



# Economic and Social Council

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## Economic Commission for Europe

Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

### Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies

Twenty-sixth session

Geneva, 30 November-02December 2016

Item 6(c) of the provisional agenda

**International regulatory cooperation**

## Progress report on the Sectoral Initiative on Pipelines Safety (SIPS)

**Note by the Rapporteur<sup>1</sup>**

### *Summary*

Accidents at international pipelines threaten the lives of people and pose a risk to the environment, cause serious loss and hostility towards the construction of pipelines. However, if pipelines were designed, constructed and maintained in accordance with the relevant norms and standards, they could be effective and environmentally friendly means of transport and distribution of energy.

This document contains information on the purpose of the sectoral initiative and its recent activities and plans.

It is submitted to the Working Party for discussion and adoption.

## I. Project objective and key deliverables

1. Development of the UNECE Recommendation "On the safety of pipelines" that is taking into account the provisions of the "International model" as contained in Recommendation L

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<sup>1</sup> At its eighteenth session, the Working Party asked the secretariat to provide annual updates on the work of all the sectoral initiatives (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2008/18, para. 63).

will allow interested countries to participate in UNECE activities in the field of international technical harmonization and modify national standards for the safety of pipelines, taking into account national differences.

2. Harmonization of national and international legal norms does not imply only tightening of certain requirements as it was during the first pipeline projects. Harmonization means establishing new rules with requirements based on justifiable scientific and technical provisions aimed at reducing possible risk and ensuring safety during construction and operation of pipelines.

3. In order to achieve harmonization regulators need to work closely with industry and independent third parties (conformity assessment bodies) who have the expertise in accordance with technological progress environments are continuously updated.

4 The initiative on cross-border pipeline systems highlights the risks that arise at different stages of the life cycle of pipeline systems. It also defines a set of security requirements for transboundary pipelines based on standards that must be used to establish conformity with these requirements. These requirements should take into account different geographical and climatic conditions and terrain in order to ensure optimum protection against risks while avoiding excessive costs.

5. In particular the sectoral initiative is aimed at the design and development of the overall regulatory framework in the field of construction and design of main pipelines.

## **II. Main achievements of the Initiative until 2016**

6. The sectoral initiative started the work in 2007. By the request of the Working Party (see para. 62 of the report of the session from 2008) a questionnaire was developed by interested delegations. The responses to the questionnaire were received from Belarus, Brazil, Canada, Kazakhstan and Turkey. The aim of this questionnaire was to document the existing normative practices in this area. The questionnaire and the compiled responses were discussed by the Presidium of the Working Party (see p. 5 of the rapport) and were presented at 19th Annual session of the WP.

7. The questionnaire was updated by the project team in 2015 and will also be made available on the website of the initiative.

## **III. Meetings and awareness-raising activities in 2016.**

8. The Coordinator of the Sectoral initiative presented the information on the work of the initiative in April 2016 at an International Conference "The role of the State and business in risk management" in Moscow. The event was attended by over 100 people from ten countries, including four developing countries. After the meeting it was decided to take note of the progress of the initiative and to invite interested experts to participate in its work.

9. Discussion on the questionnaire on pipeline safety took part at the annual meeting of ISO Technical Committee 67 (TC 67) in April 2016. The meeting was attended by experts from 17 countries. ISO/TC 67 confirmed the interest in obtaining information on the work of the initiative, as well as in the formulation of proposals based on the results of the activities of the initiative.

#### **IV. Deliverables for the annual session**

10. An expert working group with participation of seven countries has been created. Currently there are 14 experts contributing to its work.

11. The main outcome of the work of the Sectoral initiative in 2016 year is the development and dissemination of the updated questionnaire on rules and procedures for the development of the overall regulatory framework. Initial responses have been received from Canada, Russia and Kazakhstan. Currently experts from other countries are looking into the received responses.

12. The Working Party is invited to discuss how an updated questionnaire can be disseminated. The Sectoral initiative asks the WG.6 Secretariat to post the updated questionnaire on the official website of the Working Group.

#### **V. Responsibility for the continuation of the work**

14. The current Coordinator of the Sectoral Initiative is Mr Roman Samsonov.

#### **VI. Role of the secretariat**

15. The secretariat will continue supporting the work of the Initiative by trying to raise funds for the proposed project, servicing its meetings (prepare the invitations, agendas, preparing supporting documents and reports) and keeping the website up to date. The secretariat could assist the Convener in maintaining and developing contacts with the counterparts of the Initiative in national Governments and regional groups.

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