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**Commission d'experts techniques
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Committee of Technical Experts**

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**DEVELOPMENT OF EU CENTRALISED VEHICLE REGISTER (EVR) AND
CONSEQUENCES FOR THE OTIF NATIONAL VEHICLE REGISTERS
AFTER 2021**

Document for discussion

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the development of the EU centralised Vehicle Register (hereinafter: EVR), which will be operational from mid-2021, and reflects on the consequences related to connectivity and data exchange with other existing National Vehicle Registers (hereinafter: NVRs) of the non-EU Contracting States (CS). It also looks at several possible scenarios to ensure that in future, the relevant vehicle data can continue to be exchanged between CS.

2. SITUATION TODAY: CONNECTED NATIONAL VEHICLE REGISTERS

At present, in accordance with the requirements arising from Article 13 ATMF, each CS is obliged to establish and implement a national railway vehicle register. When admitted, vehicles must be registered in the NVR of the state which admitted it. The register also records additional admissions for other states. In order for users such as RUs, keepers, IMs, ECMs and state authorities to see the data of all NVRs relevant to them from one access point, all NVRs should be connected to the Virtual Vehicle Register (hereinafter: VVR), a central search engine developed and hosted by the EU Agency for Railways (ERA). The VVR allows users to search data from all NVRs, including those of the EU CS, through a single portal. Some of the non-EU CS are connected to the VVR by using Standard NVR (sNVR) and some are connected via the NVR Translation Engine (NVR-TE).

Equivalent provisions are also stipulated in EU law under Commission Decision 2007/756/EC of 9 November 2007 on adopting a common specification of the national vehicle register (the NVR Decision).

The 26th session of the Revision Committee held on 27-28 February 2018 adopted modifications to Article 13 § 1 of ATMF which prescribe the establishment of the vehicle registers in the following way:

***“Article 13
Registers***

§ 1 Vehicle registers shall be set up in the form of one or more electronic national or regional data banks containing information concerning the railway vehicles in respect of which a Certificate of Operation has been issued. The register shall also include railway vehicles admitted according to Article 19; it may contain railway vehicles admitted for national traffic only. The register or registers shall:

- a) comply with the specifications adopted by CTE;*
- b) be kept updated;*
- c) be accessible by the competent authorities of all Contracting States, by railway undertakings and infrastructure managers, as well as those persons or organisations registering vehicles or identified in the register.*

[...]”

These provisions, which entered into force on 1 March 2019, maintain the obligation of the CS to establish and implement their national railway vehicle register (NVR) and extend to the possibility of setting up regional vehicle registers, such as the single European Vehicle Register in the EU, provided that the information it contains is accessible to other CS.

3. THE EU DECISION ON ESTABLISHING THE EVR

On 25 October 2018, in accordance with its fourth railway package (Article 47 of Directive (EU) 2016/797), the EU adopted a Decision amending the NVR Decision (*Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1614*) and laying down the technical and functional specifications of the EVR. The amendment to the NVR Decision will allow the transfer of registrations and avoid redundant data entry for one vehicle in several existing national vehicle registers within the EU. The EVR, which is considered to simplify the vehicle registration process, reduce costs and improve data quality, is a step forward to the objectives for the Single European Railway Area (SERA). For the EU, the EVR would mean having a centralised vehicle register, centralised creation of user accounts, and use of common reference data. Furthermore, the EVR would also provide all users with a harmonised query format for consultation, the registration of vehicles and data management. It should be noted that national registration entities remain responsible for registering or validating pre-registered data.

The EVR should become operational by 16 June 2021, at which time the technical support for the current sNVR software and the NVR-TE will be discontinued.

EU Member States have the option to continue operating their NVR until June 2024. In such cases, the NVR will have to be connected to the EVR. The Member State which chooses to keep its NVR must ensure compatibility and communication with the European Vehicle Register.

IMPACT ON EXISTING NON-EU NVRS

When the VVR and NVR TE are discontinued in June 2021, the non-EU NVRS and the EU NVRS will no longer be connected, as a result of which vehicle data will no longer be mutually retrievable. This will impact the use of vehicles and possibly international traffic.

OTIF's aim is to promote, improve and facilitate international traffic by rail. Therefore, bearing in mind the developments on the EU vehicle register, the OTIF Secretariat has been actively involved in discussions with DG MOVE and ERA to find a way forward in maintaining connectivity between national registers and the exchange of relevant vehicle data between EU and non-EU CS.

4. INTERCONNECTION OF OTIF VEHICLE REGISTERS

EU PROPOSAL

At WG TECH 36, the EU explained that the EVR would provide all users with a harmonised interface for the registration of vehicles and data management. A single entry point for registration and data query on vehicles eliminates the need for the VVR and reduces costs for its maintenance. Therefore, the EC proposed the following:

- To consider setting up an EU/OTIF centralised vehicle register based on the specifications of the EVR. Non-EU CS would be offered use of the EU/OTIF centralised vehicle register at a cost.
- The CS will migrate their vehicle data to the EU/OTIF centralised register with the help of ERA.
- CSs would be able to extract data on their registered vehicles.
- CSs would be able to query data relating to vehicles registered by other CS.
- Although data would be stored centrally by ERA, ERA will not own the data.
- No change is expected in terms of access to vehicle data. CSs connected to the VVR will keep the same access to data of other CSs as they have at present.
- CSs and CS users would be subject to the same conditions as EU users concerning registration, IT maintenance, costs, data quality and the possibility of national parameters.

5. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The current system of connected NVRs is not without flaws, evidenced by the limited number of non-EU OTIF Contracting States that are connected and some recurring connectivity problems. It seems reasonable to assume that a single register managed by one entity will potentially be more robust and resilient.

In their pursuit of a single European railway area, the EU decided to replace all national vehicle registers of EU states and bring them together under one single EVR.

The EU has offered non-EU OTIF Contracting States the possibility of also making use of the EVR and it indicated its willingness to change the name of the register so that it also refers to OTIF (for example EU/OTIF centralised vehicle register).

As an intergovernmental organisation, OTIF has ambitions to extend geographically and it has to consider the sovereignty of its member states and the fact that the centralised register is hosted and managed by ERA, as proposed, may be sensitive for some CS.

It should be noted that for the purpose of EU law and the objective of creating a single European railway area, the European Vehicle Register will register all vehicles, irrespective of whether they are used domestically or internationally. As the scope of COTIF is limited to international traffic, the main purpose of vehicle registers referred to in Article 13 of the ATMF UR is to register vehicles for use in international traffic.

Furthermore, depending on the national rules and regulations of a CS, it might not be possible for some states to host the data outside of their territory. In recent years, the OTIF Secretariat has consistently suggested that a centralised vehicle register should not exclude the existence of national registers of non-EU states and that connection between different registers should be ensured. This was also reflected in the European Union Agency for Railways' report 013REC1005/ACR accompanying the recommendation issued to the European Commission, which, on page 12, notes "*The future EVR should therefore also be able to connect with the NVRs of non-EU MSs (e.g. through one common data search and consultation function), so that all NVRs and the EVR continue to be accessible for all users from internet based entry point(s).*"

At the same time it should be noted that the connectivity of national registers has so far been ensured by ERA and that the EU has decided that from 2021, ERA will discontinue this task, as the EU will have only one register. Under its current budget framework, the OTIF Secretariat does not have any resources to take up any tasks related to connecting registers. In order to ensure and maintain the exchange of vehicle data and facilitate international traffic by rail, it is important to consider and analyse alternative scenarios. Relevant questions in this respect are:

- Should there be one centralised register only, or should the possibility remain for additional national or regional registers to be connected with the centralised register?
- If the possibility of connected registers should continue to exist, who should ensure the connection and who should bear the costs?
- Who should bear the costs of using the centralised register, how high would the costs be and how should compensation be organised?

A summary of different scenarios is at annex to this document.

6. PROPOSAL FOR DECISION

1. The Committee of Technical Experts notes the developments as explained in this document.
2. The Committee of Technical Experts requests its standing working group Technology (WG TECH) to explore the possibilities for the future of vehicle registers, taking into account:
 - a. The fact that from June 2021, ERA will no longer provide software or support for the sNVR or for the connection of the EU centralised register with any national vehicle register.
 - b. The offer from the EU to use the EU centralised vehicle register jointly and brand it as the joint EU/OTIF centralised register.
 - c. Questions related to control, access rights management and ownership of data in a centralised register.
 - d. Questions related to costs and legal relations (liability) concerning the use and hosting of the centralised register.
 - e. Future possibilities for states wishing to use a national register instead of the centralised register.
3. The Committee of Technical Experts requests WG TECH to present proposals to the 2020 session of the Committee of Technical Experts.

Annex

Scenario	Benefit (Strengths and Opportunities)	Considerations (Weaknesses and Threats)
S1. All states use the EU/OTIF centralised vehicle register	<p>Data consistency (S) No data interface between different register needed = reduction of costs (S)</p> <p>Single process for data input (S) Register for vehicles for national/international traffic (O)</p> <p>EVR to become OTIF/EU centralised Vehicle Register (O)</p> <p>Single entry point (O)</p>	<p>Developing a Common coding language format (Arabic, Latin, Cyrillic and other characters (words)) (W)</p> <p>Distribution of costs (W)</p> <p>Single entry point (T)</p> <p>Security of data (T)</p> <p>Branding (EVR → CVR) (W)</p> <p>Establishing a legal framework for EU/OTIF Centralised Vehicle Register (W)</p> <p>Tool managed and data stored by a foreign authority (T)</p> <p>Establishing a centralised administration and process to manage the tool (W)</p>
S2. EU states use EVR and all non-EU OTIF states use their own NVR	<p>Maintaining CS sovereignty in their ability to store and manage own data (S)</p> <p>No additional costs for existing NVRs (S)</p> <p>Possibility for non-EU CS to control visibility of data limited to vehicles for international traffic (S)</p>	<p>Complexity of linking multiple systems (W)</p> <p>Additional interface would be needed to connect EVR and the different NVRs (W)</p> <p>Increased costs for upgrade, operation and maintenance of the interface (W)</p> <p>Costs for new NVRs (W)</p> <p>Access rights and different level of access to data (W)</p>
S3. EU states and some non-EU states use EVR and some non-EU states use their own NVR	<p>CS have a choice as to whether to join the centralised register and apply scenarios S1 or S2</p> <p>Maintaining CS sovereignty in their ability to store and manage own data (S)</p>	<p>Tool managed by an authority of a CS or Region (T)</p> <p>Additional interface would be needed to connect EVR and the different NVRs (W)</p> <p>Increased costs for upgrade, operation and maintenance of the interface (W)</p> <p>Complexity and coordination (T)</p>
S4. Two connected central registers: one centralised OTIF vehicle register and the EVR	<p>OTIF register offers a global register extension (O)</p> <p>OTIF register becomes a neutral tool/platform for non-EU CS (S)</p>	<p>Additional and currently unforeseen costs and resources for the administration of OTIF register (W)</p> <p>Need to establish a legal framework (W)</p>

		Costs (W) Complexity of linking two systems (W) Interface needed to connect two registers (W)
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