

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, 17-27 September 2023

Item 9 of the provisional agenda

Any other business:

United Nations 2030 Agenda and sustainable development

18 September 2023

ITC strategy on climate change mitigation - Draft contribution

Note by the secretariats

I. Introduction

1. In 2020 and 2021, the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) reiterated its wish to strengthen its contribution to the monitoring and implementation of the transport-related targets of the 2030 Agenda and requested its subsidiary bodies to align their work accordingly. In 2022 and 2023, discussions took place during the sessions of the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15), the ADN Safety Committee (WP.15/AC.2) and the RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting (WP.15/AC.1) on possible follow-up actions and contributions to United Nations 2030 Agenda for sustainable development in relation to their work on the carriage of dangerous goods by inland transport modes.

2. At its February 2023 session and on the basis of document ECE/TRANS/2023/21, the Committee decided to strengthen its role and contribution on climate change, which is addressed horizontally by several of the Committee's subsidiary bodies as well as the Committee itself. It therefore requested the secretariat, in close cooperation with the ITC Bureau and relevant subsidiary bodies, to develop an ambitious strategy document for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in inland transport. The strategy document was based on international United Nations legal instruments under the purview of the Committee, with priority actions for the ITC and its relevant subsidiary bodies and supported by a strong action plan with milestones (ECE/TRANS/328, para. 60).

3. The ITC Chair held a meeting on 11 September 2023 to discuss the objective to introduce the outline and envisaged elements of the strategy with all chairs of the subsidiary Working Parties/Administrative Committees and to invite all stakeholders to provide feedback as inputs for the discussion at the next session in February 2024. The ITC Bureau members, the secretaries to the Working Parties and the members of the Division's internal Task Force on the ITC Decisions on Climate Change also attended the meeting.

4. At that meeting, the Vice-chair of the RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting reported that following a round table discussion in November 2022 on the circular economy from the perspective of multimodal transport of dangerous goods¹, WP.15 and the RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting are working on provisions related to the circular economy, the sustainable use of natural resources and waste production reduction. These include the reduction of transport related emissions of greenhouse gases (e.g. use of electric vehicles) and the recycling/repurpose of used cells and batteries.

5. Furthermore, the ADN Safety Committee organized during its January 2023 session, a workshop on sustainable development and climate change from the perspective of the transport of dangerous goods by inland waterways². It expressed its appreciation of the discussions towards greening the inland navigation. It noted a need for policies and clear guidance (e.g. regulations) to

¹ (see report ECE/TRANS/WP.15/260, paras. 45-51)

² (see report ECE/TRANS/WP.15/AC.2/84, paras. 56-67)

foster sound investments by vessel owners and industry in their inland water transport fleet greening efforts, and to so avoid the uncertainty of regrettable investments. It noted that a call for flexibility is needed when referring to sustainable inland waterway transport and that vessels should have long lifetime while their propulsion systems should allow for an easy refitting, if necessary. At its August 2023 session, the ADN Safety Committee considered already several official requests for recommendation on the use of hydrogen fuel cells or methanol as fuel for the propulsion of vessels.

6. During the meeting between the ITC chair and the chairs of ITC subsidiary bodies, the Vice-chair of the RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting recalled that the priority of WP.15, the RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting and the ADN Safety Committee was to achieve regulations that warrant the safe transport of dangerous goods, and facilitate an easy multimodal multinational carriage of these goods. Nevertheless, the reduction of greenhouse gas emission, the climate change and in general the 2023 Agenda objectives are constantly considered as part of this work.

7. At the level of the RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting, it was agreed to coordinate the activities on the safe and environmentally friendly carriage of dangerous goods by inland transport modes in close cooperation with OTIF and CCNR, in particular with respect to the work done on the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF) and on the European Committee for drawing up Standards in the field of Inland Navigation (CESNI).

8. During its Spring 2023 session, the Joint Meeting requested the secretariat to publish on the ECE website a contribution to the United Nations 2030 agenda on sustainable development in particular through effective impacts of new requirements and technical innovations in the regulations on the transport of dangerous goods. This information is now available at: <https://unece.org/transport/dangerous-goods/unece-bodies-dealing-transport-dangerous-goods> and can be used by delegates as a basis to identify related impacts in their proposals.

II. Food for thoughts

9. To provide inputs and feedback to the ITC secretariat, WP.15, the Joint Meeting and the ADN Safety Committee may wish to identify which of their current and future activities could be listed in the ITC Climate Action Plan and propose milestones.

10. Examples of our current work where a positive effect in climate change mitigation is achieved are listed below. Some of them result or would result from the harmonisation with the UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods following discussion in the ECOSOC Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods.

(a) For greening the vehicles transporting dangerous goods efforts are currently done for: (i) for road transport by establishing provisions to enable the use of alternative fuels and electrified vehicles, and (ii) for the inland navigation fleet by the use of hydrogen and methanol for the propulsion of vessels;

(b) Adoption of provisions to accompany the development of these vehicles (provisions for classification, transport, packagings of lithium batteries and sodium ion batteries, completed vehicles, damaged batteries or vehicles, biofuels etc);

(c) Adoption of a rationalized classification system for batteries (lithium or sodium ion and other chemistries as battery technology develops);

(d) Work to allow a wider use of recycled plastics material in packagings for the transport of dangerous goods;

(e) Work to allow electronic versions of transport documents;

(f) Harmonization of the regulations for land transport of dangerous goods to foster the use of intermodal transport by road, rail and inland waterways aiming at diminishing the gas emissions and simplifying the intermodal transport;

(g) Ongoing efforts to allow in future e-learning for ADR drivers and ADN experts;

(h) Consideration of options to enable the safe use of greener for the carriage of dangerous goods.

11. Future work might include finding sustainable solutions to move safely hydrogen from its point of renewable production to its end users and also to continue to contribute to find solutions for safe shipping of captured carbon dioxide.

12. From an organisational point of view, the ITC strategy could be an opportunity for ITC to develop a framework for all its subsidiary bodies to become more climate neutral, by encouraging hybrid meetings. WP.15, the Joint Meeting and the ADN Safety Committee may wish to request ITC to study how to secure a standing mandate and resources to allow its subsidiary bodies to organize hybrid meetings. This would imply considering adapting current rules of procedures to a new format and providing guidelines. It would also help to facilitate and encourage broader participation.

13. Another possible action that could be considered as part of the ITC strategy would be to evaluate the contribution of ADR/ADN publishing to global warming and identify ways to limit the carbon footprint of paper publications.
