



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
4 July 2023

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

Geneva, 19-29 September 2023

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

Reports of Informal Working Groups

Report on the second meeting of the informal working group on e-learning

Transmitted by the Government of Germany and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) *,**

Introduction

1. Based on the mandate given by the Joint Meeting during its Spring Session 2022 — informal document INF.13/Rev.1 — a second meeting of the Informal Working Group (IWG) on e-learning was held virtually (Webex) on 8 May 2023. The meeting was chaired by Mr. A. Celasco, representative of IRU, and with Mr. M. Weiner, representative of Germany, acting as a Vice-Chair.

2. The following Contracting Parties to ADR and ADN, respectively, participated in the meeting: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The following associations were represented: Swiss association for road transport (ASTAG), European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic), European Barge Union (EBU), European Skippers Organisation (ESO), Fuels Europe, IRU, Turkish and Dutch training organisations TOBB and Transafe. The European Commission and UNECE were also present.

The total number of participants was 27.

Baseline study

3. After a short recap about the mandate and scope of the meeting, the adoption of the agenda and the approval of the report of the previous meeting held on 17 May 2022, the Chair

* 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/2023/40.

reminded the participants about the antitrust statement (see slides enclosed in Annex I of informal document INF.4).

4. The Chair introduced the first agenda item:

Inventory of e-learning forms in use for ADR drivers/ADN experts:

- Systems already carried out by different ADR/ADN Contracting Parties.
- Two speakers were invited:
 - Mr Bart Vervaart, Manager Compliance & Development / TRANSAFE
 - Mr Peter Hary, Specialist – Dangerous Goods & Security / ASTAG

First presentation, "e-learning" by Mr Bart Vervaart (slides are enclosed in Annex II of informal document INF.4).

5. His presentation focused on the key advantages and disadvantages of e-learning:

- Key advantages of e-learning:
 - Learning at idle moments
 - Learning on your own time
 - Learning at your own pace
 - Short periods lead to higher levels of concentration
 - Unlimited repetition
 - Different learning styles
- Key disadvantages of e-learning:
 - Self-motivation required
 - No direct study partners
 - No direct feedback
 - No hands-on practical training

6. A supportive discussion took place on the idea to work on a hybrid e-learning concept:

(a) The student could study online specific modules and a pre-test before the official exam in classroom could be proposed.

(b) The modules could be limited only to the refresher course, for example could NOT be any practical test.

Second presentation, "Elearning" by Mr Peter Hary (slides are enclosed in Annex III of informal document INF.4.)

7. The main topics of his presentation were to share ASTAG's experience on e-learning and to inform IWG about the benefits for the entrepreneur and the participants:

- Benefits for entrepreneurs:
 - More qualified employees
 - Less effort to organise further training
 - Lower costs
 - Clearer personnel management
 - Shorter absence from the workplace
- Benefits for course participants:
 - Learning independent of location
 - Learning at your own pace

- Better course preparation
- Intensive discussion of topics
- More motivated course participants
- Shorter attendance time

8. The question was raised whether training is done during work time or the participant's free time. In inland navigation, most experts do the training during their free time, as employers may not be able to arrange a substitute on board.

9. In the following discussion, it was revealed that the approval and supervision of any form of e-learning is a bigger challenge than organising such training by training institutes. The contribution was made that for training institutes, the financing of e-learning offers remains a challenge.

10. Following the discussion, the representative of Germany invited other delegations to share their legal or administrative provisions or ordinances for approval of e-learning courses with the intention to identify the formats suitable for ADR or ADN and the minimum requirements to keep a common quality and comparability among ADR and ADN Contracting Parties. Delegates of Switzerland, the Netherlands and Poland announced to do so.

11. The identification of participants was mentioned as an important point for the reliability of training.

12. A majority believed in the case e-learning courses are accepted, the possibility should be limited to refresher courses. Views differed on whether e-learning may be a suitable format for the initial courses.

13. The IWG was informed by the representatives of Austria, Finland, Portugal, and the United Kingdom that in their country, different e-learning formats for basic courses, as well for refresher courses for ADR drivers, are approved by competent authorities and subsequently offered by private or public training institutes, provided that the practical parts of the training are performed in-person. No information was given in detail about the parameters competent authorities have set up for the approval of e-learning offers.

14. The current trend is to combine e-learning modules with in-person units, often referred to as "Blended Learning". Moreover, new provisions for (partial) e-learning should not be more detailed and stricter than the existing provisions for in-person courses.

Further action

15. It was agreed to circulate the existing national rules to certify e-learning. As of today, the Chair received contributions reported as supporting materials which are enclosed in Annex IV of informal document INF.4.

16. In a second step, the Joint Meeting may give a further mandate to evaluate, which of the formats presented are already covered by national approvals and which are the core elements for such approvals, to consider the need for amendments to the ADR and ADN regulations, to give a common and clear basis for e-learning for all Contracting Parties and to draft based on this evaluation such amendments for ADR 2025 and ADN 2025, which will be discussed by the Joint Meeting at its spring session 2024.

17. The IWG scheduled its next meeting for October 2023 (physical or hybrid).