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Item 8 of the provisional agenda

Recent Developments in International Regulatory Cooperation

Progress report on the Sectoral Initiative on Pipelines Safety

Submitted by the Rapporteur¹

Mandate

Decisions 17 and 18 of the 29th session: “the Working Party noted information on regulatory cooperation provided by the delegates and adopted the reports of the four sectoral initiatives and requested them to report at the next session”.

Summary

Major changes in the structure of the European energy market, related to the desire of EU governments to reduce to zero carbon emissions from the fuel used and significantly expand the use of hydrogen as the main energy carrier, only expand the prospects of pipeline systems in ensuring uninterrupted and safe supply of even more safety-demanding hydrogen fuel or its mixture. There are already problems with converting existing pipeline systems that were previously designed to use only hydrocarbon fuels, in particular natural gas and methane, to a mixed composition and pure hydrogen. There is not enough experience in this area and therefore different requirements and regulations exist in different EU member States today. Companies that traditionally operate pipeline systems that transport natural gas and mixtures based on it are forced not only to maintain and improve their level of safety and even stricter environmental requirements, but also to look for other forms of interaction and cooperation with new players in the energy market. Companies in cross-border territories and countries are required to consider the full range

¹ This report has been submitted in English and Russian by the Rapporteur and it has not been formally edited

of regulatory changes from other regulatory sectors and new market requirements. The expansion of the use of hydrogen fuel and the rather high cost of obtaining it forces countries and the EU to introduce additional economic and legislative incentives that create a virtually new economy, which undoubtedly have an even stronger dependence on the geopolitical factors of the global scale. This document provides an update on the activities under this sectoral initiative. It is submitted to the Working group for discussion and approval. Proposed solution: The working group approves the report of the sectoral pipeline safety initiative. It requests the Secretariat to continue to report on its development and implementation. It also requests the Secretariat, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, to assist in maintaining and developing contacts with governments to promote the initiative.

I. Project objective and key deliverables

1. The objective of this sectoral initiative was initially to develop a common policy framework for pipeline safety in accordance with the provisions of the "international model" contained in "Recommendation L" of The working group on standardization and regulatory cooperation policies (available on the website http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/wp6/Recommendations/Recommendation_L_en.pdf). However, the changes taking place in the global energy sector, and especially in the EU, pose even more complex challenges for pipeline transport. The call to switch to more environmentally friendly fuels based on renewable natural sources, such as hydrogen or biofuels, does not answer the simple question of what should happen at least to the existing pipeline infrastructure in Europe and countries previously engaged in the supply of traditional fossil sources, such as natural gas, methane and oil. After all, their total length is more than 1 million km in the EU alone!
2. Along with direct difficulties in the regular exchange of information in the field of solving the tasks of the sectoral initiative, which previously forced the active development of remote methods of work related to collecting information from participating countries, most of the past reporting year was also complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The possibility of holding events in the traditional format, including conferences with personal presence, was completely limited, and contacts between experts were minimized and transferred completely to the online format, which did not allow for the necessary information exchange.
3. If in previous years the initiative group managed to collect a certain amount of information on new pipeline systems for the transportation and distribution of liquefied natural gas (LNG), the new stage of development of the initiative requires, in particular, a more detailed consideration of the requirements, changes and their possible harmonization for the transportation of hydrogen or its mixture. It is also necessary to understand in more detail the issues of maintaining or changing existing pipeline systems.
4. In 2020, the initiative of the Russian gas society with the participation of the Russian Union of Industrialists and entrepreneurs and the Technical Committee of the International organization for standardization (ISO TC 67), which led to the creation of a working group on pipeline safety, was developed, and The Chairman of the initiative was headed by the Executive Director, Russian gas society. Up to this point, this industry initiative has focused on identifying the risks that arise at various stages of the pipeline system lifecycle, mainly related to long-distance transportation. Starting in 2018, the task force will focus on a more in-depth study and identification of a comprehensive set of safety requirements for cross-border pipelines based on standards, as well as on finding solutions that will be used to determine compliance with these requirements.

5. The Task force will focus on developing specific recommendations that can become a key element of the overall regulatory framework of the countries of the United Nations economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in the construction and design of not only main pipelines, but also all distribution systems in general. In addition, the planned work will allow for a broad exchange of information in the field of forming new tariff approaches and pricing for pipeline transport services.

II. Main achievements of the Initiative until 2020

6. The sectoral initiative began its work in 2007. At the request of the Working group (see paragraph 62 of the report of the 2008 session), interested delegations developed a questionnaire. Responses were received from Belarus, Brazil, Kazakhstan, Canada and Turkey. The purpose of the questionnaire was to document existing regulatory practices in this area. The questionnaire and its consolidated responses were discussed by the Bureau of the Working group and presented at its nineteenth annual session.

7. The questionnaire was updated by the project team in 2015 and placed on the web site of the Initiative www.unece.org/trade/wp6/sectoralinitiatives/pipelinesafety/sips.html.

8. In the following years, a working group was formed in Russia on the basis of the Russian gas society, the Russian Union of Industrialists and entrepreneurs and the ISO Technical Committee 67. She worked on creating a prototype geo-information system for data collection and visual representation of more than 2 million km of pipeline systems operating in the ECE countries The UN and Russia. Regular consultations and working meetings were held with interested ISO committees. Currently, this work has been developed in the formation of new conceptual approaches in the field of regulation and regulation of the gasification program of the Russian Federation.

9. In 2018-2019, the concept of the pipeline safety management systems (SMS) program, implemented by the American petroleum Institute, was analyzed in more detail. Unfortunately, the development of this work due to communication problems will be carried out in 2021.

III. Meetings and awareness-raising activities in 2019-2020

10. In 2020, at the initiative of the Russian gas company, with the support of ISO TC 67, a working group on the safety of main pipelines was formed on the basis of the current working group.

11. In 2020, at the initiative of the Committee for technical regulation, standardization and conformity assessment of the Russian Union of Industrialists and entrepreneurs (RSPP) and the Russian gas society, 5 remote webinars were held, including with the participation of international experts, including eurogaz, which addressed the most important issues of regulation and legislative support for planned development within the framework of the Sectoral initiative.

IV. Deliverables for the annual session

12. The sectoral initiative aims to develop not only a reference legal framework in this sector, but also to develop a recommendation on the organization of cooperation and information exchange in this critical area in Europe.

13. Currently, policy priorities in this sector are moving towards policy and regulatory frameworks that guarantee the security of pipeline supply. This is forcing the initiative to completely rethink the priorities of its work and widen its scope.

V. Responsibility for the continuation of the work

14. The current Coordinator of the Sectoral Initiative is Dr. Roman Samsonov.

VI. Role of the secretariat

15. The sectoral initiative invites the secretariat to continue supporting the work of the Initiative by trying to raise funds for the proposed project, servicing its meetings (prepare the invitations, agendas, preparing supporting documents and reports) and keeping the website up to date. The secretariat could assist the Convener in maintaining and developing contacts with the counterparts of the Initiative in national Governments and regional groups, as well as contributing to awareness-raising activities.
