
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

Bern, 20-24 March 2023

Item 9 (b) of the provisional agenda

Any other business:

Circular economy and sustainable development goals

7 February 2023

Outcome of the WP.15's round table discussion on the circular economy and the WP.15/AC.2's workshop on sustainable development and climate change

Note by the secretariats

I. Introduction

1. Upon the request of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) to its subsidiary bodies for an annual report on the work related to United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15) held during its 112th session in November 2022 a round table discussion on the circular economy from the perspective of multimodal transport of dangerous goods and the ADN Safety Committee organised, at its forty-first session in January 2023, a workshop on sustainable development and climate change from the perspective of the transport of dangerous goods on inland waterways.
2. The secretariat was requested to report to the spring 2023 session of the RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting on the positive outcome of both events, the WP.15 roundtable (report ECE/TRANS/WP.15/260, paras. 45-51) and WP.15/AC.2 workshop (report ECE/TRANS/WP.15/AC.2/84, paras. 56-67). It will help guiding the Joint Meeting's discussion on the key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) applicable to the work on the transport of dangerous goods for inland transport modes.

II. WP.15's round table discussion on circular economy and sustainable use of natural resources

3. A round table discussion on the circular economy from the perspective of multimodal transport of dangerous goods was held during the Working Party's 112th session. The round table was a response to discussions held during the Working Party's 111th session and to the request from the Inland Transport Committee, in the context of its strategy to 2030, for an annual report on the work of the subsidiary bodies related to the circular economy and the Sustainable Development Goals.
4. The programme and all the presentations made during the round table were made available on the webpage of the 112th session of the Working Party WP.15 (<https://unece.org/info/Transport/Dangerous-Goods/events/364687>).
5. The round table began with welcome addresses from the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe, the Director of the Sustainable Transport Division and the Chief of the Dangerous Goods Section. The Executive Secretary highlighted the importance of the circular economy and sustainable use of natural resources in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Agenda 2030. The Director of the Sustainable Transportation Division recalled, in particular, that the Economic and Social Council had

recently approved the revised terms of reference of the Inland Transport Committee. The new terms of reference had been drafted with a view to encouraging non-member countries of ECE to participate in the sessions of the Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies and enable them to accede to the United Nations legal instruments developed under the auspices of the Sustainable Transport Division. The Chief of the Dangerous Goods Section recalled the decisions taken by the Joint Meeting regarding the addition to its programme of work of a specific item on the circular economy and the SDGs and references to those topics in working documents.

6. The panellists and the participants recognized that the work of United Nations bodies on the transport of dangerous goods was already having a direct and indirect impact on the development of the circular economy and the SDGs and that it was now important to better identify the links between those areas.

7. The Working Party expressed its appreciation of the round table discussion. It stressed the importance of continuing to consider its work in the light of goals related to the circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources, while reconciling those issues with expected safety objectives.

8. The Working Party decided to dedicate a new agenda item to the issue of the Sustainable Development Goals and the circular economy so as to allow for regular discussion on follow-up actions. It also invited delegations, when submitting proposals, to note in the justification part any interlinkage there might be with those topics.

III. ADN Safety Committee's Workshop on sustainable development and climate change from the perspective of the transport of dangerous goods on inland waterways

9. A workshop on sustainable development and climate change from the perspective of the transport of dangerous goods on inland waterways was held during the forty-first session of the Safety Committee. The workshop was a follow-up of the round table discussions held during the November 2022 session of WP.15 in the context of the Inland Transport Committee strategy to 2030, for an annual report on the work of the subsidiary bodies also related to the circular economy and the SDGs.

10. The programme and all the presentations made during the workshop were made available on the webpage of the forty-first session of the Safety Committee (<https://unece.org/info/Transport/Dangerous-Goods/events/370093>).

11. The workshop began with welcome addresses from the Director of the Sustainable Transport Division and with background information by the secretariat. The Director highlighted the importance of circular economy and sustainable use of natural resources in achieving the SDGs of Agenda 2030 and recalled, in particular, that the Economic and Social Council had recently approved the revised terms of reference of the Inland Transport Committee which became the UN center for inland transport. The new terms of reference enable the Inland Transport Committee to take more regional and global specialized role in the inland transport sector including possible global exchange in the field of transport of dangerous goods on inland waterways. The Director also informed the workshop of the latest ITC's actions against climate change and potential future contributions from the ADN Safety Committee. The secretariat recalled the decisions taken by the Joint Meeting to add to its programme of work a specific item on the circular economy and the SDGs and to insert in the justification part of future working documents the interlinkage to the SDGs, if applicable.

12. The representative of CCNR presented their roadmap and two transition pathways for greening the inland waterway transport until 2035 and 2050 in accordance with the timeline of the regulatory work on ES-TRIN.

13. The representative of EBU and ESO informed the audience about the ongoing work in CESNI on the initiatives to move in a gradual shift the transport by inland waterways towards a zero emission inland vessels scenario.

14. The representative of the Recommended ADN Classification Societies reported on current projects for use of alternative fuels for the propulsion of inland waterway vessels, their optimization with respect to fuel consumption and the potential of autonomous sailing.

15. The secretariat reported on the ongoing activities of the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) related to climate change, circular economy and greening of the inland fleet towards a modern, sustainable and resilient waterway network.

16. The Chair of the Safety Committee highlighted the challenges posed by the complexities of sustainable transport in a healthy and safe society resulting in the need to seek, in some cases, a sound balance of measures satisfying the constraints set by circular economy, sustainable use of natural resources including the reduction of transport related emissions of greenhouse gases. Considering avoidance of transport would also be an option (e.g., pipelines).

17. The Safety Committee expressed its appreciation of the workshop discussions. It noted a need for policies and clear guidance to foster sound investments by vessel owners and industry in their greening efforts of the inland water transport fleet, and to so avoid the uncertainty of regrettable investments. It also noted that a call for flexibility is needed when referring to sustainable inland waterway transport and that vessels should have long lifetime while their propulsion systems should allow for an easy refitting, if necessary. It was agreed that the inland waterway infrastructure also needed improvements to ensure a safe and regionally sound ways of supplying vessels with such alternative fuels.

18. Further to its decision to develop a list of potential innovative propulsion systems and a list of evaluation criteria, the Safety Committee decided to dedicate a new agenda item to “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” to allow for regular discussion on possible follow-up actions and reporting on SDGs, including climate change adaptation and mitigation. It invited delegations, when submitting proposals, to insert in the justification part of their document any interlinkage of their proposal to SDGs, when applicable.

19. The panellists and the participants recognized the important work of United Nations bodies in the area of transport of dangerous goods which already resulted in recent years in contributions to the SDGs including the global fight against climate change. The secretariat was invited to consider a possible new entry on Goal 17 as a result of the close cooperation and collaboration with other UN agencies and intergovernmental organization on activities related to dangerous goods.

IV. Discussion

20. In the context of the outcomes of both, the WP.15 roundtable and the ADN Safety Committee workshop, the Joint Meeting is expected to further discuss the key SDGs applicable to its work from the perspective of multimodal transport of dangerous goods.

21. It may further consider possible follow-up actions or activities related to the inland transport of dangerous goods and their interlinkages to the SDGs.