

Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

108th session

Geneva, 10-13 November 2020

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

14 October 2020

Organization of the 108th session

Note by the secretariat on behalf of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Working Party

Revision

Introduction

1. The Chair of the Working Party, Ms Ariane Roumier (France) and the Vice-Chair, Mr Alfonso Simoni (Italy), would like to inform delegates of the arrangements agreed with Conference Services to take account of the changing situation caused by the pandemic and to help the Working Party to progress in its programme of work in the best possible manner.

Background

2. As a result of the coronavirus pandemic and the measures implemented by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and ADR Contracting Parties to protect public health, such as travel restrictions, it was decided to postpone the 108th session of the Working Party. The session, initially scheduled from 11 to 15 May, was postponed to 9-13 November 2020 in place of the 109th session.

3. On 27 August 2020, the Economic Commission for Europe's Executive Secretary informed UNECE Members States that "UNOG's capacity to service meetings of Geneva based entities remains severely limited, due to a combination of COVID-19 response measures, financial constraints triggered by the liquidity crisis, and the ongoing renovation work of the Strategic Heritage Plan (SHP)".

4. Considering these factors, the current quarantine and travel restrictions in force in Switzerland and ADR Contracting Parties, and after consultation with the secretariat and UNOG Conference Services, the Working Party's Bureau agreed to adjust the format of the 108th session as indicated below.

5. These arrangements also take into account that the Working Group is on the first year of its working biennium and that decisions for which an in-person discussion would be required could be deferred to the next face-to-face session.

Schedule and format of the session

Hybrid informal meetings without interpretation (10-11 November 2020)

6. On 10-11 November 2020, the Working Party will meet in WebEx-based informal hybrid meetings i.e. with the possibility to participate either remotely or in-person in the allocated room in the Palais. These informal meetings will be held in English only (i.e.

without interpretation services) and aim to discuss the documents on the agenda for the session. Final decisions on proposed texts and conclusions will only be taken during the hybrid official sessions on 12-13 November.

Provisional timetable of the informal meetings:

Tuesday: 10h-12h30 and 14h30-17h30

Wednesday: 9h30-12h30 and 14h30-17h30

Hybrid official meetings with interpretation (12-13 November 2020)

7. On 12 and 13 November 2020, the Working Party will meet in official hybrid meetings i.e. with the possibility to participate online or in the allocated room in the Palais. These meetings will be held **with simultaneous interpretation into English, French and Russian** using the interpretation platform “Interprefy”. Details about how to connect and use the platform will be circulated a few days in advance to the session, to all those who have previously registered to attend the session remotely.

8. During these sessions, the Working Party will be able to take decisions on proposals and adopt the draft report of the meeting.

Provisional timetable of the official meetings:

Thursday and Friday: 10h-12h and 14h30-16h30

9. A test of the Interprefy platform and connexions will also be scheduled prior to the morning session on Thursday morning.

Conduct of business

Comments on documents

10. To facilitate the discussions and the work of the interpreters during the formal session, the Chairs would like to invite delegations to submit, as much as possible, their comments in advance in informal documents.

Quorum and voting

11. In accordance with the Rules of Procedures of the Working Party (ECE/TRANS/WP.15/190/Add.1), the secretary will check the quorum (online and in the room) to declare the official meetings open and to take decisions.

12. Considering the format of the meeting and the time in the biennium, the Chairs propose to adopt only decisions taken by consensus and to delay decisions for which a vote would be needed until the next session.

13. As regards the elections of officers for 2021, the Chairs remind delegates that, in accordance with the rules and procedures “All elections shall be decided by secret ballot, unless, in the absence of any objection, WP.15 decides to proceed without taking a ballot on an agreed candidate or slate.”. Elections will take place during the official segment of the meeting (12-13 November). Due to technical reasons, secret balloting is currently not possible for hybrid meetings using Interprefy. If a secret ballot would be needed or required for this session, the elections will be postponed until the opening of the next session allowing secret balloting.

Registration

14. All delegates (i.e: attending virtually or in person) should register online at:
<https://uncdb.unece.org/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=9gr5V8>
15. In addition, those wishing to attend in person are requested to register through a new platform (INDICO) by following the link:
<https://indico.un.org/event/31152/registration/>
16. Since INDICO is a new registration system, you will have to create a new account. You won't be able to use the other system credentials.
17. Please note that registration through INDICO is mandatory for participants wishing to attend in person (including for those with a long-duration badge). The secretariat will not be able to register you onsite and Security will not grant access to the premises to those who are not previously registered through INDICO.
18. The registration through this platform is mandatory for all future meetings taking place in Geneva to allow a quick COVID-19 response, if necessary. Nameplates in the rooms will be set up for those who registered with INDICO taking into account the social distancing.

Further information

19. Before the session, the secretariat will publish further information on <http://www.unece.org/trans/main/dgdb/wp15/wp15inf108.html>. This will include:
 - Guidelines for participation in the Web-Ex based meetings;
 - Guidelines for participation in the meetings with Interpretfy;
 - Guidelines and measures for entering and participating in the session at the Palais;
 - Rooms allocated for participants who wish to attend the meetings in person;
 - Provisional timetable.
 20. Delegates are also invited to check the information and restrictions for travellers entering Switzerland on the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health's website:
<https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/krankheiten/ausbrueche-epidemien-pandemien/aktuelle-ausbrueche-epidemien/novel-cov/empfehlungen-fuer-reisende.html>
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