
Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

113th session

9 May 2023

Geneva, 15-17 May 2023

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Eighty-fifth session of the Inland Transport Committee

Efficiency and methods of work of the Working Party

Note by the Secretariat

Introduction

1. During its eighty-fifth session, the Inland Transport Committee, decided to proceed with the review of its Working Parties' mandates in the course of 2023. See § 18 of [ECE/TRANS/328](#).
2. The review of Working Parties' mandates by their parent sectoral committees is in line with the outcomes of the 2005 reform of ECE and the ensuing guidelines for the establishment and functioning of working parties within ECE ([ECE/EX/1](#)).
3. The review process will be based on a number of good principles or practices one of these being resource efficiency. In this respect, Chairs of the Working Parties will be requested to provide inputs to the Inland Transport Committee to identify possible ways of improving efficiency and methods of work.
4. In this context, the Working Party may wish to review, update as necessary and reaffirm its commitment to the working methods it has already adopted as regards its calendar of sessions and its rules for documentation.

Session planning and organisation

Rules concerning the agenda for the last session of an amendment period

5. The Working Party may wish to modify or reconfirm the following rules concerning the agenda for the last session of an amendment period adopted at its sixty-fourth session (see [TRANS/WP.15/153](#)):

“At the last (November) session of an amendment period, WP.15 shall consider the texts of all amendments adopted at previous meetings of WP.15 and the Joint Meeting.

In addition to the amendments adopted, new documents may only be included on the agenda of this last session if they:

- Relate to modifications of the amended text
- Bring the Annexes into line with other international agreements concerning the transport of dangerous goods.

Other new proposals will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of WP.15 at that session.”

Number and calendar of sessions

6. The Working Party may wish to reconsider its current number and calendar of sessions in the light of current workload and foreseen developments of ADR and taking into account the following information.

7. In the last two years the Working Party has not used all the meeting days allocated to it. In the past, the secretariat had already invited the Working Party to explore the possibility of reducing the length of its sessions or changing the calendar of meetings in order to decrease the number of meetings allotted to it (see [ECE/TRANS/WP.15/2013/6](#)).

8. The initial proposal in [ECE/TRANS/WP.15/2013/6](#) was to replace the current calendar of meetings (four sessions per biennium) with a new calendar comprising only three sessions per biennium, organized as follows:

Even years (n): A session in May, in which some corrections to the list of amendments for entry into force on 1 January of the following year (n + 1) may still be adopted, if necessary, and new amendments that will enter into force on 1 January of year n + 3 are discussed.

Odd years (n + 1): A session in May and a session in late October – early November. This second session is the last in which amendments for entry into force on 1 January of the following odd year (n + 3) may, in theory, be adopted.

9. At that time, the majority of delegations who had spoken had confirmed that, in view of the developments envisaged in the Working Party, for example the revision of Part 9 of ADR, the incorporation of new intelligent transport systems and the organizing of information exchanges between the Contracting Parties to ADR, it was necessary to maintain the number of meetings.

10. Since 2010, the Working Party has agreed to reduce its second sessions in odd years to 8 meetings (4 days).

11. During the last two years, it appeared that only 15.5 days were used by the Working Party (31 meetings) instead of the 19 scheduled (38 meetings). Note also that, in 2021 and 2022, the length of each meeting was reduced to 2 hours instead of 3 because of the hybrid format.

12. The fact that the Working Party does not use all the resources allocated to it could have an impact on the budget dedicated to the Working Party in the future.

Documentation

13. The Working Party may wish to review, update as necessary and reaffirm its commitment to the rules for documentation it has adopted.

14. At its sixty-fourth session, the Working Party has adopted rules concerning the documentation to be submitted to its future sessions. These rules have been updated and reproduced in the Annex of the Working Party's Rules of Procedure ([ECE/TRANS/WP.15/190/Add.1](#)).

Official documents

15. The rules for the submission of official documents are well followed by the Working Party's participants. They could be updated to take into account the recent decision of the Working Party to invite delegations, when submitting proposals, to note in the justification part any interlinkage there might be with the Sustainable Development Goals and the circular economy.

Informal documents

16. The rules for the submission of informal documents are as follows:

Informal document may be submitted for consideration at a session provided:

- (a) That they contain specific commentaries or additional information concerning a new document included in the provisional agenda and that it has not therefore been possible to submit them in time;
- (b) That they are submitted solely for information purposes and require no decision from the Working Party;

- (c) That they are intended to correct flagrant errors in existing texts;
- (d) That they are intended to clarify the interpretation of existing texts; or
- (e) That they contain the report of an informal working group mentioned in the provisional agenda.

17. Since biennium 2012-2013, the number of documents to be considered per session has remained low and it appears that decisions on amendments or interpretation issues are often based on informal documents.

18. This makes it difficult for the secretariat and the Bureau to plan the sessions and this could have an impact on the budget allocated to the Working Party in the future since the number of parliamentary documents issued is used by Member States to evaluate programme performance of the ECE subprogrammes.

19. Furthermore, most informal documents are available in English only which does not facilitate inclusive deliberations. They are also often submitted late which does not allow participants to conduct national consultations before discussion.

20. The Working Party may wish to confirm the rules for the submission of informal documents in [ECE/TRANS/WP.15/190/Add.1](#) and invite delegations to favour submissions in official documents whenever possible.
