



**OTIF/RID/CE/GTP/2019/1**

16 September 2019

Original: German

**RID:** 11<sup>th</sup> Session of the RID Committee of Experts' standing working group  
(Vienna, 25 to 29 November 2019)

**Subject:** Equivalence of the USA's construction and testing provisions for tank-wagons

**Proposal transmitted by the Secretariat of OTIF**

#### **SUMMARY**

***Explanatory summary:***

In 2014, a Memorandum of Understanding was concluded between OTIF and the General Secretariat of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GS-GCC) in order to prepare the accession of the GS-GCC and the GCC Member States to the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF). In connection with this, the question arose as to whether tank-wagons built in accordance with North American provisions are in conformity with RID.

***Decision to be taken:***

Preliminary exchange of opinions.

#### **Introduction**

1. In 2014, OTIF and the General Secretariat of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GS-GCC) concluded a Memorandum of Understanding in order to prepare the accession of the GS-GCC and the GCC Member States to the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF). The GCC Member States are the Kingdom of Bahrain, the State of Qatar, the State of Kuwait, the Sultanate of Oman, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

2. In the framework of this Memorandum of Understanding, several conferences have already taken place with the participation of the GS-GCC, the GCC Member States and the Secretariat of OTIF. There were presentations on RID at these conferences.
3. Most of the railway lines on the Arabian Peninsula are being newly built. A wide variety of consultancy firms from across the world are currently at work on the Arabian Peninsula. Contracts for the procurement of railway rolling stock have already been concluded.
4. For example, Saudi Arabian Railways (SAR) already concluded contracts for the provision of 1500 tank-wagons a few years ago, and these tank-wagons are built in accordance with standards of the Association of American Railroads (AAR).
5. Against this background, SAR asked the OTIF Secretariat whether RID contains provisions that allow tank-wagons not built in accordance with the standards referred to in RID 6.8.2.6, but in accordance with North-American standards, to be used in the scope of RID.
6. RID does not currently contain any provisions dealing with equivalence between standards referred to in RID and other standards. Against the background of OTIF's strategy of fostering the accession of other states to COTIF, the OTIF Secretariat is of the view that the RID Committee of Experts' standing working group should look into this issue.
7. In order to examine the question of equivalence, the OTIF Secretariat has contacted various institutions to find out whether comparative studies have already been carried out in this area. As this does not seem to be the case, the OTIF Secretariat, together with the GS-GCC, intends to commission such a study once there is agreement on the funding.
8. For this reason, the OTIF Secretariat wishes to address a preliminary set of questions to the standing working group.

## Questions

9. Have any studies comparing the construction and testing requirements for RID tank-wagons and the AAR requirements or the requirements of the USA's Department of Transportation already been carried out in any of the RID Contracting States?
10. There is currently no evidence to suggest that American tank-wagons would be less safe or safer than RID tank-wagons. Nevertheless, the way in which American tank-wagons are used in the North American railway system is different from how RID tank-wagons are used under COTIF.

How should such a comparative study be carried out? Is it necessary to carry out a detailed comparison of provisions, is a comparison between the principles and general safety approaches more appropriate, or is a combination of both required?

It should be borne in mind that in addition to differences in the construction and testing requirements for tank-wagons, there are considerable differences in the operational requirements and in the infrastructure requirements.

In this context, it will be recalled that the standing working group and the working group on tank and vehicle technology have already dealt with the development of American provisions and their possible consequences for RID in the past (see for example document OTIF/RID/CE/GTP/2015/4 from Germany and report RID/CE/GTP/2015-A, paragraphs 43 to 47, which discuss new tank-wagon standards for the USA and Canada that were developed after the accident in Lac-Mégantic (Canada)).

11. What might be the consequence of provisions concerning equivalence for the further development of RID?
- Would there have to be more references to global ISO standards in future replacing regional CEN standards, to the extent that such ISO standards exist?
  - Should cooperation with partners from North America be intensified in order to ensure parallel development or even harmonisation of the provisions?
  - How should we deal with the issue if in future, a GCC Member State decides to purchase e.g. Australian tank-wagons? Might it therefore be useful to extend the study to look at standards that already exist on other continents?
  - How will consistency with the tank provisions of ADR be ensured at the same time?
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