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## **Economic Commission for Europe**

### **Inland Transport Committee**

#### **Working Party on Rail Transport**

##### **Seventy-second session**

Geneva, 21-23 November 2018

Item 22 of the provisional agenda

##### **Activities of international organizations in rail transport**

### **Update - OTIF'S activities**

#### **Submitted by OTIF**

##### **1. Membership of OTIF – general situation**

Currently, 50 States and the EU are members of OTIF.

On 7 November 2018, the Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan** deposited an application for accession to COTIF/OTIF. Under normal circumstances, the accession of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan will take effect on 1 May 2019.

OTIF is continuing its cooperation with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and China's National Railway Administration (NRA) in the framework of MoUs. In both cases, one of the areas of cooperation is possible accession to OTIF in an appropriate form.

##### **2. Cooperation with international organisations and associations**

The Organisation is successfully expanding its network of cooperation. In 2017 and 2018 new MoUs were signed with the World Customs Organisation (WCO), the International Union of Railways (UIC) and the Universal Postal Union (UPU).

An MoU with UNESCAP has just been finalised and is expected to be signed in the next few days.

We are also continuing our cooperation with the OSJD, and in particular, continuing the determination of both secretariats to further enhance and strengthen cooperation.

### **3. 13th General Assembly**

On 25 and 26 September 2018, OTIF held its 13th General Assembly. This meeting of the Organisation's supreme body also marked the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CIM and RID. It is worth recalling that CIM was the first international transport convention.

With regard to the substance, the General Assembly took the following decisions:

- The creation of a new appendix on the safe operation of trains, which opens the way to the expansion of interoperability beyond Europe;
- Modification of the scope of the Uniform Rules concerning the Contract of Use of Infrastructure (CUI UR);
- Modification of Article 34 of COTIF to harmonise the deadlines for the entry into force of modifications to the Convention with the rail sector's constant need to adapt.

Modifications to the Appendices to the Convention adopted by the General Assembly will enter into force for all Member States thirty-six months after their notification by the Secretary General, with the exception of those which, before the entry into force, make a declaration in terms that they do not approve such modifications. In other words, amendments to the Appendices adopted by the General Assembly enter into force automatically for all Member States thirty-six months after their notification by the Secretary General. It goes without saying that Member States which made a declaration not to apply certain Appendices to the Convention in their entirety are not bound by the modifications.

Taking into account the importance of an inter-institutional approach and cooperation with other organisations, the General Assembly set up an ad hoc Committee on Cooperation that will help involve the Member States in operational contact groups.

In order to optimise the running of the Organisation, the General Assembly supported setting up a working group of legal experts, which will deal with topical legal issues, such as the digitalisation of transport documents.

### **4. Technical Interoperability**

The 11<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee of Technical Experts held in June 2018 mandated the development of proposals for suitable and feasible provisions concerning infrastructure. The objective is to promote cross-border transport and ensure compatibility when vehicles operated on the lines and networks of neighbouring states.

The draft will be based on and compatible with: European Union Technical Specifications for Interoperability, complemented, where necessary, with provisions of relevance for non-EU OTIF Member States.

### **5. Dangerous Goods**

The new provisions of the Regulation concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail (RID) will enter into force on 1 January 2019. The 2019 edition replaces the 2017 edition. However, in accordance with a general transitional provision, the provisions of RID 2017 may continue to be used until 30 June 2019.

RID applies to the international carriage of dangerous goods by rail between the 44 existing RID Contracting States in Europe, Asia and North Africa. In the Member States of the European Union, RID also applies to national, as well as international transport.