
Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

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Item 7 of the provisional agenda

Reports of informal working groups

Informal working group on the reduction of the risk of BLEVE – Comments (Ref. doc: INF. 7)

Transmitted by the Government of Italy

Following the BAM test presentation and the related summary documents presented by the Netherlands, the Italian delegation would like to express its position on the issue of BLEVE.

The Italian experts attended the presentation of the test results provided by BAM and recognized a noticeable work that finally highlights that, in the testing conditions, thermal coating postpones the occurrence of a BLEVE.

The Italian experts also recognized that, for practical reasons, BAM used testing configurations (small capacity static LPG tanks, pressure relief valves) that present differences in terms of design and construction from the fixed tanks used for transport of LPG (the RID/ADR regulation requires significantly higher standards) and noticed that to date, it has not presented a model to convert the testing results on real scale tanks that are in use today. The scale factor should also take into account that in real accidents the immediate engulfment and heating radiation used for the test could appear excessive.

The argument seems to be very relevant not only for the LPG transport but for all the products that can produce a BLEVE and should be evaluated also in accordance to the fire brigades emergency procedures that could be affected by the presence of the thermal coating.

Finally, Italy firmly supports the enhancing of the level of safety in the dangerous goods transport conditions that have to be evaluated taking into account the real transport conditions and the good practices in the emergency operation and shall be subjected to an assessment of the risk.

It is essential that the risk assessment is based not only on the effects of the BLEVE but takes into account the frequency of occurrence and must be performed with an agreed risk assessment methodology, in order to evaluate the scenarios coming from the application of both preventive and protective possible measures.

It must be ensured that an overall impact assessment from the implementation of every measure accompanies any proposal, including all known aspects i.e. positive, negative, technical, operational, environmental and economic.