

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods
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Agenda Item 5(a)

Multi-Lateral Special Agreements (MSAs)

Transmitted by the European Council of Paint, Printing Ink and Artists Colours Industry (CEPE) and the International Association of the Soap, Detergent and Maintenance Products Industry (AISE) and the International Express Carriers Conference (IECC)

Discussion Paper

Introduction and Discussion

8.1.2.1 (c) requires that copies of applicable Special Agreements are carried on the vehicle. This is being interpreted by some authorities as requiring a copy of the signed MSA from each of the countries of origin, transit and destination. While it is easy to provide the information in writing in all languages as required by 5.4.3.3 and 8.1.2.1 (b), it is much more difficult and complex to obtain copies of signed MSAs.

The UN web site has a description of each current MSA and a list of the signatory countries and date of expiry, etc. It is normally only possible to download a copy in one language. At the time of writing, only French or English versions (but not both for a given MSA) are available for downloading. It is therefore necessary to approach the individual country's authorities to obtain a copy of their signed version, something that is very time consuming and complicated.

Can it be expected that inspectors at the roadside will have a list of all the MSAs applicable to their country? Is it the case that they also have copies of the text in their language or can easily gain access to one? If so, it would simplify matters for carriers if they only had to indicate the MSA reference number on documents as implied by 5.4.1.1.1(i).

There is also the issue of current applicability – it is possible for countries to revoke their signature at any time in the light of experience. There appear to be two possible ways that could ensure that there is roadside evidence of applicability:

- (a) a system of dating the list of MSAs on the UN web site so that the user, when they download the list, can relate this date to that of their dangerous goods document;
- (b) the copy of the MSA on the web site is always accompanied by a list of current signatories and there is a dating system for when downloads are made during preparation of dangerous goods documentation.

Such a dated reference should then be sufficient to confirm that the MSA is current and applicable to the journey being undertaken.

If it is still felt that some text should be carried on the vehicle, is it sufficient for the one on the UN web site, whether just in French or English, to be downloaded and used?

Proposal

That this matter be discussed informally at the next WP.15 meeting to obtain an indication of the views of delegates, with a view to preparing a full proposal during the next biennium. It is hoped that this will lead to more streamlined proposals being implemented in the 2007 edition of ADR.