

## Middle East Rail 2018 and cooperation with the GCC

The Secretary General of OTIF, Mr Davenne, was invited to speak at “Middle East Rail 2018”, a major event organised in Dubai by Terrapinn, in partnership with the Government of the United Arab Emirates.

On 13 March 2018, he gave a presentation on the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF), describing it as a major legal framework capable of integrating different regional models. He explained that the diversity of OTIF Member States showed that COTIF ensures the coexistence of different railway systems. In addition, harmonised technical interoperability that takes account of the different systems is emerging in COTIF, particularly with the new Appendix H on the safe operation of trains.

Later on in the morning, the Secretary General took part in a panel discussion on interoperability and interregional integration, alongside Mr Montazeri, Deputy Managing Director, Tehran Urban & Suburban Railway Company (TUSRC), Mr Borghini, Executive Director, Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking, Mr Citroën, Director General of UNIFE and Mr Fitch, Head of Unit, European Commission. The panel was chaired by Mr Rosen, Chairman of the Rail Working Group.

“Middle East Rail 2018” also provided an opportunity to continue strengthening working relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Since 2015, there has been a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between OTIF and the GCC and numerous discussions and meetings take place at regular intervals. Recently, the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) signed an MoU with the GCC.

On 12 March 2018, a high-level meeting was organised between the GCC, OTIF and ERA. Keir Fitch, Head of Unit Rail Safety & Interoperability at DG MOVE, Josef Doppelbauer, Executive Director of ERA, Nada M. Abo Al-Samh, Head of GCC’s Railway Section and Khalid Al-Olayan, GCC’s Transport Director were the main participants. The railway companies of the GCC states were also represented.

The meeting was very positive and productive. GCC explained that it was working on common operating rules. In the context of its work, GCC had begun analysing a journey using the CIM consignment note. By agreement with CIT, GCC were given some examples of model contracts and the Secretary General proposed that OTIF and CIT work together to study this virtual journey.

The Secretary General was honoured to be invited as a speaker at Middle East Rail and to have taken part in the high-level meeting in parallel with the event.



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