

UNECE

Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation

UNECE Regional
Report 2021



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United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation: UNECE Regional Report 2021



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Foreword

It is a great pleasure to present the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Regional Report, based on the United Nations Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable trade facilitation 2021. This report is turning out to be a flagship publication from UNECE for the trading community in Europe and Central Asia. The timing of the publication of this report is critical as international trade is going through a transition stemming from uncertainties related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trade facilitation is a journey towards a constantly moving target. This report is an important contribution in this journey, keeping track of the key indicators for monitoring and benchmarking trade facilitation performance. This year, UNECE economies reached an impressive average rate of trade facilitation implementation of 76%, which is an increase from 72% in 2019. The report also identifies disparities among country groups, especially in digital trade facilitation.

Trade facilitation and digitalization are closely linked, as both aim at more efficient and rapid processes. Once more, this year's survey identifies gaps in pursuit of digital trade facilitation measures.

Another important aspect covered by the survey is sustainable and inclusive trade facilitation. It is encouraging to see that member States are increasingly interested in responding to questions related to these areas. This will indeed help policymakers to align policy decisions towards sustainable trade facilitation.

In this year, the section on trade facilitation in times of crisis is a welcome addition, given the lessons learned about preparing for crisis situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The report provides important recommendations on using best practices and international standards for achieving fuller implementation of trade facilitation provisions.

The Global Survey is an important example of cooperation among the United Nations Regional Commissions. All UN member States, including the transition economies of the UNECE region, stand to benefit from this useful benchmarking tool.



Olga Algayerova
United Nations Under-Secretary-General
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