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Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on the Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs

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Item 5 (a) of the provisional agenda

Proposals of amendments to ATP:

Pending proposals

Provisions applicable to official testing stations

Transmitted by the Government of France

Background

1. The Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be Used for such Carriage (ATP), signed in 1970, is based on type testing carried out by official testing stations designated by the Contracting Parties.
2. ATP does not specify any requirements as to the technical competences of official testing stations in terms of either resources or results, but accreditation is being developed as a means of harmonizing laboratory practices.
3. Although five countries voted against this proposal at the last session in 2015, France would like to discuss it again in order to establish indisputable criteria for recognizing the technical competence of laboratories acting as official test stations.

Proposal

4. Various official testing stations have obtained accreditation for their activities under ISO 17025 in respect of the tests described in ATP, annex 1, appendix 1. The list of testing stations already accredited is available in the 2015 meeting records of Sub-Commission D2 on Refrigerated Transport (CERTE) of the International Institute of Refrigeration (IIR). This accreditation ensures third-party evaluation of laboratories acting as testing stations and a degree of consistency in the practices of testing stations, allowing formal recognition of certificates at international level, as required under ATP.

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Impact

5. The accreditation of testing stations within each State involves the introduction of a quality management system to ensure the traceability of measures, compliance with technical procedures and standards, and impartial handling of requests. It requires complete mastery of technical facilities and compliance with the basic rules applicable to testing activities. Accreditation implies that a testing station has the requisite means to conduct tests. Third-party audits are carried out by the accreditation bodies of the different countries, which have the specific status of not-for-profit organizations. The International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) network of accreditation bodies ensures that the accreditation rules are consistent so as to ensure a high level of recognition of laboratory competences.

Economic impact of the procedure

6. The cost of accreditation to laboratories may be estimated at €3,000 per year, but it has no impact on the manufacturers using these laboratories.

Proposal for amendment

7. It is proposed to add the text in **bold** to annex 1, appendix 1, paragraph 1:

“1. Checks for conformity with the standards prescribed in this annex shall be made:

- (a) before equipment enters into service;
- (b) periodically, at least once every six years; and
- (c) whenever required by the competent authority.

Except in the cases provided for in appendix 2, sections 5 and 6, to this annex, the checks shall be made at a testing station designated or approved by the competent authority of the country in which the equipment is registered or recorded, unless, in the case of the check referred to in (a) above, a check has already been made on the equipment itself or on its prototype in a testing station designated or approved by the competent authority of the country in which the equipment was manufactured.

The designated or approved testing station must be accredited for the tests in question, in accordance with ISO 17025, by an accreditation body belonging to the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) within two years following the entry into force of the present provision.”