



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
21 December 2016

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

Joint Meeting of the RID Committee of Experts and the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

Bern, 13–17 March 2017

Item 9 of the provisional agenda

Any other business

Request for consultative status

Note by the secretariat^{*, **}

1. At its autumn 2016 session, the Joint Meeting considered an application from the Council on Safe Transportation of Hazardous Articles (COSTHA) seeking consultative status for participation in the work of the Joint Meeting, and asked COSTHA to draw-up a new application which the secretariat was requested to submit as an official document (ECE/TRANS/WP.15/AC.1/144, para.58). The secretariat reproduces hereafter the new information received from COSTHA.

Background

2. COSTHA's initial request for consultative status was reproduced by the secretariat in INF.5 for the autumn 2016 session of the Joint Meeting.

3. As noted in the report of that session, ECE/TRANS/WP.15/AC.1/144:

“57. The Joint Meeting considered with interest the request for consultative status filed by COSTHA. Several delegations asked the COSTHA representative to provide additional information, in particular to justify the organization's compliance with the principles set out in Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31, parts I and II, in accordance with rule 1 (d) of the Joint Meeting's rules of procedure.

* In accordance with the programme of work of the Inland Transport Committee for 2016-2017, (ECE/TRANS/2016/28/Add.1 (9.2)).

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Specifically, they considered that in respect of paragraph 12 of the resolution, COSTHA should explain the mechanisms of accountability to its members and how its members exercised control over its policies.

58. Following the discussion, in which several delegations expressed support for the application, the COSTHA representative was asked to draw up a new application incorporating the appropriate justification. The secretariat was requested to submit the application as an official document, with additional information attached in an appropriate format.”

4. As requested by the Joint Meeting, COSTHA respectfully submits the following information.

COSTHA profile

5. COSTHA, founded in 1972, is a not-for-profit industry association devoted to promoting regulatory compliance and safety in the international transport of dangerous goods. COSTHA represents 180 member companies, including: shippers; carriers by highway, air, and water; container and packaging manufacturers; chemical manufacturers; pharmaceutical companies; electronics manufacturers; personal care and other consumer product manufacturers; automobile and automobile component manufacturers; and trainers, as well as other businesses and organisations involved in all aspects of transportation of dangerous goods and hazardous wastes.

6. The mission of COSTHA is to assist and support its members by providing timely regulatory information, to aid and develop their roles as dangerous goods professionals, and to monitor international regulatory activity and promote regulatory harmonisation where practical.

7. While COSTHA’s head office is in the U.S. and permanent staff are in the U.S. and Canada, COSTHA also works with experts located in various regions including Europe, Asia, and Latin America. COSTHA’s membership includes many global or multinational companies with corporate headquarters in North America, Europe, and Asia, and COSTHA’s Board of Directors is currently composed of representatives from twelve companies with corporate headquarters in the U.S., the Netherlands, Sweden, and Switzerland. A list of COSTHA member companies is available at: <http://www.costha.com/page/current-members-38.html>

COSTHA activities

8. COSTHA’s bylaws govern its membership, structure, voting rights, and procedures. The bylaws are provided in an annex in INF.5. Financial statements have also been submitted previously to the secretariat.

9. Issues are discussed by COSTHA members in committees. Every effort is made to develop COSTHA positions by consensus, but positions may be determined by vote if necessary, and then approved by the Board of Directors, in accordance with Article XII of the bylaws. COSTHA ensures that representation on the Board of Directors proportionally reflects the various segments of industry represented by the members, in accordance with Article VII of the bylaws.

10. COSTHA is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) with consultative status at the United Nations Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, where it participates actively and also provides administrative support for the lithium battery informal working group.

11. At the aforementioned Sub-Committee, as well as in other regulatory fora, COSTHA has introduced proposals and provided expertise regarding specialised issues, such as transport of medical devices, adsorbed gases, small quantities of dangerous goods in e-commerce, safety devices, and other dangerous goods in articles, that may not be the focus of other industry associations, particularly those that are active in those regulatory fora.

12. COSTHA also works closely with representatives from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) particularly in the Caribbean to organise meetings and training courses on the transport of dangerous goods.

COSTHA interest in the work of the Joint Meeting

13. COSTHA is not affiliated with any other NGO already in consultative status for the work of the Joint Meeting.

14. COSTHA may be able to provide some different perspectives from certain industries, such as retail and e-commerce companies, manufacturers of vehicle components such as airbags and other safety devices, heavy equipment manufacturers, manufacturers of medical devices and analytical instruments, and electronics manufacturers, who operate and transport globally including in contracting parties/states to the RID/ADR/ADN.

15. In a survey of COSTHA members conducted in November 2016, respondents indicated that they had operations, including manufacturing facilities, distribution centres, and retail facilities, in the following contracting parties/states to the RID, ADR, and/or ADN: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova (Republic of Moldova), Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

16. COSTHA members are increasingly addressing issues related to the transport of dangerous goods internationally, including importing to, exporting from, and transporting in contracting parties/states to the RID/ADR/ADN. COSTHA would appreciate the opportunity to participate as an observer to the Joint Meeting, to ask questions and learn regarding the interpretation or implementation of requirements in the RID, ADR, and ADN, to be aware of and share with our members issues and proposed and pending amendments with respect to these regulatory instruments, and to support and collaborate with competent authorities and other stakeholders at the Joint Meeting.