



## Tenth anniversary of the CTE: towards interoperability beyond the EU

On Tuesday 13 June and Wednesday 14 June 2017, the Committee of Technical Experts (CTE) met for its 10th anniversary session in Bern.

The CTE discussed and endorsed the development of a draft new Appendix H to COTIF which would regulate the safe operation of trains in international traffic. This new Appendix will be the foundation stone of the concept of interoperability beyond the European Union driven by the Secretariat of OTIF. The purpose of the draft new Appendix is to prescribe requirements concerning the safe operation of trains in international traffic, including safety certification and the supervision of railway undertakings. The subject will be further discussed by the Revision Committee and the General Assembly in 2018.

The Committee also unanimously adopted the new Uniform Technical Prescriptions concerning telematic applications for freight (UTP TAF). These will contain requirements for the international exchange of information for international freight services. They will lay down requirements for the communication process between railway undertakings and infrastructure managers, databases intended to be used to track trains and wagon movements and information to be delivered to freight customers.

It also adopted modifications to the existing UTPs GEN-A, GEN-B and GEN-C concerning respectively the essential requirements, the definition of subsystem and the content of technical files.

The new and modified UTPs will enter into force in accordance with Article 35 § 3 of COTIF which, in all likelihood, means 1 December 2017.

Other subjects the CTE discussed included:

- an explanatory document concerning the common safety method set out in UTP GEN-G, which was validated and will be published on the OTIF website;
- modifications to APTU and ATMF, which will subsequently be proposed to the Revision Committee for adoption;
- initiatives taken in the European Union to ensure that the conformity assessment of subsystems, such as vehicles, is done in a good and consistent manner. CTE analysed how these initiatives might be of significance to OTIF.

29 of the 42 Contracting States were present or represented. There were delegations representing the European Union and the European Union Agency for Railways. The following international organisations and associations were also represented: CER, UNIFE and NB-Rail.

In addition to Contracting States, representatives of China and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), accompanied by a delegation from Qatar, were also present in an advisory capacity at the invitation of the Secretary General. The fact that they were present as the CTE is starting to create a concept of interoperability that is valid outside the European Union is evidence of the operational nature of the cooperation agreements the Secretariat signed with China and the GCC in 2014 and 2016 respectively.