General Assembly
Rules of Procedure

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In accordance with Article 14 § 2 (a) of the 3 June 1999 Protocol version of the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF) of 9 May 1980, the General Assembly has adopted these Rules of Procedure.

**Article 1**

**Definitions**

For the purpose of these Rules of Procedure, the term:


b) “OTIF” means the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail;

c) “Member State” means one of the Member States of OTIF;

d) “regional organisation” means a regional economic integration organisation which has acceded to the Convention in accordance with Article 38 of the Convention;

e) “Associated Member” means a State which has acceded to COTIF in accordance with Article 39 of the Convention;

f) “Assembly” means the OTIF General Assembly;

g) “Secretary General” means the Secretary General in accordance with Article 13 § 1 g) of the Convention;

h) “Secretariat” means the Secretariat of the Assembly provided by the Secretary General;

i) “working languages” means the working languages in accordance with Article 1 § 6 of the Convention.

**Article 2**

**Composition and tasks**

§ 1 The composition of the Assembly shall be determined on the basis of Article 14 § 1 of the Convention.

§ 2 The tasks of the Assembly shall be determined on the basis of Article 14 § 2 and Article 33 §§ 2 and 3 of the Convention.
**Article 3**  
**Convening and sessions**

§ 1 The Secretary General shall convene the Assembly in accordance with Article 14 § 3 of the Convention.

§ 2 In addition to the requirements of Article 14 § 3 of the Convention, the Secretary General shall also convene the Assembly at the request of a regional organisation which, according to Article 4 § 3, enjoys the votes of at least one-third of the Member States.

§ 3 The calling notice indicating the venue of the Assembly and the date and time it opens, the provisional agenda and annotated provisional agenda, shall be sent to Member States, Associate Members, the regional organisations and, with the agreement of the Member States, to selected non Member States and to the interested international organisations and associations no later than 20 weeks before the Assembly opens.

§ 4 If an Assembly has not been able to complete its agenda during a session, it shall reconvene for a complementary session within a period to be determined by the Assembly, depending on the circumstances.

§ 5 The Assembly shall convene at the headquarters of OTIF. However, with the agreement of the Chair of the Assembly and subject to the agreement of the Administrative Committee, the Secretary General may convene the Assembly at any other place.

**Article 3 bis**  
**Urgent extraordinary sessions**

When extraordinary sessions of the Assembly are of an urgent nature, a derogation from Articles 3 § 3, 10 and 11 shall apply:

a) The calling notice, provisional agenda and annotated provisional agenda for an urgent extraordinary session shall be sent to Member States, Associate Members, the regional organisations and, with the agreement of the Member States, to selected non Member States and to the interested international organisations and associations no later than three months before the Assembly opens.

b) The provisional agenda and annotated provisional agenda for an urgent extraordinary session shall only include items submitted for examination in the calling notice for the extraordinary session.

c) The Secretary General shall send the working documents relating to the provisional agenda of the urgent session to the Member States, Associate Members and the regional organisations as soon as possible, but not less than one month before the urgent session of the Assembly opens.

**Article 4**  
**Right to vote**

§ 1 Subject to the cases provided for in Articles 14 § 5, 26 § 7 and 40 § 4 (b) of the Convention, each Member State represented at the Assembly by a delegation that is suitably vested with powers in accordance with Article 6 shall have one vote.
§ 2 A Member State may arrange to be represented by another Member State; no State may however represent more than one other State.

§ 3 Subject to the cases provided for in Articles 14 § 5, 26 § 7 and 40 § 4 (b) of the Convention, a regional organisation which is represented by a delegation that has been suitably vested with powers in accordance with Article 6, shall enjoy in those matters under discussion that come within its competence the number of votes equal to those of its members which are also Member States of OTIF. The regional organisation shall not enjoy the right to vote in respect of Title IV of the Convention. Moreover, individual Member States that are also members of a regional organisation may only exercise their right to vote in so far as the matters under discussion do not come within the competence of the regional organisation.

Article 5
Observers

§ 1 The representatives of Associate Members and the representatives of non Member States and international organisations and associations invited in accordance with Article 14 § 7 of the Convention as well as persons invited by the Secretary General on account of their specialist competencies in connection with the discussion of particular matters may attend sessions of the Assembly in an advisory capacity.

§ 2 Observers shall receive the documents prepared for the Assembly, subject to any requirements concerning confidentiality.

Article 6
Powers

§ 1 In order to participate in proceedings and in Assembly votes, other than as provided in § 2, delegations of the Member States and regional organisations shall be appropriately vested with powers by the competent organs.

§ 2 In order to participate in Assembly votes concerning amendments to the Convention, delegations of Member States shall be vested with specific powers assigned by name by the Head of State, the Head of Government, the Minister for Foreign Affairs or the Head of the authority authorised to issue these powers. In the latter case, the letter of credentials shall indicate that the authorisation has been granted by the Head of State, the Head of Government or the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Delegations of regional organisations shall be vested with powers assigned by the organ that is competent to represent the Organisation externally.

§ 3 The authorisations referred to in § 1 and the powers referred to in § 2 of a Member State represented at the Assembly by another Member State shall be granted by the organs referred to in § 2.

§ 4 If the authorisations and powers are not drawn up in one of the working languages, a translation in one of the working languages shall be attached to them.

§ 5 Before the Assembly is opened or at the latest within 24 hours of the meeting being opened, delegations shall deposit the powers in accordance with Article 6 § 2 and § 3 with the Secretariat.
Article 7
Verification of powers

§ 1 A Credentials Committee shall be formed at the beginning of the Assembly. It shall be made up of five delegations of the Member States or of the regional organisations designated by the Assembly on the basis of a proposal from its Chair. Each delegation shall have one vote.

§ 2 When the Assembly is opened, the Committee shall check whether the powers are in conformity with the requirements of Article 6 §§ 2 and 3; in the case of Article 6 § 1, the Committee shall only examine the authorisations when a delegation has expressed doubts about it to the Chair of the Assembly.

§ 3 The Committee shall report to the Assembly as soon as possible. The Assembly shall note the report and shall, in case of doubt, take a decision on the right to vote.

§ 4 Pending the Assembly's decision concerning their powers, delegations shall be entitled to participate in the work on a provisional basis.

Article 8
Secretariat

§ 1 The Secretariat shall prepare, receive, translate and distribute documents for the Assembly (Articles 10, 11 and 16) and interpret speeches made at meetings (Article 25); prepare and circulate the Record of the Assembly (Article 23) and Minutes (Article 24); have custody and proper preservation of the documents in OTIF’s archives and, generally, perform all other work which the Assembly may require.

§ 2 The Secretary General or the members of the Secretariat designated by him shall take part in the discussions of the Assembly and its Committees in an advisory capacity.

Article 9
Non-public nature of sessions

Unless the Assembly decides otherwise, its sessions and those of its subsidiary organs shall not be open to the public.

Article 10
Provisional agenda

§ 1 The provisional agenda shall be prepared by the Secretary General.

§ 2 The provisional agenda for the Assembly shall include:

a) items requested for inclusion by a previous Assembly;

b) items suggested by the organs referred to in Article 13 § 1, letters b) to g) of the Convention;

c) items notified in accordance with § 3 that a Member State or a regional organisation has requested to be placed on the agenda.
§ 3 A Member State or a regional organisation may request not less than 16 weeks before
the Assembly opens to place other business on the agenda. In this case, the Secretary
General shall send the adapted version of the provisional agenda to the Member States,
Associate Members and the regional organisations not less than 14 weeks before the
Assembly opens. A request for an additional item shall contain a brief explanation of
the proposed item.

§ 4 The provisional agenda shall be submitted to the Assembly at the beginning of its ses-
sion for adoption or amendment. As a rule, the first item on the provisional agenda
shall be the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair.

§ 5 After the deadline prescribed in § 3, or when a session is opened, new items may be
added to the agenda, or existing items deleted from it, only with the unanimous agree-
ment of delegations with the right to vote.

Article 11
Working documents

§ 1 The Secretary General shall prepare and send the working documents relating to the
provisional agenda of the session of the Assembly, except items referred to in Article
10 § 2, letter c), to the Member States, Associate Members and the regional organisa-
tions no later than 16 weeks before the Assembly opens. The period shall be 8 weeks
for working documents concerning the election of a Secretary General, the report on
the activities of the Administrative Committee and the election of the members of the
Administrative Committee.

§ 2 As a general rule, a Member State or a regional organisation that submits a request in
accordance with Article 10 § 2, letter c) shall send the Secretary General, in at least
one of the working languages, a working document on the proposed agenda item no
later than 16 weeks before the Assembly opens. The period shall be 12 weeks if the
document is submitted in all three working languages. The Secretary General shall
provide translation(s) into the other working language(s) and send the working docu-
ments to the Member States, Associate Members and the regional organisations not
less than 10 weeks before the opening of the meeting.

Article 12
Chair

§ 1 Subject to Article 3 § 4, when each Assembly is opened, the Chair of the previous
Assembly or, in his absence, the delegate of his/her country, shall chair the opening
session of the meeting until the new Chair and the Vice-Chair are elected. If no dele-
gates from the country of which the Chair of the previous Assembly was a national is
present, one of the Vice-Chairs of the previous Assembly, or, in his/her absence, the
delegate from his/her country, shall chair the opening session in the order decided upon
previously by the Assembly.

§ 2 The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Assembly shall not, in principle, be assumed by del-
egates:

- of Member States whose nationals were elected to chair one of the preceding
three sessions of the Assembly,
- of the Member State that chairs the Administrative Committee,
- of the Member State of which the Secretary General is a national.

§ 3 The Chair elected by the Assembly or, in his/her absence, one of the Vice-Chairs, shall chair the sessions in the order decided upon by the Assembly.

§ 4 In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him/her by virtue of the Rules of Procedure, the Chair shall conduct proceedings, ensure that the Rules of Procedure are applied, give the floor, direct the votes and announce decisions.

§ 5 The Chair shall decide all questions concerning application of the Rules of Procedure. If a delegation disputes the Chair's decision, a vote shall be taken. The Chair's decision shall stand if a majority in accordance with Article 21 § 1 does not oppose it.

Article 13
Bureau

§ 1 The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Assembly shall, with the Chairs of the Committees, form the bureau of the Assembly. The Secretary General or a member of the Secretariat designated by him shall attend the meetings of the bureau in an advisory capacity.

§ 2 If necessary, the bureau shall assist the Chair in conducting and co-coordinating the work.

Article 14
Committees

§ 1 In addition to the Credentials Committee provided for in Article 7, the Assembly shall designate an Editorial Committee and, if necessary, other Committees. It shall compose them and lay down their tasks.

§ 2 Each Committee may set up one or more sub-committees to examine particular questions.

§ 3 Committees and sub-committees shall conform to the requirements of these Rules of Procedure in so far as they are applicable to them.

§ 4 The Committees' conclusions shall be brought to the attention of the Secretariat and delegates, if possible in writing, and before the plenary session during which they are discussed. Otherwise, the Committee Chairs shall give a verbal account.

Article 15
Conducting proceedings

§ 1 In principle, the Chair shall give the floor in the order in which it is requested.

§ 2 In general, a delegation shall not be given the floor a second time, except to reply to a question, until all those delegations wishing to speak on the same question have done so.
§ 3 In a plenary session, the Chair of a Committee may have priority in taking the floor in order to explain the conclusions of the organ he chairs.

Article 16
Proposals on the agenda items

§ 1 Proposals may be submitted by any Member State, regional organisation, the Secretary General or an observer. Suggestions by observers shall be considered as proposals for a vote provided they are supported by a Member State or a regional organisation having voting rights in accordance with Article 4.

§ 2 Proposals regarding an item included on the agenda shall be made in at least one of the working languages and shall normally be submitted in writing to the Secretary General not less than 8 weeks before the Assembly opens. Where the proposals are made in all the working languages, they shall be submitted not less than 5 weeks before the Assembly opens. The Secretary General shall circulate the proposals to the Member States, Associate Members and the regional organisations in all the working languages not less than 4 weeks before the Assembly opens.

§ 3 After the deadline prescribed in § 2 or when the Assembly is opened further proposals may be submitted in at least one of the working languages. In principle, proposals submitted during the meeting shall be submitted in writing. Such written proposals shall be submitted to the Secretary General, who should ensure translation, if possible, before the discussion in order that they can be made available to delegations as soon as possible. The Chair shall read them out.

Article 17
Examination of proposals and voting

§ 1 If several proposals are submitted on the same question, the Chair shall decide the order in which they are discussed and put to the vote, beginning, in principle, with the proposal that differs the most from the base text, or, in the absence of a base text, from the original proposal.

§ 2 If a proposal is the subject of an amendment, the amendment shall be discussed and put to the vote before the proposal itself. If a proposal is the subject of two or more amendments, the vote shall first take place on the amendment which, in the Chair’s opinion, differs the most, with regard to its substance, from the original proposal. If the Assembly does not adopt any amendment, the vote shall take place on the original proposal.

§ 3 If a proposal can be separated into different parts, with the agreement of the author of the proposal, each part may be discussed and voted on separately. Once the different parts have been adopted, a vote shall be taken on the proposal as a whole.

§ 4 The Chair of the Assembly and the chairs of the Committees shall provide the Editorial Committee with written copies of the proposals adopted.
Article 18
Motions of order

Delegations may, at any time, submit motions of order, provided they do not concern the substance of the question being dealt with. The Chair shall take a decision immediately. If the Chair's decision is disputed, a vote shall be taken. The Chair's decision shall stand if it is not rejected by a majority in accordance with Article 21 § 1.

Article 19
Rediscussion of proposals

A proposal that has been adopted or rejected may only be examined again if the Assembly so decides. In this event, re-examination of the proposal shall be decided using the same voting procedure as was used for the adoption or rejection of the proposal in question in accordance with Article 21.

Article 20
Quorum

§ 1 There shall be a quorum in the Assembly when a majority of the Member States entitled to take part in decision making are represented either by their own delegation or by the delegation of another Member State. In deciding whether there is a quorum, account shall not be taken of Member States that do not have a right to vote in accordance with Article 14 § 5 of the Convention or whose right to vote in accordance with Article 26 § 7 or 40 § 4 (b) has been suspended.

§ 2 For the purpose of determining a quorum for an agenda item on a matter within the competence of a regional organisation, that organisation shall be counted to the extent of the number of votes it is entitled to cast in accordance with Article 4 § 3.

§ 3 At the start of each new agenda item, the Chair shall determine and inform the Assembly whether or not the meeting is quorate for the purpose of that item, notwithstanding that this may change prior to any vote.

Article 21
Voting procedure

§ 1 Voting in the Assembly shall take place in accordance with Article 14 §§ 4 to 6 of the Convention and with the following rules:

§ 2 In principle, decisions of the Assembly shall be taken by a majority of the total number of votes duly represented in the meeting room at the time of the vote.

§ 3 Decisions of the Assembly shall be taken by a majority of two-thirds of the total number of votes duly represented in the meeting room at the time of the vote

a) on fixing, for six-year periods, the maximum amount that the expenditure of OTIF may reach in each budgetary period, or else on directives relating to the limitation of this expenditure that it shall issue for a period of not more than six years;
b) on the relocation of the OTIF headquarters (Article 1 § 2 of the Convention);

c) on the introduction of other working languages (Article 1 § 6, 2nd sentence of the Convention);

d) on OTIF's taking on further attributions (Article 4 § 1 of the Convention) and on transferring OTIF attributions to another intergovernmental organisation (Article 4 § 2 of the Convention);

e) on proposals to amend the Convention itself, with the exception of Articles 9 and 27 §§ 2 to 4 and on proposals to amend the Protocol referred to in Article 1 § 4 of the Convention;

f) on the dissolution of OTIF and any transfer of its attributions to another intergovernmental organisation (Article 43 of the Convention);

g) on whether an amendment to the Convention is of such importance that the membership of any Member State which will have made a declaration pursuant to Article 34 § 2 or 3 of the Convention, and which will not have approved the amendment within the period of eighteen months running from its entry into force, will cease, on the expiration of this period, to be a Member of OTIF (Article 34 § 6 of the Convention).

§ 4 Non-participation of a delegation present in the meeting room at the time of the vote shall be considered as an abstention.

§ 5 In principle, voting shall take place by show of hands. However, any delegation may request a nominal vote. This vote shall take place in French alphabetical order, beginning with the delegation whose name the Chair draws out. Votes shall be recorded in the minutes.

§ 6 If at least two delegations of Member States or a delegation of a regional organisation which, according to Article 4 § 3, enjoys the votes of at least two Member States, so request, voting shall take place by secret ballot, unless the majority of the total number of votes duly represented in the meeting room at the time of the vote is opposed to this. On the basis of a proposal by the Chair, two scrutineers shall be designated to count the votes. All invalid ballot papers shall be reported to the Assembly.

§ 7 If the votes are divided equally, a second vote shall take place, if necessary after a break in the session. If the votes are again divided equally, the proposal shall be considered as rejected.

§ 8 Once voting has begun, no delegation may interrupt it, unless for the purpose of a motion of order concerning the manner in which the vote is taking place.

**Article 22**

**Election of the Secretary General**

§ 1 Of the candidates for the post of Secretary General, the one who receives the majority of votes in accordance with Article 21 § 2 shall be elected.
§ 2 If none of these persons receives this majority in the first ballot, as many ballots shall be carried out as are necessary to leave only two persons. After each ballot, the person who has received the least number of votes, as well as all those who have received no votes, shall withdraw.

§ 3 If, in the ballots in accordance with § 2, two or more persons receive the same number of votes and fewer votes than one or several other persons, a vote shall be taken on which of these persons shall withdraw. If, in two further ballots, the number of votes is equal, lots shall be drawn to decide.

§ 4 If two persons remain at this stage and they receive the same number of votes, a new vote shall be taken, if necessary after a break in the session. If, in two further ballots, the number of votes is still equal, the Chair shall decide, unless the Assembly decides to invite applications for the post again.

Article 23
Record of the Assembly

All decisions by the Assembly shall be recorded in a document and sent to the Member States, Associate Members and the regional organisations by the Secretary General.

Article 24
Minutes

§ 1 Minutes of the plenary sessions and, where appropriate, of the Committee sessions shall be prepared. They shall summarise the proceedings in the working languages. The text of proposals and decisions shall be reproduced in full.

§ 2 Delegates may request that any statements they have made be reproduced in the minutes in full, provided the text is given to the Secretariat in one of the working languages.

§ 3 The Secretary General shall send the provisional minutes as soon as possible after the session has closed to all those who took part in the Assembly. The latter shall, within six weeks of the date on which the provisional minutes were sent out, inform the Secretary General in writing of any corrections they wish to make to the text of their interventions.

§ 4 The final version of the minutes shall be sent to Member States, Associate Members and the regional organisations and observers.

Article 25
Languages

§ 1 The proceedings shall be conducted in the working languages.

§ 2 If possible, there shall be simultaneous interpretation of the Assembly's proceedings into the other working languages; the proposals and announcements by the Chair shall be interpreted in full.

§ 3 Delegations that wish to use another language for their interventions shall provide interpretation into one of the working languages.
§ 4 All Assembly documents shall be prepared and distributed simultaneously in all the working languages within the applicable deadlines, except in the cases foreseen by Article 16 § 3.

§ 5 If there is a difference between the wording in the working languages, the wording of the language in which the proposal was written or in which an intervention was made shall prevail; however, with regard to Assembly decisions, the French text shall prevail in the event of differences.

Article 26
Requirements for working documents and proposals

Working documents and proposals not originating from the Secretariat shall be as brief as possible. Working documents should not exceed 10,700 words (around 20 physical pages). Proposals should not exceed 5,300 words (around 10 physical pages). Working documents and proposals, including graphical representation, shall be submitted in an editable format to simplify translation.

Article 27
Amending the Rules of Procedure

§ 1 These Rules of Procedure may be amended based upon a decision by the Assembly, provided a proposal for amendment submitted by a Member State, or a regional organisation, or a suggestion for amendment from the Secretary General, is on the provisional agenda.

§ 2 A decision by the Assembly taken in accordance with § 1 may be brought into force for the session at which the decision is taken.

Article 28
Entry into Force

These Rules of Procedure shall enter into force on 25 September 2018.

Berne, 25 September 2018

Chair of the General Assembly

(Monique van Wortel)