
Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals
(Fourth session, 9-11 December 2002, agenda item 3)

Offer from IGUS to assist with future technical revisions of the physical hazard classes of the GHS, as appropriate

(Agenda item 3: Work for the biennium 2003-2004)

Note made by the OECD Secretariat

The International Group of Experts on the Explosion Risks of Unstable Substances (IGUS) was established as an OECD *ad hoc* Expert Group in 1962 to provide technical assistance with the development of the first set of OECD Test Guidelines for physical-chemical properties. After the adoption of the first set of OECD Test Guidelines in May 1981 the Group remained active as a scientific platform for discussions and information exchange on hazardous physical properties of chemicals and mixtures. The membership of the Expert Group comprises experts from OECD member countries who are either actively involved in research, development or testing of dangerous substances and mixtures, or are advisors to government on these issues. Experts from non OECD member countries participate in the work as observer-members of IGUS. Since 1988 IGUS has been assisting the former UN Committee of Experts on Transport of Dangerous Goods (CETDG) with respect to the work on test methods and development of hazard criteria for those physical hazards relevant for transport and within its realm of expertise. Currently the expertise of IGUS covers nearly all physical hazards of solids and liquids. Its scope will be further expanded to include also gases, if necessary.

IGUS is currently reconsidering its management structure and has expressed its preference to re-activate and formalise its liaison with OECD which, since 1981, has been limited to the moral support of the work of the Group. Options that would allow the formalisation of IGUS as an OECD Nominated Expert Group on Physical Hazards, if agreeable to member countries, will be discussed by the appropriate technical management groups in OECD in the first half of 2003.

Taking into account:

- the independent position of the (OECD)-IGUS Expert Group,
- the broad level of the Group's expertise in physical hazards, both in the area of transport, and with respect to consumer and worker exposure,
- the Group's very active and scientifically up-to-date membership, and
- the Group's eagerness to contribute to further the international harmonisation of hazard classification of physical hazards and to keep the GHS, once adopted, in pace with scientific developments,

The (OECD)-IGUS Expert Group offers its expertise, time and service to the UN Subcommittee of Experts on the GHS and the UN Committee of Experts on TDG&GHS to act as the Focal Point for any future work on physical hazards related to the GHS.