



Working session with the members of UNESCAP

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) invited OTIF's Secretary General, Mr Davenne, and the head of the legal department, Mr Kuzmenko, to contribute to the expert group meeting on the harmonization of the rules and regulations for facilitation of international railway transport, which was held in Bangkok, Thailand on 4 and 5 September 2017.

The main aim of the expert group is to carry out studies to recommend:

- Measures to enhance the efficiency of railway border crossings,
- Measures on common technical standards,
- Measures to harmonize operational practices.

In due course, the recommendations will provide support for the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network.

The Secretariat would like to thank UNESCAP for this invitation, which is particularly relevant at this time.

This is because OTIF's raison d'être is to connect Europe, Asia and Africa by setting up unified railway law.

It was therefore natural that Mr Davenne and Mr Kuzmenko presented OTIF's ability to provide structure for railway links in Asia.

They also reported on the solutions COTIF can provide for problems that currently exist in Asia and the Pacific in terms of technical and legal interoperability. More generally, they showed that COTIF is a suitable legal framework for facilitating international rail transport for Asia and the Pacific and between Asia and Europe.

Around forty people attended this two day meeting of discussions and recommendations, which was both intense and informative. The meeting was attended by the ministries of transport, railways and customs authorities of the countries invited, which included Bangladesh, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, Thailand, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

After the meeting, the OTIF Secretariat was invited to comment on the two studies that are underway:

- "Critical parameters for facilitation of international railway transport",
- "Border crossing practices in railway transport".

The Secretariat looks forward to continuing its work together with UNESCAP on developing the railways.

Contact:

Sarah Pujol

sarah.pujol@otif.org