



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

TRANS/SC.2/2002/10
11 July 2002

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Rail Transport
(Fifty-sixth session, 16-18 October 2002,
agenda item 10)

**HARMONIZATION OF CONDITIONS OF DIFFERENT LEGAL
RAIL TRANSPORT SYSTEMS**

**Transmitted by the Intergovernmental Organization for
International Carriage by Rail (OTIF)**

Following consideration of this item, SC.2 requested the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) and the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSZhD) to prepare a report on progress made in the harmonization of the COTIF-CIM/CIV and SMGS/SMPS systems (TRANS/SC.2/194, para. 59).

The secretariat reproduces below the reply from the OTIF secretariat as received.

* * *

Although OTIF was invited to prepare a report on this subject in 2002 only, the report drafted by the Central Office in conjunction with OSZhD, transmitted to you on 22 December 2000 and published under the symbol TRANS/SC.2/2001/1, already covers the development of the situation, bearing in mind the implementation of the new COTIF, although the Vilnius Protocol has not yet entered into force.

You will also be aware that the European Commission adopted a recommendation for a Council decision on 23 January 2002 clearly indicating the Commission's decision to undertake the process of accession to OTIF. This recommendation is currently being discussed by Community bodies.

In due course, 25 or 26 of the 41 member States of OTIF will be members of the European Union. The accession of the European Community will constitute a decisive stage which will lead OTIF to reposition itself in order to contribute additional added value. The two most important growth opportunities will involve services with the Russian Federation and services to the Middle East and the Balkans.

The European Commission has encouraged the initiation of contact between OTIF and OSZhD and the closer relations with this organization.

OTIF and OSZhD are fully aware of their responsibilities. It is incumbent on them to find a way forward and the first steps have already been taken. There is a general desire to cooperate. This is why the report transmitted to UN/ECE in December 2000 has been submitted as a result of mutual consultation. It should provide the States participating in the Working Party on Rail Transport with information without the need to put this item back on the agenda.
