

**Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods
and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification
and Labelling of Chemicals**

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**Sub-Committee of Experts on the
Transport of Dangerous Goods**

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Geneva, 3-7 July 2017

Item 2 (i) of the provisional agenda

**Explosives and related matters:
review of Chapter 2.1 of the GHS**

**Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized
System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals**

Thirty-third session

Geneva, 10-12 July 2017

Item 2 (b) of the provisional agenda

**Classification criteria and related hazard
communication: review of Chapter 2.1**

**Status of the work of the informal correspondence group on
the revision of GHS Chapter 2.1**

Transmitted by the expert from Sweden

1. As a result of the initiative of the expert from Australia in December 2014¹, work was initiated to revise GHS Chapter 2.1 on Explosives. As the expert from Australia resigned from leading the effort, the expert from Sweden took over the leadership² and an Informal Correspondence Group (ICG) was formed for the task. While initially comprising almost exclusively members from the Working Group of Explosives (EWG) under the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (SCETDG), the ICG currently consists of 31 experts whereof many also frequently attend the meetings of the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System (SCEGHS).

2. During the previous biennium, status reports on the work of the ICG have been submitted to all but the first sessions of the SCEGHS and SCETDG,³ and dedicated meetings of the ICG have been held during many of these sessions of both Sub-Committees. For the December 2016 sessions, the status report described how a new classification scheme for Explosives in the GHS had been discussed which would comprise generalised labelling for all Explosives except the current category “Unstable explosives” and some Explosives which were judged not to pose a significant explosion risk⁴. While this new classification and labelling could potentially solve many problems with the current provisions in Chapter 2.1, it inevitably also poses new challenges in particular relating to down-stream effects such as on existing requirements for storage and use. When the previous biennium ended in December 2016 there was consensus on continuing the effort, recognising that a lot of issues still remained to be addressed.

3. At the previous (32:nd) session of the SCEGHS, the Chairman asked the expert from Sweden to review the Terms of Reference of the ICG, to which the expert from Sweden responded with an informal paper to that session⁵. That document contained two options for such terms – keeping the current ones as in the original document from the expert from Australia⁶ (Option A), or new ones (Option B). While the SCEGHS opted for keeping the

¹ ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/2014/15 - ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2014/79

² UN/SCEGHS/29/INF.13 and the report from the 29:th session of the SCEGHS (ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/58)

³ UN-SCEGHS-32-INF08_UN-SCETDG-50-INF11, UN/SCEGHS/31/INF.10 - UN/SCETDG/49/INF.37, UN/SCEGHS/30/INF.9 -UN/SCETDG/48/INF.32

⁴ See Annex 1 of UN-SCEGHS-32-INF08_UN-SCETDG-50-INF11 for details on this

⁵ UN/SCEGHS/32/INF.41

⁶ ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/2014/15 - ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2014/79

original terms, the expert from Sweden was encouraged to put together a Programme of Work for the future work of the ICG. In March 2017, the expert from Sweden sent out a draft proposal for a Programme of Work to the group, with the intention of further discussing this during the sessions of the Sub-Committees in July 2017. This draft proposal is reproduced in the Annex to this document.

4. During the time that has passed since the December 2016 sessions of the Sub-Committees, the expert from Sweden has encouraged members of the ICG to feed in their views on the way forward to the group. While some comments have been received, the discussions within the ICG have not been very vivid lately. A few members have, however, pointed out their preferences for how to continue the work, and these indicate that views are at this point diverging in two main directions. There are some members who prefer to work further on a new classification and labelling scheme for Explosives in the GHS along the lines of what was presented in the Status Report to the December 2016 sessions of the Sub-Committees⁷, and an elaborate “thought starter” has been circulated by a group of experts suggesting how Chapter 2.1 can be revised to function better in sectors other than supply and transport. Other members, on the contrary, prefer to keep the current classification and labelling system intact and instead work on introducing a note (or revising the existing Note 1 in section 2.1.3) to solve the problem of misleading labelling for some Explosives when not in their transport packaging or configuration, and an initial suggestion has been circulated also to this end from a group of experts.

5. It is proposed that a meeting of the correspondence group be convened in connection with the sessions of both sub-committees in July 2017, where discussions will be held on the Programme of work (see Annex) and the way forward in relation to the two main directions members of the ICG have indicated preference for (see paragraph 2 above). As regards the session of the SCETDG, the meeting of the ICG could be convened once the Working Group of Explosives has completed its work, or as otherwise decided by the Sub-Committee. As regards the SCEGHS, it is proposed that the meeting of the ICG is convened in the margins of the session of the Sub-Committee.

Annex: Draft proposal for Programme of Work sent out to the ICG in March 2017

Task nr.	Description of task	To be concluded	Comment
1	Assess the problems with Chapter 2.1 as in GHS Rev.7 and assess their urgency.	May 2017	On-going, almost concluded
2	Propose various possible solutions to the problems and make a rough assessment of their potential drawbacks.	May 2017	On-going, almost concluded
3	Decide on which problems should be solved and in what way.	July 2017	To be done at UN-sessions in July 2017
4	Work on detailed solutions to those problems identified in Task nr. 3.	November 2017	To be done at and after UN-sessions in July.
5	Analyse the consequences of the proposed solutions.	February 2018	
6	Make initial suggestions for amendments to Chapter 2.1, if and as appropriate.	March 2018	For WD-submission to UN-sessions in June/July 2018
7	Make final suggestions for amendments to Chapter 2.1, if and as appropriate.	September 2018	For WD-submission to UN-sessions in December 2018

⁷ See Annex 1 of UN-SCEGHS-32-INF08_UN-SCETDG-50-INF11