



Bulletin

OTIF Organisation intergouvernementale pour les transports internationaux ferroviaires
Zwischenstaatliche Organisation für den internationalen Eisenbahnverkehr
Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail

131st year
N°3/2023

Bulletin of
International
Carriage
by Rail

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EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

Recent weeks have been dominated by the temporary move of the OTIF Secretariat due to the renovation of the headquarters on Gryphenhübeligweg. The move to the premises in Gümligen took place at the beginning of August.

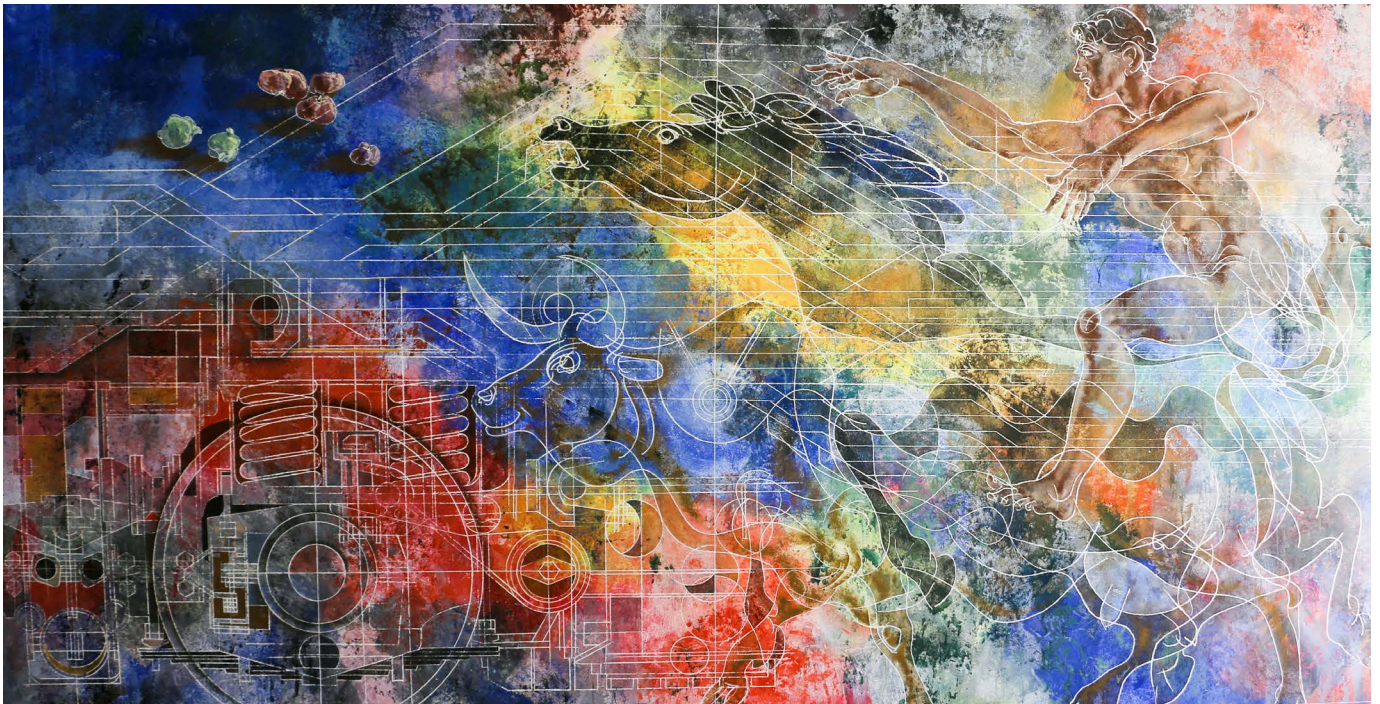
Thanks to good preparation and the full involvement of the Administrative and Finance Department, but also due to the active support of all employees, everything went smoothly and to plan. This was no foregone conclusion since a huge number of old documents and damaged or superfluous items of furniture needed to be discarded, and obviously had to be thoroughly inspected first. The move also means it will be a bit of a squeeze for the next two years since there is considerably less space available in Gümligen.

The move took place with no interruption to business. This bulletin contains detailed information on the highlights of the other important events such as the 50th meeting of the Working Group Technology and its history.

In particular, allow me to draw your attention to the article on gender-neutral language. It is not just the premises of OTIF which occasionally require complete modernisation but also its legal language. We are eager to learn which specific areas of OTIF law will eventually be affected by this adjustment and to what extent.

I hope you enjoy reading it.

Wolfgang Küpper
Secretary General



Hans Erni, mural, approximately 20m², 1965, entrance to the Secretariat

INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM SUMMIT

Mr Jochen Conrad, Head of the Dangerous Goods Department, attended the 2023 International Transport Forum (ITF) Summit as the deputy of OTIF's Secretary General. The summit was held in Leipzig from 24 to 26 May 2023 and was chaired by the United Kingdom.

The theme of the summit this

year was the role of transport for sustainable economies. More specifically, discussions focussed on the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions in the transport sector.

A noteworthy event was the special ministerial round table on the war in Ukraine. Part of the discussion centred around the reconstruction of infrastructure

after the war and the participating countries committed themselves to supporting the re-establishment of Ukraine's internal and external transport links.

Following the summit, 36 Member States signed a joint declaration and for 2024, the United Kingdom handed over the Chair of the ITF summit to Lithuania.



137th SESSION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

The Administrative Committee of the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) held its 137th session at the end of May 2023.

At this spring session, the Committee examined and approved the 2022 Annual Report. The report is available on OTIF's website (https://otif.org/en/?page_id=222).

The Administrative Committee also approved the revised provisional budgets for 2023 and 2024. Lastly, it approved a number of important decisions concerning human resources.



HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON EURO-ASIAN TRAFFIC

On Monday 19 June 2023, a delegation from China's National Rail Administration (NRA) visited the headquarters of the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) in Berne. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss latest developments within the NRA and OTIF.

Under the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2016, the two institutions agreed to cooperate on major Euro-Asian rail traffic issues such as connectivity, interoperability and the development of international rail transport between Asia and Europe.

The Director of the NRA, Mr Fei Dongbin, and the Secretary General of OTIF, Mr Wolfgang Küpper, and their teams were also able to discuss China's possible accession to OTIF.

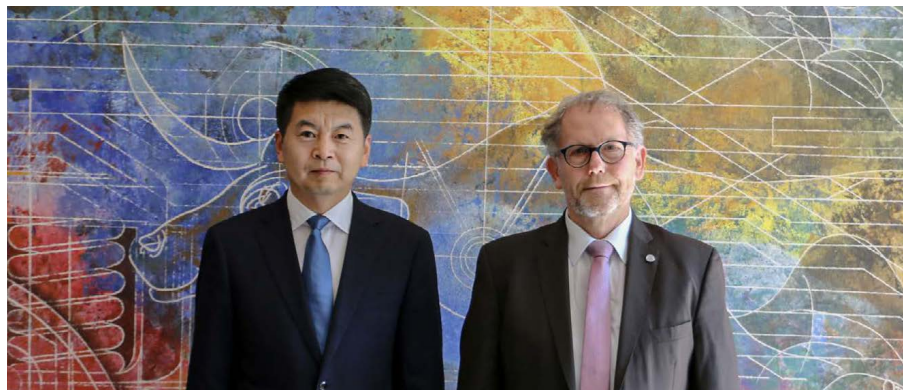
The Secretariat welcomed this meeting as an important milestone in cooperation with the People's Republic of China.

The Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2016 sets out the terms of cooperation between OTIF and the NRA and refers more specifically to:

1. Conducting exchanges in terms of regulations on through international railway transport, railway technical standards, transportation corridor layout, etc.;
2. Promoting the use of the common CIM/SMGS consignment note in railway through transport between Asia and Europe, studying

problems that occur in using the common consignment note and finding solutions to such problems;

3. Studying problems that occur in the operation of Sino-European freight trains and finding solutions to such problems. The terms of this cooperation form part of China's major "Belt and Road" project. Developing and improving rail transport between Asia and Europe are key to reviving the Silk Road network for the benefit of all the countries involved.



RELOCATION TO TEMPORARY PREMISES

In the summer of 2023, the Secretariat teams of the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) spent time sorting, tidying out and emptying their offices in time to relocate as planned at the beginning of August.

The work on renovating OTIF's headquarters building will start in the last quarter of 2023 and will continue until the first quarter of 2025.

The OTIF headquarters building



was constructed in the 1960s and opened in 1966. There has been no major renovation to the building for more than 50 years. Having explored various options to relocate the Organisation, it was instead decided to renovate the entire building and its structure. The address of the OTIF Secretariat's temporary offices is: Worbstrasse 201, 3073 Gümligen, Switzerland.

Please note that the Organisation's postal address will remain the same: Gryphenhübeliweg 30, 3006 Berne. The staff's telephone numbers will also remain the same.



COURTESY VISIT

Ms Iryna Venediktova, who has been newly nominated as Ukraine's ambassador to Switzerland, paid a courtesy visit to the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) on 7 June 2023.

Following the formal introductions, Ms Venediktova and Mr Küpper,

the Secretary General of OTIF, discussed railway law and its application in Ukraine. This discussion took place against the background of the war.

Mr Küpper presented the Organisation and emphasised the added value of choosing to apply the Convention concerning

International Carriage by Rail (COTIF), particularly the Uniform Rules concerning the Contract of International Carriage of Goods by Rail (CIM UR).

The Secretary General welcomed this visit.

COOPERATION WITH THE UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION

Mr Masahiko Metoki, Director General of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and Mr Wolfgang Küpper, Secretary General of the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) met at OTIF's headquarters on 28 June 2023.

Mr Metoki and Mr Küpper had already had the opportunity to meet in January 2022 when they took part in a remote discussion.

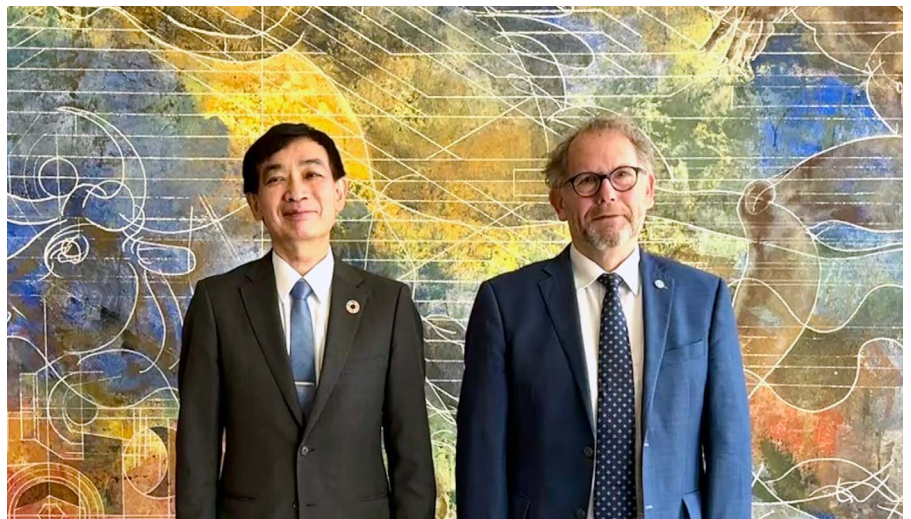
On Wednesday 28 June 2023, the aim of the meeting was to discuss the current areas of cooperation that are defined in a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2018. The first point raised concerned cooperation on shared service resources. Participants then discussed developments in sending packages in the post by rail

between China and Europe.

Lastly, future areas of cooperation were considered.

The Secretary General welcomed this visit and would like to thank the

Director General of UPU, Mr Masahiko Metoki, for the quality of their discussion and for the lasting cooperation between the two international organisations based in Berne.



DEPOSITARY NOTIFICATIONS

Since last Bulletin mid-March 2023 ([Bulletin 2/2023](#))

NOT-23015	13.7.2023	Provisions adopted by the Committee of Technical Experts at its 15 th session held on 13 and 14 June 2022
NOT-23014	30.6.2023	Corrections to the edition of RID in force since 1 January 2023 (Annex to Appendix C to the Convention)

NEGOTIABLE MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT DOCUMENTS; UNCITRAL WORKING GROUP

Working group VI “Negotiable multimodal transport documents” of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) met in New York (United States of America) from 8 to 12 May 2023. Its aim is to prepare an international instrument on negotiable freight documents that would be applicable alongside the underlying transport conventions.

With a mandate from the ad hoc

Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation, the Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) is closely following the subject and the work of Working Group VI.

The head of the OTIF Secretariat’s Legal Department, Mr Aleksandr Kuzmenko, therefore took part in the autumn 2022 session in Vienna and the spring 2023 session in New York.

The challenge for the Secretariat is to ensure, for the benefit of the rail sector, that a new legal instrument for negotiable multimodal transport documents does not conflict with the provisions of the Uniform Rules concerning the Contract of International Carriage of Goods by Rail (CIM UR).

AN AFTERNOON OF DISSEMINATION

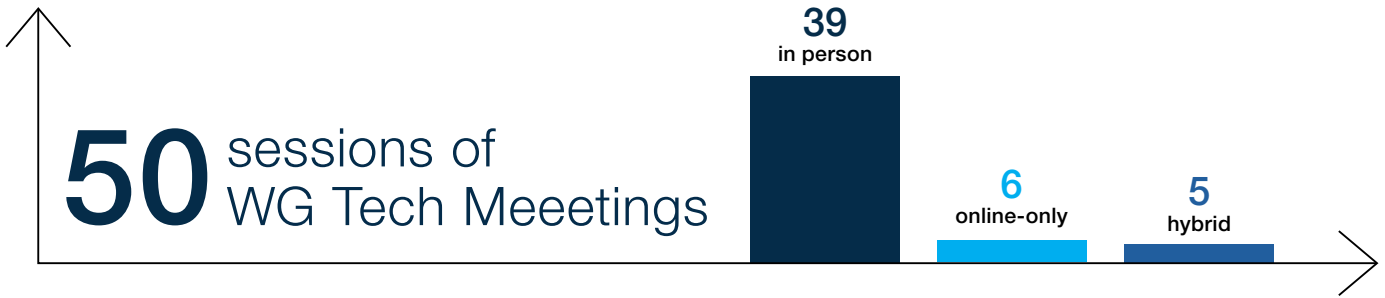
On 20 June 2023, the Secretary General of OTIF, Mr Küpper, and the heads of the Dangerous Goods and Technical Interoperability Departments, Mr Conrad and Mr Leermakers, welcomed a group of 11 trainees from the German Federal Railway Authority (EBA), which is based in Bonn (Germany).

At the request of this delegation of trainees, Mr Küpper, Mr Conrad and Mr Leermakers gave a presentation on the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) and its activities. What is OTIF’s role? What is the purpose of the uniform rules for technical interoperability? Why and how are the rules for the transport of dangerous goods

developed? These were just some of the questions that the trainees were able to get answers to.

The participants welcomed this opportunity to share information and knowledge.





MEETING VENUES AND CHAIR

CHAIR:

- Switzerland 38x
- United Kingdom 10x
- Germany 1x
- OTIF Secretariat 1x



First meeting
14-15 November 2006

On 7 and 8 September 2023
WG TECH held its 50th session

Chair persons

Marcel Hepp (CH), Roland Bacher (CH), Michael Schmitz (DE), Christoph Le Borgne (CH), Vaibhav Puri (UK)

340
delegates attending at least one session

Delegates who have attended the most sessions:

2
Roland Bacher (CH)
30 sessions

1
Milan Popović (RS)
41 sessions

3
Rocco Cammarata (IT)
27 sessions

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

14 UTPs

2 annexes to the ATMF UR

full-revision of the ATMF UR

1 new Appendix to COTIF (Appendix H - EST UR)

4 annexes to the future EST UR.

USE OF GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE IN OTIF

Language is one of those things that accompanies almost all aspects of our lives. On the one hand, it expresses what has developed historically; on the other hand, it continues unconsciously to influence the way people think, thus further consolidating social structures, role models and clichés.

However, language is not an immobile, fixed entity. It constantly evolves like a living organism and adapts to current trends, social changes and mindsets.

For some time now, many societies have been experiencing a strong push towards gender equality and equal opportunities. As a result, it is only logical that this effects how people use language and that for some years, there have been increasing calls for gender-neutral and non-discriminatory language. Like OTIF, many of its Member States and other international organisations have reacted to these

calls and have officially introduced rules on using gender-neutral language.

In April 2021 on the initiative of the Member States, the 4th session of the Working Group of Legal Experts (the predecessor to the ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation, hereafter the “ad hoc Committee”) decided to include the issue of gender-neutral language as a new item in its work programme. Since then, this issue has been examined at regular intervals. Firstly, the 2nd session of the ad hoc Committee decided that gender-neutral language should generally be used and that some guidelines should be drafted.

With regard to OTIF’s legal texts, it was decided that “initially, the introduction of gender-neutral language should be limited to the provisions of legal instruments under binding or non-binding institutional law which is addressed

to natural persons or which refers to specific roles, positions or offices”¹. The OTIF Secretariat’s Translation Department subsequently drafted trilingual guidelines on the use of gender-neutral language, which were submitted to the 4th session of the ad hoc Committee.

The final consultation of the Member States on these guidelines is currently underway and will be completed at the end of September. We hope that we will be able to provide you with a link to this trilingual tool on gender-neutral language in one of the next editions of the Bulletin.

With these guidelines, OTIF is embracing the *Zeitgeist* and has decided to be a modern organisation in which equal rights and equal opportunities are also at the fore in terms of language.

Joana Meenken

¹ List of decisions of the 2nd session of the ad hoc Committee “Décisions 07.04.2022/Beschlüsse 07.04.2022/Decisions 07.04.2022”.

RESULTS OF THE 15th COMMITTEE OF TECHNICAL EXPERTS AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee of Technical Experts (CTE) held its 15th session on 13 and 14 June 2023 in Bern, Switzerland. The meeting was held in a hybrid format. This article summarises the results of the session, its decisions and its work programme.

31 OTIF Member States (MSs) were present or represented at the session. The European Union was represented by the European Commission. There were also delegates from the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA), the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), the Organisation for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD) and the International Union of Railways (UIC). In line with the invitation, Israel attended as an observer in the framework of ERA's EUMedRail project. The Committee elected the United Kingdom, in the shape of Mr Vaibhav Puri, to chair the session.

Adoption of binding provisions

Revision of the UTP GEN-E concerning the qualifications and independence of assessing entities

The CTE adopted a fully revised version of the Uniform Technical Prescription (UTP) GEN-E. The requirements of UTP GEN-E apply to assessing entities that perform assessments for technical admissions in the scope of the ATMF UR. The changes will improve the clarity and structure of the provisions, specify the scope, particularly in relation to EU law, and align the provisions with the latest provisions applicable in the EU. The revised UTP will replace UTP GEN-E of 1 December 2011 from the moment it enters into force.

Revision of the UTP GEN-G concerning a Common

Safety Method on risk evaluation and assessment

The CTE also adopted a revised version of the UTP GEN-G. The changes will widen the scope to include risk assessments relating to safety management systems in the scope of the EST UR. The revised UTP will apply immediately upon entry into force for the purposes of the APTU and ATMF UR, while for the EST UR, the UTP will only apply once the EST UR have entered into force. The revised UTP will replace UTP GEN-G of 1 January 2014, as last amended on 1 December 2016, from the moment it enters into force.

Revision of the list of technical documents set out in Appendix I to the UTP TAF concerning telematics applications for freight services

Appendix I to the UTP TAF contains references and introduces changes to technical documents which include software coding necessary for the exchange of information and the harmonised implementation of the TAF provisions. Appendix I is regularly updated following an agreed process between ERA and the OTIF Secretariat.

Notification of adopted binding provisions

Following their adoption by the CTE, the Secretary General notified the parties to COTIF of all modifications to the UTPs in depository notification NOT-23015

of 13 July 2023. The depository notification and the adopted documents are available on OTIF's website under: [Activities > Technical Interoperability > Notifications > 2023](#). Subject to the conditions mentioned in the depository notification, the revised UTPs will enter into force on 1 January 2024.

Items concerning approval of non-binding guidance and recommendations

Progress report on drafting and updating the UTP application guides

The CTE reviewed a progress report on updating the application guides. The CTE also approved revised application guides for two UTPs:

- UTP concerning freight wagons, which entered into force on 1 January 2022 (UTP WAG)
- UTP concerning rolling stock noise, which entered into force on 1 April 2021 (UTP Noise)

The application guides are based on the TSI application guides issued by ERA. Additional texts relevant to the application of UTPs is written in blue rectangles and they explain the differences between the UTP and the TSI.

All UTP application guides are published on OTIF's website: [Reference Texts > Technical Interoperability > Prescriptions and Other Rules](#) (in the right-hand column).

Items for discussion

Progress report on development of the annexes to the EST UR (Appendix H to COTIF)

In 2018, the 13th General Assembly adopted the new Appendix H to COTIF, the EST UR. They set out general principles and safety responsibilities for the operation of trains in international traffic. In accordance with Article 34 § 2 of COTIF, two-thirds of the Member States must approve the General Assembly's decision before the EST UR can enter into force.

The General Assembly recommended that the Committee of Technical Experts prepare proposals for annexes to the EST UR before the EST UR enter into force. The proposals could then be adopted by the Committee of Technical Experts without delay after the EST UR enter into force.

The CTE discussed progress on the development of annexes to the future EST UR (Appendix H to COTIF).

The Committee considered the draft proposal for Annex C concerning the Safety Certification procedure. The aim of this annex is to harmonise the procedure for issuing safety certificates, and their content, in order to facilitate the mutual acceptance of conformity assessment results between safety certification authorities in the meaning of Article 5 § 3 of the EST UR. The CTE can only adopt the annexes once the EST UR are in force.

Giving more prominence to provisions dedicated to vehicles suitable for free circulation and general operation in international traffic

WG TECH analysed the feasibility of

developing specific UTPs, or parts thereof, dedicated to vehicles that can be used freely in international traffic.

CTE 15 welcomed the analyses and requested WG TECH to take into account the findings of the analyses when drafting amendments to the UTP WAG and the UTP LOC&PAS.

Next steps in monitoring and assessing implementation of the APTU and ATMF UR

The first step in monitoring and assessing implementation of the APTU and ATMF UR focused on the tasks of the Contracting States. The results of this first step were reviewed by the CTE in 2022. The second step should provide an understanding of how, in practice, the sector, assessing entities and competent authorities apply the rules and procedures within the scope of COTIF. It should also give a better view on whether compliance with the UTP is relevant with regard to authorisation for national use in the CSs. For this purpose, four questionnaires were discussed and agreed. The Secretariat will send the questionnaires to the respective addressees and may follow them up with bilateral discussions, where necessary.

Update on the future railway mobile communication system (FRMCS) and its relevance to OTIF

The CTE took note of developments in the FRMCS specifications and acknowledged the rapid developments in technology and future compatibility with existing signalling systems.

Work programme of the Committee for 2023/2024

The CTE discussed its work

programme for the coming period, which has to be considered in the context of OTIF's 2022/2023 Work Programme. The CTE also made suggestions for the development of OTIF's 2024/2025 Work Programme.

In coordination with WG TECH, the Secretariat was requested to prepare the following for the 16th session of the Committee of Technical Experts:

- Proposals for the revision of UTPs, where UTPs relevant to the admission and use of freight wagons are given priority;
- Proposals to update the application guides to UTPs;
- If feasible, a progress report on the development of annexes to the EST UR, particularly with regard to a Common Safety Method on supervision to be applied by Supervision Authorities;
- A progress report on monitoring and assessing implementation of the APTU and ATMF UR.

Next session

In 2024, CTE 16 will be held in a hybrid format on 11 and 12 June in Bern.

All working documents for the session are published here: [Activities > Technical Interoperability > Committee of Technical Experts > Working Documents > 2023](#)

The list of all decisions taken by the Committee of Technical Experts at its 15th session is published on OTIF's website under: [Activities > Technical Interoperability > Committee of Technical Experts > Decisions](#).

Technical Interoperability Department

CALENDAR OF OTIF'S MEETINGS IN 2023/24

DATE	EVENT	ORG	LOCATION
7 November	Special event Anniversaries "The CIM UR and CIV UR: feedback and prospects.	tbc	Berne - Switzerland
7 - 9 November	Ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation, 5 th session		Berne - Switzerland
14 - 15 November	Working Group WG TECH. 51 st Session	Department for transport of the United Kingdom	London United Kingdom
20 - 24 November	16 th session of the RID Committee of Experts' standing working group		London United Kingdom
29 - 30 November	138 th Session of the Administrative Committee		Berne - Switzerland

EVENTS WITH OTIF PARTICIPATION IN 2023/24

DATE	EVENT	ORG	LOCATION
25 - 29 September	Global Sustainable Transport Forum	★	Beijing - China
26 - 27 October	4 th Tbilisi Silk Road Forum "Conncting today, resilient tomorrow	★★	Tbilisi - Georgia
17 - 19 October	OSJD Commission for Transport Law in the field of provisions for the carriage of dangerous goods	OSJD	Warsaw - Poland
6 - 10 November	114 th session of Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15)	UNECE	Geneva - Switzerland
7 - 8 November	UIC Group of Experts on the Carriage of Dangerous Goods	UIC	Sopron - Hungary
7 - 9 November	OSJD Commission on Infrastructure and Rolling Stock	OSJD	Warsaw - Poland (ONLINE MEETING)
14 - 17 November	77 th session of the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2)	UNECE	Geneva - Switzerland
21 - 22 November	Railway Interoperability and Safety Committee (RISC)	European Commission	Brussels - Belgium

★ Global Sustainable Transport Innovation and Knowledge Center and Ministry of Transport of the People's Republic of China

★★ Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

EVENTS WITH OTIF PARTICIPATION IN 2023/24

DATE	EVENT	ORG	LOCATION
27 - 28 November	10 th Annual Meeting of International Organisatio	OECD	Paris - France
30 November	Return of Experience Workshop on the revision of the TSIs ns	ERA	Valenciennes - France
27 November - 6 December	63 rd session of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods	UNEC	Geneva - Switzerland
7 February	Return of Experience Workshop on the revision of the TSIs	ERA	Valenciennes - France
13 - 16 February	Working Group on Annex 2 to SMGS "Provisions for the Carriage of Dangerous Goods"	OSJD	Warsaw - Poland
21 - 22 February	Railway Interoperability and Safety Committee (RISC)	European Commission	Brussels - Belgium



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You can also read the Bulletin on OTIF's website **www.otif.org** under the tab headed "Media".

Thank you for your continued interest.
The Bulletin editor

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