
Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

Joint Meeting of the RID Committee of Experts and the
Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

17 February 2022

Bern, 14-18 March 2022

Item 4 of the provisional agenda:

Interpretation of RID/ADR/ADN

List of interpretations

Transmitted by the Government of the Netherlands

Introduction

1. During the 13th Session of the RID Committee of Experts' standing working group in November 2021 the Netherlands submitted informal document INF.2. In that document among other things the suggestion was made to register the interpretations of RID that did not lead to an amendment of RID.
2. Since 2016 the UNECE publishes a list of ADR interpretations adopted by the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15). Also, a list with ADN interpretations that are confirmed by the ADN Safety Committee is published at the UNECE website. Interpretations that lead to an amendment of the provisions or biennial amendments of ADR or ADN are not mentioned in these lists. Currently OTIF does not publish a list of interpretations of RID.
3. The RID Committee of Experts' standing working group supported the suggestion for a list of interpretations of RID but noted that most questions of interpretation concerned both RID and ADR and are discussed at Joint Meeting level. Therefore, the standing working group asked the representative of the Netherlands to initiate a discussion on organising the related work in the Joint Meeting (OTIF/RID/CE/GTP/2021-A, paras. 17-21).
4. The secretariat of the Joint Meeting documents the decisions and summarizes the discussions in the reports. However, it is difficult for those not present at a meeting to comprehend the full extent of the discussion. It can also be difficult to trace back the documents on a topic, if it is not known when the discussion took place. Fact is that reports from discussions in WP.15 before the year 2000 are not published at the UNECE website. That makes it also difficult to trace back to the relevant documents regarding on the topic in question for ADR.
5. Although we are of the opinion that the provisions in RID/ADR/ADN should be written in such a way that its meaning and goal is clear for everyone and interpretations, in principle, should no longer be needed. Unfortunately, this is not always the case or possible. Therefore, knowledge on previous discussions and the rationale behind the decision for a provision is sometimes necessary in order to implement that provision correctly.
6. At the moment, much of the knowledge on the discussions and rationale behind discussions and provisions for RID/ADR/ADN is stored in the collective minds of members of these TDG bodies, such as the Joint Meeting, the WP.15, the RID Committee of Experts' standing working group and the ADN Safety Committee. As interpretations are not written down, valuable knowledge and expertise are lost when members no longer participate in these bodies.

7. A similar request, to address interpretations of existing regulatory issues was raised at the Sub-Committee UN TDG level by the Expert of the United States of America (ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2020/73). There was general support for this approach in this Sub-Committee (see: report ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/114).

8. Since the Joint Meeting is an advisory body for the RID Committee of Experts, the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15) and the ADN Safety Committee, its decision for amendment or on interpretation of RID, ADR or ADN should be approved or confirmed by these committees. Therefore, the final discussion whether an interpretation made by the Joint Meeting is accepted for RID, ADR or ADN should be taken by these decision-making committees.

Question

9. Is the Joint Meeting of the opinion that it would be helpful to have a procedure with the purpose to present the interpretations made by the Joint Meeting to the RID Committee of Experts, the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15) and the ADN Safety committee to review, confirm or amend these interpretations, if appropriate, and to publish them for RID, ADR or ADN?

Request

10. The Dutch delegation is interested to hear the opinions of the other delegations regarding this question and invites the Joint Meeting to take action, as it deems appropriate.
