



China: Application for accession to OTIF

On 26 April 2024, the People's Republic of China deposited an application to accede to the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail as an Associate Member, in accordance with Article 39 of the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF). Article 39 only stipulates one substantial condition in order to become an Associate Member: railway infrastructure must be operated on the territory of the state concerned.

An Associate Member may participate in the work of the organs of OTIF, except the Administrative Committee, in an advisory capacity, and must pay contributions to the Organisation. Unlike the Member States, Associate Members are not contracting parties to COTIF.

China and OTIF have been cooperating for several years.

In spring 2016, the Chinese National Railway Administration (NRA) expressed its interest in OTIF's work and in the legal framework offered by COTIF. The Secretary General of OTIF then invited the Deputy Minister for Transport and a delegation from the NRA to Berne. On 12 July 2016, OTIF and the NRA signed a memorandum of understanding. This memorandum marks the start of cooperation between China and OTIF. (Find out more about OTIF-NRA relations: [05/07/2016](#), [12/07/2016](#), [20/06/2023](#), [Bulletin 4-2017](#), [Bulletin 4-2023](#)).

The Secretary General, in his capacity as Depositary of the Convention, notified the Governments of the Member States of OTIF of the application for accession in a circular letter dated 26 April 2024.

Unless five OTIF Member States object, the application for accession is deemed to be accepted three months after this first notification, i.e. on 26 July 2024.

The Secretary General will then send the Member States a second notification informing them that the application has been fully accepted and accession will take effect on the first day of the third month following this notification.

China will therefore become the second Associate Member of OTIF, alongside Jordan, which has been an Associate Member since 2010.

