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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
Transport of Dangerous Goods

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Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally
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and Labelling of Chemicals

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ISSUES RELATING TO THE GLOBALLY HARMONIZED SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION AND LABELLING OF CHEMICALS (GHS)

Proposal for a way forward in the discussion on the implementation of the GHS criteria for
corrosivity in the UN Model Regulations for Transport for consideration by
the Working Group on corrosivity

Transmitted by the expert from the Netherlands

Introduction

1. The intention of the Netherlands by submitting document ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2009//15 and earlier papers is to bring the Model Regulations for Transport in line with the GHS criteria on corrosivity. In our view harmonisation in the chain of storage, use and transport will enhance safety and will also lead to less administrative burden for industry.
2. However it is not our intention to substantially strengthen the safety requirements for the transport of corrosive substances.

Consequences of implementing GHS criteria

3. The current criteria for corrosivity in the Model Regulation in terms of packing groups (see 2.8.2.5 of the Model Regulations for transport) are the same as in GHS in terms of the building blocks 1A, 1B and 1C (see 3.2.2.4.2 of GHS). In addition, GHS contains additional elements and calculation rules that can be used to derive a classification.
4. Changes to a system do always have certain downstream consequences. However, we presume that the implementation of the GHS criteria will not change the requirements for the transport of corrosive substances significantly.

5. We recognise that the classification of substances and mixtures mentioned by name in the dangerous goods list has not been systematically adapted to amendments in the criteria (grandfather clause). However, it would be difficult to explain, and in our opinion certainly not desirable, that the list of substances in the UN Model Regulations does not match with the criteria.

6. The United Kingdom fears that implementation of the GHS criteria will lead to an “unbalanced system” (see ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2009/50 par. 6) and the same worries are expressed by industry (see ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2009/49).

7. Of course the Netherlands would not favour an “unbalanced system”. The question however is whether or not the implementation of the GHS criteria will lead to such an “unbalanced system”. In our view this is a crucial question for both the Sub-Committee TDG and GHS.

Proposal

8. A way forward could be:

- (a) The working group may decide to conduct an impact study in order to get a clear picture of the consequences of introducing the GHS text;
- (b) The study should be based on terms of reference established by the working group. The main goal could be to investigate whether the classification according to the dangerous goods list in Chapter 3.2 of the UN Model Regulations for transport matches with the GHS criteria 1A, 1B and 1C.

The joint working group could address the following issues:

- (i) Should the study include all substances or a list of big movers?;
 - (ii) Who will perform the study;
 - (iii) The time schedule;
 - (iv) Other issues;
- (c) The results should be discussed in a joint TDG/GHS working group
 - (d) Based on the outcome of such a study a solution for the problem may be developed.

In relation to the concerns expressed on the text of GHS all parties involved are encourage to forward their concerns of the GHS text to the attention of the Sub-Committee on GHS, which is in the process of an editorial review of Chapter 3.2 of GHS.
