
Economic and Social Council

Inland Transport Committee

18 January 2024

Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

Original: English

Joint Meeting of Experts on the Regulations annexed to the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (ADN) (ADN Safety Committee)

Forty-third session

Geneva, 22-26 January 2024

Item 4 (d) of the provisional agenda

Implementation of the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (ADN): training of experts

Request for discussing the possibility of making ADN examinations available in English

Transmitted by European Barge Union (EBU) and European Skippers Organisation (ESO)

Introduction

1. The inland navigation industry is coping with a structural shortage of crew, which is a big concern for the operation of barges. For a certain couple of years, more and more, from non-European countries crew members (mostly ex-sea vessel crews) like people originating from the Philippines or South-America are being found willing to sail on board of inland barges.
2. The language English is being spoken very well by most of these non-European crew members. This is a benefit in the sea harbours and probably the upcoming harmonized and international "River Speak".
3. However, currently, it seems impossible or at least a novelty to examine the ADN in English, despite it being an 'original ADN language'. The Catalogue of Questions for ADN exams is also available in English.
4. However, lacking the possibility to take exams in English restricts the development of competent crew members who can sail on board ADN dangerous goods barges.
5. The inland industry has requested that both the Dutch Ministry and the recognized competent authority in the Netherlands, CCV, investigate the possibility of making ADN examinations available in English.. (The CCV is a division of CBR and designated by the Dutch Ministry to perform the ADN exams and to ensure the quality level of the ADN training providers).
6. It was concluded that this would take some efforts and time, but is considered not to be impossible. However, this seems to be a new practise of examination of experts under the ADN member states and it would be appropriate to discuss amongst the contracting parties of the ADN.

I. Request

7. EBU/ESO requests the ADN safety committee to give its opinion about examination in the English language.

8. In the opinion of EBU/ESO, the ADN itself does not have to be amended, however it could be a possibility to ask the informal working group on the training of experts to confirm this position.
9. Relevant exams/tests would be:
 - ADN basis exam (ADN 8.2.2.7.1)
 - ADN test after refresher course (ADN 8.2.2.7.1.3 / 8.2.1.4)
 - ADN specialization of Chemicals exam (ADN 8.2.1.7)
 - ADN specialisation of Gas exam (ADN 8.2.1.5)

II. Justification

10. Offering exams in English, the world's number one language, should not be unusual in our international community. Developing the skills of non-native English-speaking crew members would be very helpful in today's job market.. From a human perspective these crew members then will get the same chance to develop themselves further in inland dangerous goods transport, as this is impossible until today as long as English is excluded.
11. The further development of skills and ADN-knowledge of crew members is important in relation to safety. Crewmembers whom otherwise would be limited in their education level as per ADN 1.3, will then get the opportunity to enlarge their knowledge of ADN and with this, to make better safety choices due to improved ADN skills and understanding.
12. As English is one of the four official ADN-languages and therefore, both the ADN agreement, its Annexes and the Catalogue of question are directly available in English, EBU/ESO would not see any reasons to not allow exams in English.

III. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)

13. The following SDG's could support Exams being taking in the English language:
 - Goal 4: Quality education; to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
 - Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth; without sufficient amount of available crew member the inland navigation industry is restricted to perform optimally.
 - Goal 10: Reduced inequality; equal chances for non-European crew members to develop themselves and obtain higher ranked positions on board of inland navigation barges under the ADN-treaty.
 - Goal 17: Partnership for goals.
-