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International regulatory cooperation:

Sectoral projects

Report on the sectoral initiative on the Safety of Pipelines

Submitted by the Rapporteur¹

Summary

Despite changes in the structure of the European energy market, pipeline systems will continue to play a significant role in the next 25-30 years for the continuous and safe delivery of primary hydrocarbon resources to European consumers.

Companies operating pipeline systems are required to maintain and increase their safety levels and comply with increasingly strict environmental requirements. This is especially the case for companies in cross-border areas, where the security has to be managed in collaboration with transport, regulatory and other market agents.

This document contains an update information on the activities of the sectoral initiative. It is submitted to the Working Group for discussion and adoption.

Proposed decision:

The Working Party adopts the report of the sectoral initiative of Pipelines Safety. It mandates the Secretariat to continue to report on its development and implementation. It further requests the Secretariat contingent upon the availability of extrabudgetary resources, to assist in maintaining and developing contacts with Governments to promote the initiative.

¹ 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).



I. Project objective and key deliverables

1. The objective of the sectoral initiative is to develop a common policy framework for security in the sector of pipelines according to the provisions of the "international model", as contained in "Recommendation L" of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (available at http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/wp6/Recommendations/Recommendation_L_en.pdf).
2. Given the difficulty of obtaining regularly updated information from stakeholders, the sectoral initiative will continue to use available information technology (IT) tools for online consultations as necessary. Additionally, before drawing up the Common Regulatory Objectives (CROs), the Sectoral Initiative will work on the identification of all risks that are relevant to the sector and establish a unified scientific approach to safety in the construction and operation of pipelines, including route optimization and reversible operating modes.
3. The appearance of new systems of transportation or distribution of liquefied natural gas (LNG) products, in particular, requires a more detailed consideration of requirements, changes and their possible harmonization.
4. In 2019 upon an initiative of the Russian gas society, with participation by the Russian Union of Industrialists and entrepreneurs and International Organization for Standardization Technical Committee (ISO TC 67), a task force on the safety of pipelines was established. The sectoral initiative had until then focused on identifying the risks that arise at different stages of the life cycle of pipeline systems, associated mainly with long-distance transport. Starting from 2018, the task force will aim to more precisely examine and identify the complex set of safety requirements for transboundary pipelines based on the standards as well as the solutions to be used to determine compliance with these requirements.
5. The task force will focus on the formulation of specific recommendations that could become a key part of the overall regulatory framework of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) countries in the field of construction and design not only main pipelines, but all distribution systems in general.

II. Main achievements of the Initiative until 2018

6. The sectoral initiative started its work in 2007. At the request of the Working Party (see paragraph 62 of the 2008 session report), interested delegations developed a questionnaire. Responses to the questionnaire were received from Belarus, Brazil, Canada, Kazakhstan and Turkey. The purpose of this questionnaire was to document the existing normative practice in this area. The questionnaire and the collected replies were discussed by the Bureau of the Working Group and were presented at the 19th annual session of the Working Party.
7. The questionnaire was updated by the project team in 2015 and is available on the website of the initiative: www.unece.org/trade/wp6/sectoralinitiatives/pipelinesafety/sips.html
8. In the following years, a Working group was formed in Russia, on the basis of the Russian Gas Society and the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs and ISO/TC 67. It worked to create a prototype of the Geoinformation System for data collection and visual representation of more than 2 million kilometers of pipeline systems operating in the UNECE and Russia. Regular consultations and working meetings with ISO interested committees were held.

9. In 2018, the concept of the Pipeline Safety Management Systems (SMS) pipeline safety program implemented by the American Petroleum Institute was analyzed in more detail.

III. Meetings and awareness-raising activities in 2019

10. In 2019 on the initiative of the Russian Gas Society with the support of ISO TC 67, on the basis of the current working group, a Task Force on the safety of mainline pipelines was formed.

11. In April 2019, a roundtable on cooperation with the American Petroleum Institute (API) was held in Moscow on the initiative of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP) Committee on Technical Regulation, Standardization and Compliance Assessment. The meeting discussed how to further involve American and international experts into the Sectoral Initiative.

IV. Deliverables for the annual session

12. The sectoral initiative aims to develop a reference legal framework for the pipeline security sector and a recommendation on cooperation and information exchange in this area in the UNECE region and beyond.

13. The first questionnaire on regulatory and security aspects of the sector that was disseminated to the UNECE member countries in 2007. It revealed different interpretations of the rules and regulations in the security of pipeline systems, especially in the area of transboundary and reverse agreements, since this practice has not been used frequently.

14. Currently, policy priorities in this sector are moving towards policy and regulatory frameworks that guarantee the security of pipeline supply as a whole. This is forcing the initiative to completely rethink the priorities of its work and widen its scope.

15. In 2019 the analysis of the draft of the Eurasian economic union technical regulations on the requirements for main pipelines for the transport of liquid and gaseous hydrocarbons was carried out. The document covers five countries: Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia and was based on the results of the 2016 survey and materials from API. It will be orally presented by the Coordinator of the Initiative at the 29th Annual Session of the Working Party.

V. Responsibility for the continuation of the work

16. The current Coordinator of the Sectoral Initiative is Dr. Roman Samsonov.

VI. Role of the secretariat

17. 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. Resources permitting, the UNECE secretariat could assist the Convener in maintaining and developing contacts with the counterparts of the Initiative in national Governments and regional groups, as well as contributing to awareness-raising activities.