CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA FOR MATERIALS HAZARDOUS ONLY IN BULK

Scientific hazard evaluation and classification of solid bulk cargoes

Submitted by Germany

SUMMARY

Executive summary: As no data base for all bulk solids exists, any introduction of new criteria for classification might exhibit an inestimable impact on shipping. For the same reason, there is non-standardized identification and phrasing of safety-related information in the schedules of the IMSBC Code. A German project is aiming at improving these situations.

Strategic direction: 5
High-level action: 5.2.3.4
Planned output: 2012
Action to be taken: Paragraph 8

Introduction

1 For the definition of cargoes which are only hazardous when carried in bulk, so-called MHB materials, a number of potentially relevant hazardous properties have been identified (see e.g. DSC 16/4/13 by the United States and DSC 16/4/67 by Germany and the Netherlands). However, in the past, no systematic approach had been taken to define MHB cargoes. The criteria developed to define these hazards will after finalization not only have an impact on future entries in the IMSBC Code but may also affect retrospectively the existing cargoes.

2 Presently, there is no comprehensive documentation of the properties and the hazards of all solid bulk cargoes listed within the IMSBC Code.

3 Germany noted that the hazard descriptions of the cargoes as shown on the schedules within the IMSBC Code are non-harmonized and in a number of cases do not fully cover all hazards. Germany is of the opinion that a comparable listing and identification of
the hazards has to be developed to enable mariners to introduce the appropriate occupational safety measures and easily understand the risks involved when handling, loading or unloading the cargoes.

4 For the procedures on board, in particular those in emergency, clear and unambiguous phrasing in the schedules is important. The information should conform to the standards of communication on board ships and should be standardized. The existing language in the IMSBC Code does not fully meet this request.

5 Germany has started to evaluate and amend the phrasing, to evaluate the cargoes on scientific base and to create a structured documentation of this information. In the next months, more German co-partners will step into the project to evaluate all hazardous properties and all kind of advice for mariners within the IMSBC Code schedules. In addition, safety information in particular on the health hazards will be retrieved and evaluated by experts.

6 Any impact assessment of the introduction of the criteria on the business and the shipping procedures is still missing. With the ongoing project, Germany would like to add information for the identification of hazard criteria for the IMSBC Code. It is hoped that the impact of specific criteria on the classification of cargoes could be identified for any specific cargo.

7 First non-final examples of the project work for three cargoes are submitted by Germany (E&T 17/INF.4). The documentation shows the approach taken, the formatting of data, the toxicological/eco-toxicological hazards and the physical-chemical data evaluated.

Action requested of the E&T Group

8 The Group is invited to note the ongoing project and comment as appropriate.