THE IMPACT OF DISINFORMATION ON DANGEROUS GOODS OPERATION

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ABSTRACT

It becomes increasingly obvious that the current social stage comes with unique challenges, so the definition of success as gaining advantages only to one party to the detriment of the other must be overcome. In the new era, highly interconnected and transparent, we must find solutions to raise ourselves together or together we will collapse. Our goal is to build a global community, energized by the vast informational networks (which have canceled all distances), based on responsibility, creativity, common benefits and values. Using new approaches and solving problems not solitary but synergistically, effectively, principally, the new strong currency in the global business strategy will become the trust. This cannot be achieved either by fear or legal over-regulation, but only by higher moral values, assumed and followed as the only long-term sustainable solution.

Keywords: *Dangerous goods, port facility, disinformation, manipulation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Prior to the time when the Internet informs and connects us instantly, geography and time had some meaning. Business was running at a different pace, people used to meet, discuss, analyze and finally make a decision. Today, the distance is irrelevant and business opportunities occur one after another, much faster than we can mentally process and understand the context from the partner's point of view. From the speed of the virtual connection and the profit-seeking run, there is the paradox of misunderstanding, incomplete or fragmented data and misinformation. We can hardly decode the real intentions of our partner, since we often do not know him personally.

2. DANGEROUS GOODS OPERATED IN PORT FACILITIES

Almost 50% of the goods carried by sea can be classified as dangerous, potentially dangerous or harmful to the environment.

Given the significant share of maritime transport in trade flows and, implicitly, in port platforms, these types of goods can have a particular impact on such areas, both on those directly involved in the operation and on other categories of people who, by the nature of their service duties, come into direct contact with them or operate in the vicinity of the port facility. In the latter category, the population of localities may also enter the port. Increasing the volume and diversification of different categories of dangerous goods, coupled with the development of the scientific research that made new data known about the dangers they can cause, requires the existence at the decisional level of the concern to elaborate specific legal regulations necessary to protect the relations social impoverishment, local community and carriers.

For the proper operation of dangerous goods it is necessary that the training of the personnel involved in the operation is thorough and that the port facility infrastructure meets the legal standards related to the specialization on the different categories of goods.

Among the categories of goods whose operation generate risks and may affect the environment and / or the health and safety of the port workers, we can list:

- Secondary oil products that may cause fires or explosions;
- Chemicals (industrial, pharmaceutical or agricultural) operated either as final consumer products or as by-products for industrial use. The latter category presents the most important handling and storage risks which, if not properly carried out, can cause accidents with a wide range of variations such as choking, poisoning, skin, eye, respiratory and other diseases generated by inhalation of small particles, as well as fires or explosions;
- Asbestos, whose poor handling or storage can cause cancer or major respiratory disease;
- Minerals, mineral concentrates that due to the size or weight of the goods represent a physical or chemical hazard caused by the emission of flammable gases, spontaneous combustion causing respiratory diseases or other diseases caused by inhalation of small particles;
- Products of animal or vegetable origin such as cotton, oleaginous cakes or fish meal, which can cause self-combustion, fire or explosion risk;
- Radioactive material used in certain industries, including the medical one, which can cause burns, cancer and other illnesses.

These materials pass through ports and are transported by different ship types, generally built specifically for the transport of dangerous goods such as bulk chemicals, petroleum products or gas.

Dangerous goods can be mainly shipped in two ways:

- Bulk: are those products transported without a direct packing into a tank or cargo space that is a structural part of the ship on or under deck. These goods are generally transported in ships specifically built for this purpose, such as tankers (oil, gas, chemical, etc.);
- In packages or crates: those products transported together with their packaging, which may be: barrels,

metal containers, sacks, crates, boxes, etc. Such products are normally transported in combined packaging on pallets, as cargo units or in containers. Liquids can be transported in portable tanks or tankers. Packaged goods are transported in general cargo ships, container vessels or RO-RO vessels.

All these categories of potentially harmful or even fatal goods must be operated by port workers who have experience of the dangers generated by these types of materials. They can be safely transported if properly operated and appropriately grouped, identified, secured and documented according to international standards. Consequently, port workers need to have minimal knowledge of the products they operate, know the best way to operate them in order to create a safe working environment.

Although in the specialty literature, the expression "dangerous products", "hazardous substances", "hazardous or dangerous material", "goods" are used in the transport of goods which may pose a potential hazard to humans, animals, the environment, "according to the ADR Convention, dangerous goods are" substances, materials, articles and waste which, by virtue of their physical state, chemical and biological properties, radioactive or other specific properties, during the transport, loading / unloading operations and storage, can endanger the life and health of people, can cause environmental pollution, destroy the living nature, damage or destroy the transport materials and other goods. “It is worth mentioning that at the level of the United Nations there are different arrangements for each mode of transport; they have in common the list of dangerous goods, each assigned a UN-code number.

In the same context, dangerous residues apply. Broadly, according to the Explanatory Dictionary of Romanian Language, REZÍDUAL means "the remainder of a chemical or physical process carried out on a raw material"; it may have all three aggregation states, its producer or owner having to give up. Hazardous residues are those substances or products contaminated with components that have been classified as dangerous goods for which no direct use is foreseen.

Within the IMO rules and recommendations, a distinction is made between dangerous goods in packages, solid bulk and bulk liquids. The latter category, in turn, is divided into hydrocarbons, hazardous chemicals and liquefied gases.

2.1 International Agreements

International rules containing provisions on dangerous goods and their shipping are governed by the following international agreements:

- THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT OF LIFE AT SEA, known as the "SOLAS 1974" Convention, which, in Chapter VII, provides for specific prevention measures for dangerous goods. Furthermore, Rule 54 of Chapter II-2 provides for measures relating to the construction of ships carrying dangerous goods. The SOLAS Convention also includes safety aspects.
- THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE PREVENTION OF POLLUTION BY VESSELS, 1973, as amended by the 1978 Protocol, known as MARPOL 73/78. This document includes in Annex II provisions for liquid pollutants in bulk and in Annex III, for harmful substances transported in packages. Both annexes cover dangerous goods and include issues directly related to the phenomenon of pollution.
- THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME DANGEROUS GOODS CODE, known as the IMDG Code. It also includes the following publications enclosed in its supplement:
- EMERGENCY PROCEDURES FOR SHIPS TRANSPORTING DANGEROUS GOODS (EMS);
- FIRST AID GUIDE for use in the event of accidents involving dangerous goods;
- United Nations IMO / ILO Guidelines for Strengthening Freight Transport Units;
- Recommendations for the safe use of pesticides on ships;
- INTERNATIONAL CODE FOR SAFETY OF REFUELING OF NUCLEAR FUEL, PLUTONIUM AND HIGHLY RADIOACTIVE WASTE IN SHIPS onboard Ships (INF Code);

2.2 IMO Regulations

The International Maritime Organization, an integral part of the UN, has also issued a number of publications on dangerous goods:
- International Code for the Construction and Equipping of Ships Carrying Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk (IBC Code);
- International Code for the Construction and Equipping of Liquefied Gases (ICG Code);
- Recommendations on the safe transport of dangerous goods and activities involving such goods in port areas (Circular / MSC & 675-1995) and
- The Code of Practice for Safeguards in Solid Bulk Goods (BC Code).

The problem of transporting dangerous goods was a priority for the United Nations. The first meeting on this issue was held in 1953 under the aegis of ECOSOC (Social and Economic Council) when a Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods was established. This committee issued in 1956 a report setting out the minimum requirements for carrying out this operation. They constituted the Transport Recommendations reunited in the Orange Book. The aim of this book is to serve as a reference framework for all modes of transport to apply uniformly the same principles for creating fast, efficient and safe transport flows.

Referring to the harbor platform, it is very important that operations of handling, stacking and storing are done in safe conditions. However, it is obvious that it is impossible to identify each of the chemicals by their names and the dangers they imply, given that at present there are over 5 million chemicals that can be considered dangerous, with a few hundreds.

The orange paper provided for the creation of groups of dangerous goods and the IMDG Code specifies these types of goods in detail, setting up 9 major risk classes.

The statistics show that most of the accidents recorded during the transport of the goods occurred during the cargo handling phase, the port being the interface between the land transport modes (rail, road, inland waterways and pipelines) and thus the main place handling and stacking of goods.

The port is convenient, due to its proximity to the sea and its strong relationship with the marine environment, to adopt the international rules set by the IMO. The most important of these are the IMDG Code and the Recommendations on the safe transport of dangerous goods and the activities involving such goods in port areas.

To this end, it should draw up its own rules on dangerous goods incorporating the IMO provisions mentioned above.

2.3 National Regulations

In Romania, the Maritime Port Authority, elaborated on the basis of the Framework Port Regulation stipulated in the MTI Order no.636 / 2010, contains a number of provisions regarding port operators. Thus, according to these provisions, "The port operator must:

a) Ensure that portable tanks, tanks and containers used to carry dangerous goods have been certified in accordance with the International Convention for the Safety of Containers (CSM) 1972, where applicable, or conform to the provisions of Sections 12 and 13 of the General Introduction of the IMDG Code are certified by a certification or approval system of a competent authority;

This rule does not contain rules on stacking or clear rules on segregation of goods. Taking into account the classification of dangerous goods in risk classes, we consider it appropriate to impose segregation by port operators on risk classes, in accordance with the IMDG Code on board ships. Also, the contravention of the violation of the rules set out in this Regulation is ambiguous, leaving practically the application of the rules contained therein at the discretion of the port operators who choose to comply wholly or partly with it:

"Art. 266. In seaports, depending on the specific nature of the activities carried out, the investigating agents belonging to the designated institutions carry out controls and sanctions, in accordance with the legal provisions.

At national level, Law no. 59/2016 of 11 April 2016 on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances and Law no. 481/2004 on civil protection.

These legal documents create the generally applicable framework in all economic and transport domains. However, they do not create a specific port-specific legal framework, given the economic and legal specificity of this economic area. The activities carried out in the specialized area involve the development of a body of specialists in organizing and controlling the handling and storage of goods.

3. MEDIA AND DISINFORMATION

As Albert Einstein said, we cannot solve a problem using the same patterns of thinking that originally generated it. The classic reward / penalty system is relatively limited. We cannot generate enough rules to get the desired behavioral response for every situation we can imagine, much less for situations we can not foresee.

3.1 MSC FLAMINIA

A good example is the container ship MSC FLAMINIA, under German flag, which suffered in June 2012 an explosion in the mid-Atlantic, followed by a fire, which resulted in the death of three sailors and seriously damaged the floating structure. The ship was carrying 3,000 containers from the United States to Belgium, of which 150 contained substances classified as hazardous waste.

The ship was originally brought to Constanta harbor to be emptied and repaired at the Daewoo Mangalia shipyard.

Figure 1 MSC Flaminia fire

Here comes a classic disinformation / manipulation episode, easily identifiable retrospectively in mass media.

Disinformation by providing real-time information mixed with propaganda messages is a perverse form of manipulation, with effect, especially on naive subjects, uninitiated by diversionist techniques. As a rule, the method is used by important people, with public functions, who have access to mass media: journalists, politicians, specialists, culture people, etc.

Initially, real and public information is revealed that meets the expectations of citizens. The goal is to gain audience confidence and create an aura of expert, authoritative specialist in the field where manipulation is desired. That person will quickly win a series of supporters who will follow, admire and claim him as a hero, a courageous person who does not hesitate to say things by name. In the next stage, when public confidence is gained, the manipulator begins to sneak alongside the real information and a series of "toxic" propaganda messages to suggest some opinions and attitudes that will make them accept things that are obvious against their interests.

Headlines from central and local newspapers, as well as news bulletins, reported a catastrophic situation:

"Floating Bomb Flaminia - a danger to the safety of the population and the environment", “Poisoned business in Constanta harbor”, “Flaminia mystery”, "MSC Flaminia - a big chemical, toxic and miscellaneous dangerous substance floating bomb. No wonder the EU states fear MSC Flaminia just short of being a nuclear device ready to explode. The list of MSC Flaminia's dangerous goods is available on net. The good news is that there are no radioactive materials and no explosives there. The bad news - almost all of the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code is present. "

Local politicians and journalists accused the authorities of accepting the anchoring of the Flaminia ship in Constanta, loaded with 12,000 tons of mixed toxic waste and another 15,000 tons of contaminated extinguishing liquid, endangering the safety of residents and the environment. They complained in press conferences about the lack of transparency of authorities and the misinformation of the population over the procedures for unloading, decontaminating and transporting dangerous cargo containers. Moreover, the private company that owns the berth in which the ship was to operate did not have, according to the Environmental Guard, a storage permit, not even transit waste, and yet the discharge procedures have begun. "

"Workers have found a number of containers of contaminated meat on board, so even the prefect has found that the risk of harming the environment and endangering the health of those handling these containers is a serious one."

Politicians have asked the Minister for the Environment for information on the additional amount of toxic wastes on board, "especially since there are tensions between the German owner and the ship's new operator on this issue." They would also have asked for information on neutralization procedures for toxic waste, "because there is no legislation in Romania, no procedures, no disposal, neutralization and storage technologies." Constanta and Dobrogea have thus become the garbage dump of Europe", the politicians concluded.

Another title announces "Sulfur gases, a mega scam. They want to release radioactive waste in Dobrogea." The shocking hypothesis: Flaminia will spill the waste into the Chevron wells of Dobrogea. Politicians noted that for over a month, a ship loaded with radioactive (?) substances "walks" between Constanta Port and Sulina Port. As they already had suspicions about the true intentions of the American company Chevron, who leased the exploitation of shale gas in the Dobrogea area, they came up with ideas, and then came up with some striking conclusions. "This technology is based on the drilling of a very large diameter shaft, somewhere under the bituminous shale, and that's why it's called shale gas. It is quite accidental that a ship, Flaminia, walks through the port of Constanta through the port of Sulina on board, do not know how many tons of radioactive waste that left Germany for France, the only ones in the world that neutralize dangerous substances, and they refused to receive it, why did not they get it?

"These guys, the multinationals, bring me only disasters. There are 870,000 hectares for the concessional country, out of which about 300,000 are in Dobrogea area. The loss is, once, out of the crop. Two, the touristic potential of the area is much diminished because you cannot travel among the pipes and among the wells. And the most important, potentially destructive from the ecological point of view. If they depleted radioactive substances there, this is the picture of a national disaster, "concluded the theory.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Exactly this hostile context of the press combined with obviously false rumors about the existence of containers of silver ingots, epoch cars or weaponry, rumors of attempts to steal frozen meat from refrigerated containers partially affected by the fire, copper pieces or metal cut from the walls of the warehouses, determined the project managers to move the ship for unloading to a port in Denmark, for the cleaning of the stores affected by the fire. About six months later, the ship turned back empty to Daewoo – Mangalia Heavy Industry Shipyard to replace the pieces destroyed by fire.

The pressure put on the media ultimately resulted in wasting time and money for the Romanian companies involved in the project. Laboratory analyzes indicated that the waste could have been neutralized in Romania, according to the legislation governing the area, and the evolution of the shale gas prospects did not identify links or intentions to mask the toxic products of Flaminia in the underground wells.

It is confirmed again that in the business world there are no friends or enemies, there are only interests.

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