

Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized
System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

1 June 2021

Fortieth session

Geneva, 5-7 July 2021

Item 2 (i) of the provisional agenda

**Work on the Globally Harmonized System (GHS):
other matters**

French translation of the definition of “Eye irritation” in the GHS

Transmitted by the expert from Canada

Background

1. In the process of developing a proposal to align our regulations with the 7th revised edition of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS), Canada found what we believe to be a translation inconsistency for the definition of “Eye irritation” between the English and French versions of the GHS.
2. We note the present English definition of “Eye irritation” was introduced in the 7th revised edition of the GHS (see ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/62 paragraphs 16 to 18 and ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/2016/9; previously a working definition existed). There were no changes to the English or French definition of “Eye irritation” in the 8th or 9th revised edition of the GHS.
3. In the English version of the GHS, the definition of “Eye irritation” reads as follows:
“*Eye irritation* refers to the production of changes in the eye, which are fully reversible, occurring after the exposure of the eye to a substance or mixture.”
4. In the French version of the GHS, the definition of “Eye irritation” reads as follows:
« *L’irritation oculaire* désigne une atteinte totalement réversible de l’œil faisant suite à l’exposition de celui-ci à une substance ou un mélange. »
5. We believe the French version of the definition of “Eye irritation” is not consistent with the English version, because the expression “une atteinte” means a damage or harm. The English version of the definition refers to “the production of changes”, so it does not refer to damage or harm. We feel this inconsistency leads to a difference in the technical meaning conveyed by the French definition.
6. We propose that the French definition of “L’irritation oculaire” could be modified to the following, to be consistent with the English definition (new text shown in bold and underlined):
« *L’irritation oculaire* désigne **l’apparition de changements totalement réversibles** de l’œil faisant suite à l’exposition de celui-ci à une substance ou un mélange. »
7. A table comparing the English and French definitions and the proposed modified text for the French definition can be found in the Annex to this document.
8. Canada raised this concern to the secretariat as well as to several Francophone experts through intersessional informal correspondence, and it is to our understanding that there is a general openness to discuss this matter. At this time, Canada wanted to bring this matter to the attention of the Sub-Committee.

Action

9. We invite the Sub-Committee to consider:
 - (a) whether others share Canada's concern that the French version of the definition of "Eye irritation" conveys a different technical meaning than the English version;
 - (b) whether there is support to modify the French definition of "Eye irritation" in the GHS; and
 - (c) whether there is support for the proposed modified text provided in this document (see paragraph 6 and the Annex) to replace the current definition, or any comments or suggestions with respect to the proposed modified text.

Annex

Comparison of the English, French and proposed modified text for the “Eye irritation” definition

English definition (GHS 7 th , 8 th , and 9 th revised editions)	French definition (GHS 7 th , 8 th , and 9 th revised editions)	Modified text for consideration
<i>Eye irritation</i> refers to the production of changes in the eye, which are fully reversible, occurring after the exposure of the eye to a substance or mixture.	<i>L'irritation oculaire</i> désigne une atteinte totalement réversible de l'œil faisant suite à l'exposition de celui-ci à une substance ou un mélange.	<i>L'irritation oculaire</i> désigne <u>l'apparition de changements</u> totalement réversibles de l'œil faisant suite à l'exposition de celui-ci à une substance ou un mélange.