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

3 June 2021

Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

Fifty-eighth session

Geneva, 28 June-2 July 2021

Item 2 (g) of the provisional agenda

Explosives and related matters: issues related to the definition of explosives

Continuation of work on definition of explosive and definition of Class 1

Transmitted by the expert from Sweden

Introduction

1. To the fifty-fifth session of Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (TDG), three documents, two from SAAMI and one from Sweden (ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/2019/7, informal documents INF.20 (55th session) and INF.35 (55th session)), were presented expressing some concerns about the definition of explosives and the definition of Class 1.
2. After reviewing the papers, the experts in the Explosive Working Group (EWG) acknowledged that there may be some problems with the definitions of “explosive substance” and “Class 1” and that changes may be needed. However, the issue was deemed too complicated for the work within the EWG due to the limited number of sessions during a biennium. Therefore, an intersessional correspondence group (hereafter: ICG-definition) was established to review the matter and to report back to the EWG. The ICG-definition will be led by Sweden with a number of remits, as described in the EWG report under point 10; informal document INF.55 (55th session).
3. When the ICG-definition started to schedule its work after the 55th session, it became obvious that the work would interfere with the on-going revision of Chapter 2.1 of GHS, since an important part of GHS revision deals with the definition of class of explosives. Since GHS revision is an important and resource-demanding work, ICG-definition decided to pause its work in order not to risk any delay of the GHS revision.
4. Now, the revision of GHS has been finished with success. The definition of class of explosives has been established by elaboration of many experts. The new Chapter 2.1 including the definition of class of explosives is presented in ST/SG/AC.10/48/Add.3.
5. The new Chapter 2.1 of GHS, especially the establishment of the definition of class of explosives implies the premise for ICG-definition is changed. Communications via e-mails within the ICG-definition indicated that members’ opinions are divided regarding the continuation of the work. Some indicated that there is no need to continue the work, while some indicated that there are still issues to clarify. The leader of ICG-definition believes it is necessary to bring back the issue to EWG and ask EWG’s opinion whether or how the work in ICG-definition should continue.

Proposal

6. EWG reviews the work assigned to the ICG-definition and the work done so far in the ICG-definition and advises whether or how the work of the ICG-definition should continue, with consideration to the outcome of the GHS revision.
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