. Entered into force on 6 October 1996 and was formally opened to global accession in 2016.
35. Entered into force on 17 March 1992.
36. Entered into force 30 October 2001.
37. The Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone; the Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs); the Protocol on Heavy Metals; the Protocol on Further Reduction of Sulphur Emissions; the Protocol concerning the Control of Emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds or their Transboundary Fluxes; the Protocol concerning the Control of Nitrogen Oxides or their Transboundary Fluxes; the Protocol on the Reduction of Sulphur Emissions or their Transboundary Fluxes; the Protocol on Long-term Financing of the Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP). See: www.unece.org/env/lrtap/status/lrtap_s.html.
38. Entered into force on 4 August 2005.
39. Entered into force on 11 July 2010.
40. Entered into force on 8 October 2009.
41. The Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters, adopted in Kyiv on 21 May 2003, is not yet in force. The Protocol is a joint instrument of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents.
42. The UNECE “Green Economy Toolbox” is a useful presentation of tools developed by all UNECE sub-programmes to support the transition to a green economy, www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/GET/.

43. Under the system, the first two characters indicate the country and the three following represent the place name. Examples such as CHGVA, JPTYO and USNYC are familiar to air travellers who see the three last letters of these codes on their luggage tags. For more information please see: www.unece.org/cefact/locode/locode_since1981.html.
44. www.unece.org/cefact.
45. www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.html.
46. The Recommendations are available at: www.unece.org/fileadmin/dam/trade/publications/ece_trade_379rev.1_eng.pdf.
47. The six international standards: the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (2014), General Statistical Information Model (2013), Common Statistical Production Architecture (2013), Strategy to implement the vision for development of business architecture in statistics (2012), Vision for strategic developments in business architecture in statistics (2011), Common Metadata Framework (2006). The 3 International Classifications are: the Principles and Framework for an International Classification of Crimes for Statistical Purposes, the Updated Classification of International Statistical Activities, and the Revision of Classification Systems Used in Transport Statistics).
48. www.unece.org/cicppp/public-private-partnerships-ppp/icoeppp/standards.html.
49. www.unece.org/cicppp/innovation-and-competitiveness-policies-icp/team-of-specialists-on-innovation-and-competitiveness-policies-to-icp.html.
50. For further details on the nature of this UN-wide report, which forms part of the regular budget documents of the United Nations please see: <http://research.un.org/en/docs/budget/documents>. As regards more specifically the UNECE part of the report please see instead www.unece.org/info/open-unece/programme-performance-report-ppr.html.
51. See the Convention website at: www.unece.org/env/pp/introduction.html.
52. See: www.unece.org/env/pp/ppif.compendium.html#national.
53. See: www.unece.org/env/eia/sea_protocol.html and UNECE (2006).
54. Within the United Nations, evaluation is defined as a “systematic and discrete process, as objective as possible, to determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and/or sustainability of any element of a programme’s performance in relation to their objectives”, see www.unece.org/info/open-unece/programme-performance-report-ppr.html.

55. OECD is responsible for conducting EPRs of countries that are part of its membership, while UNECE is responsible for all other countries.
56. The list of reviewed countries is available at: www.unece.org/environmental-policy/environmental-performance-reviews/reviewed-countries.html.
57. See the Chair's summary of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference: <http://efebatum.com/uploads/other/0/825.pdf>
58. The First and Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters were published respectively in 2007 and 2011, www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/water/blanks/assessment/assessment_web_full.pdf, www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/water/publications/assessment/English/ECE_Second_Assessment_En.pdf.
59. The countries that have been reviewed are: Belarus, Ukraine, Armenia and Tajikistan. See: www.unece.org/innovationperformancereviews.htm.
60. There is a total of 16 countries profiles: Bulgaria (1996), Poland (1998), Slovakia (1999), Lithuania (2000), Romania (2001), the Republic of Moldova (2002), Albania (2002), Armenia and the Russian Federation (2004), Serbia and Montenegro (2006), Georgia (2007), Belarus (2008), Kyrgyzstan (2010), Azerbaijan (2010), Tajikistan (2011) and Ukraine (2013).
61. www.unece.org/tradewelcome/studies-on-regulatory-and-procedural-barriers-to-trade.html.
62. The GA reports are available at www.unece.org/statcoop/ga.html.
63. In the case of the Industrial Accidents Convention, this function is carried out by a working group.
64. See for example the infographics about the Compliance Committee of the Aarhus Convention www.unece.org/env/pp/cc.html.
65. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the other UN Regional Commissions, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UN/HABITAT, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
66. For a review of the complex links between the UNECE and the EU policy framework in the field of water, see Baranyai (2015), pp. 88-100.
67. See the “Management Response” to the OIOS report, www.unece.org/info/open-unece/evaluation.html.

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The OECD is a unique forum where governments work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The OECD is also at the forefront of efforts to understand and to help governments respond to new developments and concerns, such as corporate governance, the information economy and the challenges of an ageing population. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

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International Regulatory Co-operation and International Organisations

The Case of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

The UNECE is one of five United Nations regional commissions whose objective is to pursue sustainable development, regional co-operation and economic integration. The UNECE fosters international regulatory co-operation in a large number of areas, through a diversity of instruments ranging from strong legal tools (such as conventions) to voluntary standards. Its IRC activities are demand-driven and supported by solid analytical and technical expertise. This case study provides an overview of UNECE's role in IRC – its main characteristics, its impacts, successes and challenges.

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