



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
21 November 2022

Original: English

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

Berne, 20-24 March 2023

Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda

Proposals for amendments to RID/ADR/ADN: new proposals

Language requirements for the transport document according to ADR/ADN

Transmitted by the International Association of Dangerous Goods Safety Advisers (IASA)*, **

Executive summary:

The language requirement of ADR/ADN requires most transport documents to be in two languages, both the official language of the consigning country and either English, French or German.

Modern logistics operations and the centralisation of electronic data processing (EDP) require quite substantial work to maintain language databases solely for the purpose of fulfilling the language requirement of ADR/ADN.

Many companies, as well as many authorities, communicate solely internationally and use just one language, either English, French or German.

This proposal suggests bringing the language requirement of ADR/ADN into line with the language requirement of RID, allowing the transport document to be drafted in one or more languages. One of the languages must be either English, French or German.

Action to be taken:

IASA would like to ask the members of the Joint Meeting for their opinion on amending the language requirement in 5.4.1.4 of ADR/ADN.

* A/77/6 (Sect.20), para. 20.76

** Circulated by the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) under the symbol OTIF/RID/RC/2023/6.

Introduction

1. Historically, the language requirements in ADR/ADN for the transport document stated that it must be drafted in an official language of the forwarding country, and also, if that language is not English, French or German, in either English, French or German. Modern logistics systems, means of communication and document transmission allows documents to be issued at centralised locations or data centres. The present language requirement in ADR/ADN makes this more complicated.
2. The present text in ADR reads:

"The particulars to be entered in the document shall be drafted in an official language of the forwarding country, and also, if that language is not English, French, or German, in English, French or German, unless international road carriage tariffs, if any, or agreements concluded between the countries concerned in the transport operation, provide otherwise."
3. The present text in ADN reads:

"The particulars to be entered in the document shall be drafted in an official language of the forwarding country, and also, if that language is not English, French, or German, in English, French or German, unless agreements concluded between the countries concerned in the transport operation, provide otherwise."
4. The present text in RID reads:

"The transport document shall be filled out in one or more languages, one of which shall be in English, French or German, unless any agreements concluded between the countries concerned in the transport operation provide otherwise."

Proposal

5. Amend present text in ADR and ADN to read:

"The particulars to be entered in the document shall be drafted in one or more languages, one of which shall be English, French or German, unless any agreements concluded between the countries concerned in the transport operation provide otherwise.

For national transport, the document may be in any of the official languages of the country concerned."

Justification

6. The average international transport operation mostly includes two or more different countries, so the language of the consigning country is only relevant for the first leg of the journey. This means that other than in the consigning country, there is no advantage for any member of the authorities, emergency services or vehicle crew, or for carriers or consignees in having the document in a language of the consigning country. For centralised document operations, the huge amount of work required to maintain language databases just for the purpose of issuing documentation in a language with limited use seems unnecessary.
7. Authorities, emergency services and others are used to handling texts in either English, French or German, and no detrimental situations or safety issues are anticipated.

Action to be taken

8. IASA would like to ask the members of the Joint Meeting for their opinion on amending the language requirement in ADR/ADN 5.4.1.4. Depending on the results, IASA would be prepared to submit an official document to the next session of the Joint Meeting.
