DB/PKP/BC/RzD business meeting
Virtual pilot transports operating under Unified Railway Law
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Introduction
URL's fundamentals and objectives

Prof. Dr. Rainer Freise

Phone: +49 6151 – 504 60 39
E-mail: rhfreise@t-online.de
UNECE, URL, pilot tests in 2017

I. Inland Transport Committee, Resolution from 26 February 2016:

The ITC called on the railways and their international organisations to test, when possible, new legal provisions drafted by a group of UNECE experts.

II. Correspondence between the four railways' chief executives:

In September 2016, the chief executives of our railways agreed on pilot tests to try out the URL.
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III. Unified Railway Law (URL) objectives:

1. Offering a harmonised international legal framework for Europe-Asia rail freight transports.

2. Creating the same conditions for railways as their road-, ocean- and air-based competitors with regard to a harmonised legal framework.

3. Voluntary application of URL by the railways and their customers for certain transports.

4. The current combined CIM/SMGS model will remain in place for partners that wish to retain it.
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III. Further Unified Railway Law (URL) objectives:

5. If URL is applied, there is **no reconsignment** of freight in transit: there is only **one transport contract** that covers the **entire route**.

6. URL **harmonises** regulations that are at present handled differently in CIM and SMGS (or in applicable national law).
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IV. URL's advantages over CIM and SMGS:

– Simplifies regulations
– Simplifies handling and documentation
– Reduces and speeds up administration processes
– Strengthens contractual freedom for parties
IV. URL's further advantages over CIM and SMGS:

- Ensures uniform minimum standards during entire transport
- Integrates pre-carriage and onward carriage using other modes of transport in the uniform rail transport contract; uniform URL application
- Ensures a uniform level of minimum liability for carriers
- Strengthens the competitiveness of international rail freight services
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V. When it comes to concluding and implementing transport contracts, there are **no fundamental changes:**

- Transport documents
- Costs
- Division of tasks
- Later instructions
- Tackling problems
- Freight delivery
- **Exception:** the carrier's formal report is replaced with a claim for damages from the customer.
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vi. Changes concerning liability:

– The basis for liability (damage while freight was in carrier's care) remains unchanged.

– Exclusions of liability have been tightened up and reduced.

– Compensation limits have been redefined.

– Carrier no longer has unlimited liability.
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VI. Other changes concerning liability:

– Liability for overrunning delivery deadlines is dependent on the occurrence of damage, and it is increased

– The carrier can voluntarily increase its liability; the consignor's liability can be reduced

– One thing remains unchanged: the carrier responsible bears liability
UNECE, URL, pilot tests in 2017

VII. Summary

URL offers railways and their customers the following advantages:

- Harmonised legal system
- Fewer and tighter regulations
- No need for reconsignment of freight in transit
- Integration of pre-carriage and onward carriage with other modes of transport in URL's comprehensive application
- Uniform level of minimum liability for participating carriers if they are responsible for damage