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**Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation
and Standardization Policies (WP.6)**

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Ad Hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques

Report on activities under the Ad Hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques 2022–2023

Submitted by the subgroup Chair[*]

Summary

This document presents the strategic directions of the Ad Hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START) as discussed at the twenty-third annual meeting of the START group and its initiatives on 23 May 2023 and continued on 12 July 2023.
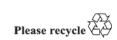
Mandate

At its thirty-second session, the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) mandated the secretariat and the START to continue to report on an annual basis on these activities (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/2, paragraph 29, decision 7).

Proposed decision

"The Working Party adopts the *Report on activities under the Ad Hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques 2022–2023*. It requests the secretariat and the Ad Hoc Team of Specialists to research on how best to promote the existing common regulatory arrangements and to continue to report on an annual basis on the activities under the START."

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[*] This document is submitted under the responsibility of the subgroup Chair and has not been subject to a substantive clearance procedure through the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division Director. This document has not been edited by a professional editor.

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I. Introduction

1.   The Ad Hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START) was established in 1999 with an aim to promote international regulatory cooperation on product technical regulations. These regulations define safety and health requirements which may be unique to the needs and circumstances of each country and can result in higher compliance costs when traders approach multiple markets. The ECE (Economic Commission for Europe) *Recommendation L on International Model for Transnational Regulatory Cooperation Based on Good Regulatory Practice* provides the basis of this cooperation through common regulatory arrangements (CRA). Several initiatives to promote CRA have been launched under START, including telecom, cybersecurity, earth-moving machinery, equipment for explosive environment and pipeline safety. This report takes stock of the current status of these initiatives as related at the START twenty-third annual meeting on 23 May 2023 and continued on 12 July 2023.

2.   The group appointed at its annual meeting Ronald Tse of Canada as chair. The leadership of the sectoral initiatives for equipment used in environments with an explosive atmosphere (SIEEE); for pipeline safety (SIPS) and for cybersecurity continue as previously. The sectoral initiative for earth-moving machinery was judged to have delivered its purpose and that further coordination at this time is not necessary. Likewise, the sectoral initiative for telecom was judged to have served its purpose at the time of creation in 2004 but that the context has evolved and the Telecom CRAs are no longer pertinent and there was no appetite to update these at this time. The annual meeting was attended by 26 experts, 12 were women.

II. Report on activities

A.   Sectoral initiative on equipment for explosive environments

3.   The current version of the SIEEE CRA was updated and then approved at the thirty-second annual session of WP.6. The publication has been updated and is available on the website.[1] The initiative has aimed to bring together all of the major stakeholders on equipment on explosive environment: the manufacturers, the operators and the regulators. This industrial sector includes private companies from the oil and gas sector who need regulatory harmonization in order to work effectively in multiple countries. The presence of the ECE CRA as well as the presence of ECE at the meetings has been helpful especially with developing and transitional economies to demonstrate the need of such international regulatory cooperation and the adoption of the principles in the CRA. It was further underlined that the SIEEE in general is highly relevant in terms of security of the environment and people. A global approach facilitates and accelerates the process of defining standards; moving forward, this will be most useful for hydrogen technology where general safety aspects, training of people and new services are important.

B.   Sectoral initiative on pipeline safety

4.   Whereas there are growing cases of cross-border pipelines involving two or more countries, there is still marked differences in legislative approaches to the regulation of trunk pipelines to ensure safety during transportation in a globally harmonized manner.[2] There is no agreed international standard on material or legal aspects of the movement of energy carriers through cross-border trunk pipeline transport. There are over one hundred international standards, developed through the International Organization for Standardization Technical Committee on oil and gas industries including lower carbon energy (ISO TC67), but the adoption of these is often done through regional bodies or national bodies and result

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[1] *Common Regulatory Framework for Equipment Used in Environments with an Explosive Atmosphere* (ECE/TRADE/391/Rev.1), 2022: https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6/pub/378872

[2] There are over one million kilometres of pipeline in each the Russian Federation and the European Union. There is around 4.5 million kilometres of pipeline in the United States of America

in divergences of application. The SIPS aims to develop a CRA in the field of construction and design of trunk pipelines.

C. Sectoral initiative on cybersecurity

5. The initiative on cybersecurity was approved in 2019 and at the time of approval, it was requested to report on activities related to this initiative on a regular basis. The CRA has two parts, the first describing the process and the second providing examples, and since its conception it was meant to be a living document with regular updates and addition of new examples. The generic methodology in the CRA is a systematic methodology which can be applied to most technical systems, based on a risk-based approach and including a framework for appropriate conformity assessment. There are currently examples for corporate systems, medical network systems, banking systems, railway systems, traditional energy utility systems, smart grid electrical systems, active assisted living systems and networked vehicles.

III. Impact and implementation

6. The START initiatives have not yet turned their focus towards measuring impact and implementation of the guidance. This will be planned in the future. However, at this stage, there is still need to further disseminate the work, to finalize work in progress and to build upon certain relations with other international bodies.

A. Return on experiences

7. The SIPS continues its preparation to develop a CRA on trunk pipeline safety. It has become evident that terminology is not being used in a uniform manner across countries in this sector. There is also a growing need to develop a unified terminology in the field of trunk pipelines.

B. Relation with other organizations' work

8. The SIEEE works in close cooperation with the International Electrotechnical Commission System for Certification to Standards Relating to Equipment for Use in Explosive Atmospheres (IECEx). The relevant experts meet through the IECEx annual meeting and the next meeting is planned to take place in Edinburgh in September 2023.

IV. Pertinence of the topic today

9. Cybersecurity could be viewed as a product or as a process depending on how it is being considered. There are a growing number of products which have embedded technologies, so the cybersecurity aspects will become increasingly important in the coming years. Technological services are also key elements in many processes today. Both of these aspects require a certain level of cyber awareness to plan against potential threats. The trend is that this will become more and more prevalent.

10. On goods that are traded via trunk pipeline, the market on hydrogen is growing and many countries, especially in developing and transitional economies, will require regulations on its exploitation. International regulatory cooperation and a relevant CRA on this topic will be key in order to ensure that the market is not fragmented by unharmonized regulations.

V. Future directions

11. Services and processes require transborder coordination and harmonization and will potentially need mechanisms like a CRA as presented in *Recommendation L*. The first paragraph of this recommendation's annex A clearly outlines that such coordination can

apply to systems, processes, products and services. However, the remainder of this annex as well as annex B only provide guidance on products. The initiative on cybersecurity already considers CRA from a process point of view, adapting from the product point of view. As services continue to become more important in international trade, the experts of START have suggested that it would be useful to review *Recommendation L* with processes and services in mind and see if the annexes of this recommendation should be updated or if an additional annex might be useful, dedicated solely to processes and services.

12.   Cyber risks are not going away any time soon and so cybersecurity will need to continue to develop. The work which has been developed under the initiative on cybersecurity could be better promoted in order to ensure that the general public (business community, governments) are aware of the CRA. Further communication is necessary to raise awareness of the CRA, perhaps with the organization of a workshop or webinar. Further examples in the annexes of the CRA should also be considered.

13.   Given the relevance of the topics developed under START and the potential to further reduce technical barriers to trade, especially in services, the experts of START recommend the renewal of their mandate for a further two year period.

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