

**OTIF**



**ORGANISATION INTERGOUVERNEMENTALE POUR  
LES TRANSPORTS INTERNATIONAUX FERROVIAIRES**

**ZWISCHENSTAATLICHE ORGANISATION FÜR DEN  
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**INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION FOR INTER-  
NATIONAL CARRIAGE BY RAIL**

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(Zagreb, 19 - 23 November 2007)**

**Subject: Derailment detectors**

**Switzerland's position concerning an e-mail from the European Commission to the Member States**

Switzerland has noted an e-mail dated 7 November 2007 sent by the representative of the European Commission to the representatives of the Member States and has taken a position on the arguments contained in the e-mail. This e-mail requests participants at the forthcoming meeting of the RID Committee of Experts (RIDCO) to reject the proposal in OTIF/RID/CE/2007/17 concerning the introduction of derailment detection into RID.

The arguments put forward by the representative of the European Commission are set out in italics before each of Switzerland's comments, as follows:

1. *"... there seems to be no quantitative or qualitative demonstration that there is a need for such a requirement; ..."*

The numerous cases of derailment that have been brought to the attention of the representatives of the Member States in recent years show that this statement is incorrect. The accident analyses carried out by Switzerland show that a major part of the accidents in which dangerous goods have been spilt have their origins in derailments which go unnoticed and which escalate when the next set of points is reached. Thus nobody can dispute that emergency braking after a derailment can make a definite contribution to reducing the consequences of the derailment.

For reasons of cost, only a limited number of copies of this document have been made. Delegates are asked to bring their own copies of documents to meetings. OTIF only has a small number of copies available.

The case of a derailed train in Cornaux (Switzerland) in 2006 demonstrates this: this train was loaded with petroleum products and was fitted with derailment detectors. Thanks to the immediate stopping of the train, the catastrophe was averted. This incident was referred to in the presentation given by Swiss Railways (SBB) and Oerlikon-Knorr Eisenbahntechnik (OKE) in June 2007 at the meeting of the working group on tank and vehicle technology (see paragraph 5 below).

Near Zurich in Switzerland in 2004, a train carrying petrol was involved in an accident that caused major damage. Owing to a broken wheelset, a wagon was dragged along over a distance of several kilometres before it overturned and brought down other wagons with it. The resulting fire caused around 15 million euros of damage. With a derailment detection system, this accident could have been avoided.

The accidents that have occurred in various countries in recent years have led to national representatives becoming sensitised to the problem and to a readiness to react accordingly.

2. *“... no other alternative measures have been considered ...”*

The numerous reports of the meetings of the RIDCO and the working groups, to which all delegations are invited, do not support this statement. All feasible measures have been discussed in these bodies in great detail. If you remain to be convinced, the meeting reports can be consulted on OTIF's website.

3. *“... no impact assessment has been carried out ...”*

This statement is untrue. In April 2007, Switzerland invited the working group on standardized risk analysis to a meeting in Berne. This invitation was sent to all delegations who wished to strengthen their knowledge of risk analysis with presentations of the results of the risk analysis carried out in Switzerland and of the methodology used. In this context, Switzerland has highlighted quantitatively that derailment detection leads to a considerable reduction of risk. These presentations are also available on the OTIF website.

4. *“... consistency with other TSI requirements needs to be assessed ...”*

This is a surprising statement. As a reminder: the representative of ERA was invited to the 43<sup>rd</sup> session of the RIDCO in November 2006 in Helsinki (see final report OTIF/RID/CE/2006-A, paragraphs 82 and 83). His participation was welcomed by delegates as a guarantee that there would be harmonious development of the new railway provisions. The representative of ERA also took part in the 8<sup>th</sup> session of the working group on tank and vehicle technology. At that meeting, he said that if the RIDCO decided to lay down requirements for the detection of derailments of dangerous goods wagons in RID, these goods wagons would have to meet these requirements (see final report OTIF/RID/CE/GT/2007-A).

5. *“... there is no evidence that the market can offer equipments able to fulfil the proposed requirements with a sufficient level of safety, reliability, availability and at reasonable cost ...”*

Since 2002, Switzerland has been carrying out running tests with wagons fitted with pneumatic derailment detectors. The representative of Switzerland has regularly provided information to his colleagues in the RIDCO. The reports of the meetings of the RIDCO and the working group on tank and vehicle technology contain all this information.

At the end of the test period, SBB as the operator and OKE as the manufacturer delivered a positive report at the 8<sup>th</sup> session of the working group on tank and vehicle technology held in Munich in June 2007. All participants of the RIDCO and the working group were invited to this working group meeting.

Based on this positive report, the representative of Germany stated the intention of his country to submit a proposal for the introduction into RID of derailment detection to the next meeting of the RIDCO in Zagreb in November. However, he demanded of the manufacturer that it demonstrate that the detector could function correctly at higher speeds. As far as Switzerland is aware, there were no objections to proceeding in this manner. Therefore, in October 2007, the manufacturer carried out thorough tests in Berlin which proved that the detector tripped at higher speeds. It should be added that these tests were carried out at great cost and that a very well known and respected university institute was commissioned to carry out the tests.

The remark that there is no evidence that the market can offer suitable products is also surprising. There is a reversed chronology underlying this statement: the market will only exist once derailment detection has been included in the regulations. Who is prepared these days to run the risk of newly developing a competitive product if he cannot be sure that the measure will in fact be introduced?

6. *“... The Community should propose that RID experts, with the assistance of ERA, further discuss the above mentioned difficulties before the proposal is submitted again to the RID Committee of Experts ...”*

This measure has been discussed for more than 10 years. The proposal to suspend the introduction of derailment detection under the pretext of unresolved difficulties does a discredit to all those who have for years worked to achieve the introduction of this measure to improve safety in the carriage of dangerous goods by rail.

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