Joint Position Paper

The role of eSDScom in the electronic exchange of safety data sheets within the auto industry

Safety data sheets (SDSs) provide information on how to store and handle hazardous chemical substances. Within the automotive industry, manufacturers, importers and downstream users frequently need to send or receive SDSs, and a new electronic platform called eSDScom has been developed to streamline this process.

eSDScom meets the requirements of two sets of EU regulations that directly impact the content of safety data sheets. These are REACH (covering registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals), and CLP (covering classification, labelling and packaging of chemicals). Among other data, CLP requires the inclusion of hazard classification and labelling information. CLP also forms the basis for a range of downstream regulations, including Seveso III and the Biocide Products Regulation (BPR). Since June 2015, all SDSs for mixtures have had to use CLP classification and labelling.

REACH Article 31 (Requirements for safety data sheets) and REACH Annex II (Requirements for the compilation of safety data sheets) set out detailed criteria for the content of SDSs. Alongside growing information demands for notification activities, plus upcoming changes relating to the EU's Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability, this means exchanging SDS information has become increasingly difficult and costly. More broadly, communication relating to hazardous materials has become more complex, both up- and downstream and within companies. To minimise this increased administrative and cost burden, it is essential to switch to the paperless exchange of SDS information between manufacturers, importers and downstream users.

In 2010, the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA), the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association, Inc. (JAMA), the Korea Automobile Manufacturers Association (KAMA) and the European Association of Automotive Suppliers (CLEPA), agreed that an XML-based electronic data exchange system should be developed as a long-term alternative to the existing paper-based system for communicating SDSs along the supply chain. Such a system would enable data to be made available in a structured XML format ready for importing into in-house databases.

eSDScom builds on three predecessor systems: EDASx, SDScom and ESCom. It is the new industry standard for structured XML-based data exchange, allowing the communication of SDSs, exposure scenarios and classification and labelling information, as well as related information on occupational health and safety down the supply chain. Despite being extremely comprehensive, its specification is relatively compact.

eSDScom also integrates eSDSphrac (formerly known as the EuPhraC phrase catalogue) and eSDSxml (formerly SDScomXML) schema, as well as exposure scenario data from Q4/2021 onwards. Additionally, it takes into account the work of the European Exchange Network on Exposure Scenarios (ENES) for downstream users in the ESCom project.

The main characteristics of eSDScom are:

- It enables recipients to use SDS data in their own IT systems and their own language without costly manual re-entering of supplier data, or the need for translation.
- It provides a standard for the vendor-independent electronic exchange of SDS data using XML.
- Its XML schema covers all elements of SDS content as defined by European national chemical regulations (based on REACH and CLP).
- It is open to extensions covering other legislation, and criteria for several additional regulatory regions have already been added.
- It has been developed by cross-industry expert teams, taking global requirements into account.
- It comes with its own standard phrase catalogue (formerly EuPhraC), but can also be used with other phrase catalogues. Translations of the phrase library are commercially available in more than 40 languages, including Japanese, Korean and Chinese. Updates already include other non-European SDS requirements (eg those of the USA and South America).
- It is designed to have low implementation risks, reducing project costs and making it the ideal choice for small and medium enterprises in particular.
- It is free of charge and open source (licensed under Creative Commons BY-ND 4.0). The Creative Commons licence also covers a set of tools, which currently include a free editor and style sheet.

The automotive industry is committed to increasing environmental protection for workers and customers, and recognises that developing and using the most effective procedures for sharing hazard and safety data is essential. The industry fully supports the continued development of eSDScom as the de facto standard for data exchange relating to SDSs. It recommends that all members of the supply chain implement an XML interface into their health and safety and environmental IT systems.

The **European Automobile Manufacturers' Association** (**ACEA**) represents the 16 major Europe-based car, van, truck and bus makers: BMW Group, DAF Trucks, Daimler Truck, Ferrari, Ford of Europe, Honda Motor Europe, Hyundai Motor Europe, Iveco Group, Jaguar Land Rover, Mercedes-Benz, Renault Group, Stellantis, Toyota Motor Europe, Volkswagen Group, Volvo Cars, and Volvo Group.

https://www.acea.auto/

The **Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association, Inc. (JAMA)** is a non-profit industry association which comprises Japan's fourteen manufacturers of passenger cars, trucks, buses and motorcycles. JAMA works to support the sound development of Japan's automobile industry and to contribute to social and economic welfare.

https://www.jama.or.jp/english/

The **Korea Automobile Manufacturers Association (KAMA)** is a non-profit organisation representing the interests of auto-makers in Korea. We are promoting the sound growth of the automobile industry and also the development of the national economy.

https://www.kama.or.kr/

The **European Association of Automotive Suppliers (CLEPA)** is based in Brussels, represents over 3,000 companies, from multi-nationals to SMEs, supplying state-of-the-art components and innovative technology for safe, smart and sustainable mobility, investing over €30 billion yearly in research and development. Automotive suppliers directly employ 1.7 million people in the EU.

https://clepa.eu/