

Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized
System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

29 November 2023

Forty-fifth session

Geneva, 6-8 December 2023

Item 2 (e) of the provisional agenda

Work on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals: Potential hazard issues and their presentation in the Globally Harmonized System

Potential hazard issues and their presentation in the Globally Harmonized System: status report

Transmitted by the European Union on behalf of the informal working group on potential hazard issues and their presentation in the Globally Harmonized System

1. At its forty-third session in December 2022, the Sub-Committee agreed to include a new item on its programme of work for the biennium 2023- 2024: “Potential hazard issues and their presentation in the GHS”. The European Union volunteered to coordinate an informal working group to address this topic (PHI-IWG) based on the workplan and terms of reference (ToR) in ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/2022/18¹ as amended in informal document INF.39 (forty-third session)², as agreed by the Sub-Committee³.
2. At its forty-fourth session in July 2023, the Sub-Committee approved the 2023-2024 workplan for the PHI-IWG as proposed in informal document INF.19 (forty-fourth session)⁴.
3. Since its approval, the PHI-IWG started implementing the different workstreams. In particular:
 - (a) On endocrine disruptors, the OECD accepted the mandate received from the Sub-Committee in July 2023. Since then, the OECD created an ad hoc expert group on “endocrine disruptors in the UN Globally Harmonised System for classification and labelling”. Other governance aspects were agreed. At each PHI-IWG meeting, the OECD has informed experts on the advancement of the scientific discussions on the mandate’s tasks, as presented in ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/2023/6⁵.
 - (b) On persistence and mobility, the PHI-IWG is working on:
 - (i) clarifying the scope of the work (aim, expected added value, etc.);
 - (ii) the definition of mobility and persistence in the GHS context;

¹ [Proposal for new work on unaddressed hazard classes in the programme of work for the biennium 2023-2024](#)

² See informal document INF.39 (forty-third session), paragraph 4
<https://unece.org/transport/documents/2022/12/informal-documents/addendum-stsgac10c4202218-unaddressed-hazard-classes>

³ Report of the Sub-Committee on its forty-third session ([ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/86, paragraphs 51 to 53 and Annex I](#))

⁴ See informal document INF.19 (forty-fourth session), paragraphs 15 to 19
<https://unece.org/transport/documents/2023/07/informal-documents/potential-hazard-issues-and-their-presentation-0>

⁵ See working document ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/2023/6
<https://unece.org/transport/documents/2023/04/working-documents/potential-hazard-issues-and-their-presentation>

- (iii) other issues that the identification and potential classification would entail; and
- (iv) discussing and considering other comments submitted during the PHI-IWG survey beginning 2023 taking into consideration also complementary information such as INF.24 (forty-third session)⁶.

The work is co-led by experts from the European Union and Germany.

- (c) On the substances and mixtures hazardous to the terrestrial environment, due to the resource constraints, the PHI-IWG requires additional time to finalise an informal document presenting further details in a proposal using terrestrial toxicity data to complement data on substances and mixtures hazardous to the aquatic environment, as well as any further approaches identified in future discussions.
 - (d) Finally, the workstreams on persistence and bioaccumulation, immunotoxicity and neurotoxicity have not started, yet. As a reminder, the PHI-IWG expressed their preference in postponing to the biennium 2025-2026 starting the work on neurotoxicity and on substances and mixtures hazardous to the terrestrial environment; unless additional resources become available at a later stage before the end of the current biennium.
4. The next (online) meeting of the PHI-IWG is scheduled on 23 January 2024.
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⁶ See informal document INF.24 (forty-third session), in particular paragraphs 3 to 6 <https://unece.org/transport/documents/2022/11/informal-documents/addendum-stsgac10c4202218-unaddressed-hazards>