

# ANNUAL REPORT

2021





**OTIF**

Organisation intergouvernementale pour les transports internationaux ferroviaires  
Zwischenstaatliche Organisation für den internationalen Eisenbahnverkehr  
Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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## **ADN**

European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways

## **ADR**

Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road

## **APTU**

Uniform Rules concerning the Validation of Technical Standards and the Adoption of Uniform Technical Prescriptions applicable to Railway Material intended to be used in International Traffic (Appendix F to COTIF)

## **ATMF**

Uniform Rules concerning the Technical Admission of Railway Material used in International Traffic (Appendix G to COTIF)

## **BLEVE**

Boiling liquid expanding vapour explosion

## **CIM**

Uniform Rules Concerning the Contract of International Carriage of Goods by Rail (Appendix B to COTIF)

## **CIT**

International Rail Transport Committee

## **CIV**

Uniform Rules concerning the Contract of International Carriage of Passengers by Rail (Appendix A to COTIF)

## **COTIF**

Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail

## **COVID-19**

Coronavirus disease 2019

## **CSM**

Common safety method

## **CTE**

Committee of Technical Experts

## **CUI**

Uniform Rules concerning the Contract of Use of Infrastructure in International Traffic

## **CUV**

Uniform Rules concerning Contract of Use of Vehicles in International Rail Traffic

## **DG MOVE**

Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport of the European Commission

## **ECOSOC**

United Nations Economic and Social Council

## **eFTI**

Electronic freight transport information

## **ERA**

European Union Agency for Railways

## **EST**

Safe operation of trains in international traffic

## **EU**

European Union

## **EVR**

European Vehicle Register

## **FIPOI**

Foundation for Buildings for International Organisations

## **FRP**

Fibre-reinforced plastics

## **GCC**

Gulf Cooperation Council

## **INF**

Infrastructure

## **IT**

Information Technologies

## **JCGE**

Joint Coordinating Group of Experts

## **LOC&PAS**

Locomotives and passenger rolling stock

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## **OECD**

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

## **OSJD**

Organisation for Cooperation between Railways

## **OTIF**

Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail

## **PRM**

Accessibility of the rail system for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility

## **RID**

Regulation concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail (Appendix C to COTIF)

## **RISC**

Railway Interoperability and Safety Committee of the European Union

## **SMGS**

Agreement concerning International Freight Traffic by Rail (OSJD)

## **TAF**

Telematics applications for freight services

## **TCRC**

Train composition and route compatibility checks

## **TSI**

Technical Specification for Interoperability

## **UIC**

International Union of Railways

## **UN**

United Nations

## **UNCITRAL**

United Nations Commission On International Trade Law

## **UNECE**

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

## **UNESCAP**

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

## **UNIDROIT**

International Institute for the Unification of Private Law

## **UPU**

Universal Postal Union

## **UR**

Uniform Rules

## **US**

United States

## **UTP**

Uniform Technical Prescriptions

## **WAG**

Freight wagons

## **WCO**

World Customs Organization

## **WG TECH**

Working group TECH

OTIF: A FORUM FOR  
UNIFORM RAILWAY  
LAW ENSURE THAT RID  
REFLECTS CURRENT  
SAFETY AND TECHNICAL  
CRITERIA PROMOTE  
SAFE TECHNICAL  
INTEROPERABILITY  
ENSURE THAT THE  
SECRETARIAT FUNCTIONS  
PROPERLY AND THAT THE  
MEMBER STATES ARE  
PROVIDED WITH AN  
EFFICIENT SERVICE  
THE PROVISION OF  
HIGH-QUALITY LANGUAGE  
SERVICES CONSOLIDATE  
AND INCREASE  
AWARENESS OF OTIF

# INTRODUCTION



Wolfgang KÜPPER

Three topics in particular shaped the work of the OTIF Secretariat in 2021:

1. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions on how OTIF functions

While it was initially hoped that the COVID-19 pandemic would be overcome by the end of 2020, this unfortunately turned out to be a false hope. Although there was no immediate need for further crisis management, home working, video-conferences and various contact restrictions continued to determine OTIF's work. Overall, however, OTIF was very successful in managing the various activities and especially the tasks set out in the work programme.

2. Preparing and holding the 15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

Preparing and holding OTIF's 15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in September 2021 was a major challenge. The risk of holding a purely face-to-face event only left the option of organising it in a hybrid format. In this case too however, there was a particular problem, as the election of the Secretary General, for example, always takes place by secret ballot and there are still no digital tools available for this purpose. Voting therefore had to take place on the spot in Berne. In retrospect, all the difficulties were overcome and the General Assembly was a great success.

3. Start of the renovation of OTIF's headquarters

OTIF's close ties with Switzerland, the country in which it has its headquarters, and its seat in Berne, have proven their worth over many decades. The decision to renovate the existing headquarters reinforces this bond and at the same time emphasises the independence and uniqueness of the Organisation. In 2021, the scope and financial framework of the renovation work were defined, thus giving the go-ahead for the renovation.

However, in addition to these main subjects, this report also contains a variety of other interesting topics from the various areas of activity.

Wolfgang KÜPPER

# A FORUM FOR UNIFORM RAILWAY LAW



**Aleksandr KUZMENKO**  
Head of Legal Department

In 2021, some important institutional changes took place in the area of legal issues and international cooperation. The ad hoc Committee on Cooperation and the Working Group of Legal Experts held their fourth and last sessions in April 2021. The mandate of the ad hoc Committee on Cooperation ended in September 2021 and the Working Group of Legal Experts was dissolved in October 2021 as a result of a decision to merge the activities of these two subsidiary organs and to entrust their respective mandates to a new ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation.

In 2021, the Legal Department provided substantive secretariat functions for the General Assembly, ad hoc Committee on Cooperation, Working Group of Legal Experts and the ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation. This year, the Legal Department also dealt with various legal questions relating to the execution of depositary functions, accession to the Convention and the interpretation and application of the base Convention and appendices CIV UR, CIM UR, CUV UR and CUI UR.

## RESULTS OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON COOPERATION AND WORKING GROUP OF LEGAL EXPERTS

The ad hoc Committee on Cooperation and the Working Group of Legal Experts submitted a joint report on their activities in 2019 – 2021 to the 15<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly. The latter noted the report and recognised the importance of continuing the work of the ad hoc Committee on Cooperation and the Working Group of Legal Experts in the legal field and in the field of international cooperation.

The ad hoc Committee on Cooperation attributed particular importance to cooperation with OSJD, UPU and international associations and oversaw this cooperation.



On the basis of a proposal from the Working Group of Legal Experts, at its 15<sup>th</sup> session in September 2021, the General Assembly:

- adopted a 'Regulation on the election and conditions of service of the Secretary General' (OTIF-21004-AG 15) and approved the 'Explanatory notes on the Regulation on the election and conditions of service of the Secretary General' (OTIF-21005-AG 15). The Regulation establishes clear rules and constitutes a solid legal basis for a fair, equitable and transparent process for the entire election process;
- adopted a 'Decision on the monitoring and assessment of legal instruments' (OTIF-21002-AG 15) and approved the 'Explanatory notes on the Decision on the monitoring and assessment of legal instruments' (OTIF-21003-AG 15). Monitoring the implementation and application of the Organisation's legal instruments would provide evidence concerning their usage. Based on the monitoring outcome, assessment of the Organisation's legal instruments would determine their relevance and any need to revise them;

- noted the conclusions of the Working Group of Legal Experts on the UNECE's possible approaches to the unification of railway law and supported the formation and adoption of an interface law between COTIF/CIM and SMGS to facilitate international rail freight transport between Europe and Asia. However, this interface law must not conflict with the CIM UR. The General Assembly also reiterated the following decision taken at its 13<sup>th</sup> session: in view of Article 3 § 1, Article 4 § 2, Article 14 § 2, letters h), p) and q) and Article 43 of COTIF, the General Assembly recognises that it must take a prior decision with regard to participating in the preparation of any new text on international railway law whose scope of application and objectives may conflict or partially coincide with the scope of application of COTIF and the objectives of OTIF.
- adopted the amendments to Articles 4 to 7, 10, 22 and 28 of its Rules of Procedure and replaced the 'General Assembly's Rules of Procedure' with a new consolidated version (OTIF-21006-AG 15) and approved the 'Explanatory Notes on the General Assembly's Rules of Procedure (Articles 4 to 7, 10 and 22)' (Annex OTIF 21007-AG 15). The amendments primarily concern requirements applicable to credentials and proxies and the procedure for electing the Secretary General.

In addition, it is worth emphasising that at its 4<sup>th</sup> session, the Working Group of Legal Experts:

- reviewed the Secretariat's work on collecting information on the implementation of and reservations to COTIF and instructed the Secretariat to continue this work;
- started work on the interfaces between customs and transport regulations on the basis of an inception paper prepared by the Legal Department;
- started work on the bill of lading on the basis of an inception paper prepared by the Legal Department.

## FIRST SESSION OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The General Assembly decided to set up an ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation in accordance with Article 13 § 2 of COTIF for three years (September 2021 – September 2024).

Without prejudice to the competence of the organs referred to in Article 13 § 1 of COTIF, the General Assembly gave the ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation the following mandate:

- to prepare draft amendments or supplements to the Convention;
- to provide legal advice on its own initiative or at the request of the organs referred to in Article 13 § 1 and 2 of COTIF or at the request of the organs established by them;
- to promote and facilitate the functioning and implementation of COTIF;
- to monitor and assess legal instruments;
- to take decisions on cooperation with other international organisations and associations, including establishing and dissolving consultative contact groups with other international organisations and associations and monitoring the functioning of contact groups.

At its first session in November 2021, the ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation:

- adopted its Rules of Procedure;
- adopted its Work Programme for 2022-2024, which covers three areas: legal affairs, international cooperation and the long-term strategy. Legal affairs are divided into two parts: firstly, monitoring and assessment of legal instruments, and secondly, legal advice.
- issued an advisory opinion on the request submitted by the Working Group Technology (WG TECH);
- considered and approved the draft decision and draft explanatory notes on permanent representatives. It also instructed the Secretariat to submit the draft decision to the next ordinary session of the General Assembly and recommended that the Secretary General should continue to apply the existing practice, taking into account the draft decision on permanent representatives;
- started considering the possibility of setting up an OTIF database on case law and bibliography on the basis of an inception paper prepared by the Legal Department;
- started considering the use of gender-neutral language in OTIF's texts, on the basis of an inception paper prepared by the Legal Department;
- started considering the results of consultation with the members of OTIF and interested parties on the need to amend the customs provisions in the CIM UR.

## PROMOTING AND ASSISTING ACCESSION TO COTIF

51 states and one regional economic integration organisation are members of OTIF. 47 states are active, full Member States of OTIF and contracting parties to COTIF. The membership of Iraq, Lebanon and Syria is suspended. Jordan is an associate member of OTIF and is not a contracting party to COTIF. Accession to COTIF is open to any state on whose territory railway infrastructure is operated and to regional economic integration organisations of which at least one member is an OTIF Member State. Extending the geographical scope of COTIF is a priority of the OTIF Secretariat, which provides any assistance necessary with regard to accession.

The Secretariat and the Legal Department, in particular, continue to advise various stakeholders about the accession procedure (full membership, membership of regional economic integration organisations and associate membership) and the benefits of membership. In 2020, Moldova started the procedure for accession to COTIF. In 2021, the Secretariat continued to advise Moldova on accomplishing all the formal requirements to launch the formal accession procedure in accordance with COTIF Article 37.

A great deal of work was also carried out with the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), which is aiming to construct an integrated regional railway network between its Member States: Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar.

## COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

The achievement of OTIF's aim depends, among other things, on effective and efficient cooperation with relevant international organisations and associations. In 2021, cooperation with international organisations and associations was mainly in a 'virtual' format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, cooperation with the following international organisations and associations is worth mentioning (in alphabetical order of their acronyms and abbreviated titles): CIT, GCC, OECD, OSJD, UNCITRAL, UNECE, UNESCAP, UPU and WCO.

## EXECUTION OF DEPOSITARY FUNCTIONS

The Secretary General is the Depositary of COTIF. The depositary functions are administrative and non-political. To a certain extent, the execution of these functions includes the impartial exercise of control and supervision.

In 2021, the Depositary issued 52 depositary notifications concerning, in particular:

- Approval of amendments to COTIF adopted by the General Assembly at its 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> sessions;
- Accession to COTIF;
- CIV list of maritime and inland waterway services;
- CIM list of maritime and inland waterway services;
- Various corrections;
- Modification and adoption of new UTPs.

In 2017, the Secretary General published the 'Guidelines on treaty acts under COTIF' prepared by the Legal Department in order to facilitate and accelerate the procedures that are necessary for the entry into force of modifications to the Convention and its Appendices or for other treaty acts to come into effect. In order to clarify some other depositary practices and requirements, the Legal Department prepared three addenda to the guidelines:

- concerning maritime and inland waterway services;
- concerning accession to COTIF 1999 with a reservation to apply CIV UR and/or CIM UR only to part of a Member State's railway network;
- concerning authentic texts and certified copies of COTIF 1999 and amendments to it.

# RID COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS AND RID/ADR/ADN JOINT MEETING – THE SAFE TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS



**Jochen CONRAD**  
Head of Dangerous Goods  
Department

The main focus of the RID Department's work in 2021 was to conclude the revision of the dangerous goods regulations that is carried out every two years. However, the RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting in March 2022 still had to take various decisions before the RID Committee of Experts finally adopted all the amendments at its meeting in May 2022.

## RID/ADR/ADN JOINT MEETING

The RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting develops harmonised provisions for the carriage of dangerous goods by rail, road and inland waterways. The RID Department of OTIF provides the Secretariat for the Joint Meeting, together with the Secretariat of the UNECE Transport Division. Despite the pandemic, in 2021 the Joint Meeting was able to hold a one-week session and a two-week session. It was not possible to attend the one week meeting in Berne in person, as it was held purely as a video-conference. At the two-week meeting in Geneva, although physical participation was again possible, this meeting was again subject to restrictions due to the ongoing renovation work in the Palace of Nations (Palais des Nations) and the small number of meeting rooms equipped with video-conferencing technology. Not all meeting days could be fully interpreted, resulting in discussion in informal sessions without interpretation and decision-making later in interpreted official sessions.



Despite these difficult conditions, it was possible to carry out the work as planned. However, it was already clear at the autumn session that the Joint Meeting in spring 2022 would also deal exclusively with topics concerning the 2023 revision of RID/ADR/ADN. When the adopted texts were incorporated into the consolidated versions of RID, ADR and ADN, the two Secretariats found more deficiencies than in the previous revisions, which was certainly due to the video format of the meetings. These deficiencies also had to be corrected at the meeting in spring 2022.

The Joint Meeting dealt mainly with the harmonisation of RID, ADR and ADN with the 22<sup>nd</sup> revised edition of the UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods. The aim of harmonisation with the UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods is to have the same rules, as far as possible, for all modes of transport in order to facilitate the intermodal transport of dangerous goods. Among the numerous amendments that resulted from this process, the following should be highlighted:

### NEW ENTRY UN 3550 COBALT DIHYDROXIDE POWDER

Cobalt is a mineral that is used globally in various medical and technical applications. It is obtained from cobalt dihydroxide, which is carried in various forms: crude in mixtures together with cobalt sulphate, copper and nickel sulphates, partly refined with very high moisture content and as a refined product in powder form. In powder form, this substance is assigned to Class 6.1, packing group I, because of its acute inhalation toxicity.

Establishing the new UN number 3550 for cobalt dihydroxide powder containing  $\geq 10\%$  respirable particles and the assignment of a new special packing provision ensures that only packagings that prevent dust from escaping during carriage are used. Coarse and pasty cobalt dihydroxide, which does not emit dust in the pulmonary region, poses no hazard on inhalation, and can continue to be carried under UN number 3077 (Environmentally hazardous substance, solid, n.o.s.).

### USE OF RECYCLED PLASTICS MATERIAL FOR ALL RIGID PLASTICS PACKAGINGS

A definition of recycled plastics was already included in the dangerous goods regulations in the 1990s. Since then, it has been possible to use drums and jerricans made of recycled plastics for the carriage of dangerous goods.



With the 2023 edition of the dangerous goods regulations, recycled plastics material recovered from used industry packagings may now also be used for rigid plastics intermediate bulk containers (IBCs) and composite IBCs with plastics inner receptacles.

There is general consensus on the need to revise the existing provisions in future to allow not only recycled plastics material from used industry packagings, but also those from consumer collections, in order to support the circular economy.

## USE OF LARGE PACKAGINGS FOR SEVERAL DAMAGED OR DEFECTIVE LITHIUM BATTERIES

Packing instruction LP 906 currently stipulates that only a single large damaged or defective lithium battery may be packed in a large packaging. This means that large packagings designed for the carriage of a battery with a mass of 600 kg may not be used, for example, for the carriage of four batteries for hybrid vehicles with an individual mass of 120 kg, although the energy content of a 600 kg battery is higher than the energy content of four hybrid batteries.

In future, several damaged or defective lithium batteries may also be packed in one large packaging. In order to rule out the incorrect use of large packagings, the packaging manufacturer must provide instructions for use. They must provide information on the batteries and equipment that may be contained in the packaging, the maximum permitted number of batteries contained in a package and the maximum permitted total energy content of the batteries, and the configuration within the package, including partitions and protective devices used during performance verification.

## NEW CHAPTER 6.9 FOR FIBRE-REINFORCED PLASTICS PORTABLE TANKS

The previous Chapter 6.9 has been completely revised and adapted to the latest state of the art. It now applies not only to tank-containers for land transport, but also contains construction, testing and approval provisions for portable tanks with shells made of fibre-reinforced plastics (FRP) that can be used worldwide. Previous references to European standards have been replaced by references to globally applicable ISO standards.

Portable tanks made of fibre-reinforced plastics have the following advantages, among others, compared with metal tanks:

- Lower weight,
- Corrosion resistance,
- No need for additional lining,
- Lower thermal conductivity,
- Higher impact resistance,
- Easier to repair,
- Lower transport, manufacturing and maintenance costs.

Long transitional measures were adopted that allow the continued use of existing FRP tanks and those that will be built in the near future on the basis of existing and still valid design type approvals.

In addition to harmonisation with the UN Model Regulations, the Joint Meeting discussed several issues that only concern land transport. The following points are worth highlighting:

## INFORMAL WORKING GROUP ON THE TESTING AND CERTIFICATION OF TANKS

Since 2015, an informal working group of the RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting has been working on a project to amend the administrative procedures and controls for the testing and approval of tanks. The aim was to have common requirements for all the land transport modes for the approval and monitoring of inspection bodies, with a view to their mutual recognition. This work has been largely completed and replaces the provisions already contained in RID for the mutual recognition of experts who perform tests and inspections on the tanks of tank-wagons.

As the RID Contracting States and ADR Contracting Parties are at different stages of the accreditation of inspection bodies and experts, it was recognised that some countries could benefit immediately from the new system, while others would still need to take preparatory measures. In order to ensure that the new system is introduced fairly, it was agreed to formulate the transitional measures in such a way as to enable gradual implementation of the new tasks.

An explanatory document, which is intended to provide a better understanding of the provisions that will apply from 2023 and which is aimed at authorities, inspection bodies, maintenance and repair workshops and everybody involved in the transport of dangerous goods, will be published on OTIF's website. This document begins by outlining the initial situation with regard to the inspection, testing and approval of tanks, the problems identified in this system and the resulting need to establish new regulations. The objectives of these new regulations are then explained, in particular the common requirements for the approval and monitoring of inspection bodies with regard to the mutual recognition of the inspections they carry out.

## FITTING SAFETY VALVES ON TANKS FOR FLAMMABLE LIQUEFIED GASES

In recent years, an informal working group has been looking at how to reduce the risk of a BLEVE (boiling liquid expanding vapour explosion) in the carriage of flammable liquefied gases. As a result of this work, various measures are being implemented for road transport to prevent a tyre or engine fire from spreading to the tank. In future, tank-containers for the carriage of flammable liquefied gases will have to be fitted with safety valves that open automatically at a defined gauge pressure, in order to prevent the tank from bursting. For tank-wagons, on the other hand, the fitting of safety valves remains optional, because for tank-wagons, a BLEVE caused by an engine or tyre fire can be ruled out. On the other hand, the same technical requirements apply to safety valves fitted to tank-wagons.

## CLARIFICATION ON USING TANKS AFTER THE DEADLINE SPECIFIED FOR THE NEXT TEST OR INSPECTION

Intermediate tests or inspections on tanks for the carriage of dangerous goods may be carried out three months before or after the specified date. In the past, the RID Contracting States and the ADR Contracting Parties have responded differently to the question of how a tank may be used within the three months after the specified date and what to do about tanks for which this period of three months has expired. The dangerous goods regulations now stipulate that the last time a tank is filled must be, at the latest, before the date set for the next test or inspection. The subsequent transport must be completed no later than three months after this date.

## CARRIAGE OF PRESSURE RECEPTACLES APPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOT) OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Chapter 6.2 of the UN Model Regulations, which was also incorporated into RID/ADR/ADN in the past, contains globally uniform provisions for the construction, filling and testing/inspection of so-called UN pressure receptacles. These provisions enable the carriage of UN pressure receptacles in Europe, regardless of the country in which these pressure receptacles have been approved. In contrast, however, in the United States of America only pressure vessels that have approval from the US Department of Transportation are permitted.

In addition, gas cylinders that do not meet the requirements for RID/ADR pressure receptacles or the requirements for UN pressure receptacles are also used for the carriage of high-quality and high purity gases produced in the United States of America. As these gas cylinders are not fully compliant with the rules, multilateral special agreements have been concluded in the past, which have repeatedly been extended.

The Joint Meeting now agreed to stipulate in RID/ADR that refillable pressure receptacles approved by the United States Department of Transportation may be used for the import and export of gases. However, these pressure receptacles may still not be used in transport between RID/ADR Contracting States. In turn, the United States Code of Federal Regulations (CFR49) will also authorise the carriage of RID/ADR pressure receptacles in the USA. The regulations adopted can be seen as a milestone, as now for the first time, reference is made in CFR49 to the provisions of RID/ADR and in RID/ADR to the provisions of CFR49.

## INDICATION OF WASTE QUANTITIES IN THE TRANSPORT DOCUMENT

The Joint Meeting decided to include a new provision in RID/ADR/ADN which, for the information in the transport document, allows the quantity of waste to be estimated on the basis of the nominal volume of the packagings or containers containing the waste, under certain conditions. The need for this provision arose from the fact that in many cases, the exact quantity cannot be determined when carrying waste, because no weighing facilities are available at the place of loading (e.g. at construction sites, decontamination sites).

## CONCLUSION

The amendments described above do not provide an exhaustive overview of the RID Department's activities in connection with the Joint Meeting, but summarise the most important technological developments that have the biggest impact on the regulations. This makes clear the extent to which the provisions have a direct link to dynamic technological developments in the sector.

## RID COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS AND ITS STANDING WORKING GROUP

The RID Committee of Experts is one of the most important organs of OTIF, as the provisions for the international carriage of dangerous goods by rail are continuously amended, which leads every two years to a completely new edition of RID. As the provisions of RID must also be applied to domestic transport in the EU Member States in accordance with EU Directive 2008/68 on the inland transport of dangerous goods, amendments to RID lead to changes in national law. In this respect, OTIF plays a leading role.

The technical discussion takes place in the RID Committee of Experts' standing working group, which meets once a year. As a rule, the RID Committee of Experts only meets every two years in order to adopt the decisions prepared by the standing working group.

The 13<sup>th</sup> session of the standing working group was again held in the form of a video-conference from 15 to 18 November 2021. Although personal participation was made possible, only one delegation decided to travel to the meeting, which, as an exception, was held in Geneva.

## HARMONISATION WITH THE 22<sup>nd</sup> EDITION OF THE UN RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS

The standing working group approved all the texts adopted by the Joint Meeting in 2020 and 2021 and those it adopted itself in November 2020. It also carried over all the other amendments that had been adopted for ADR one week previously by the UNECE Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15), insofar as they were relevant to rail transport.

## EXTRA-LARGE TANK-CONTAINERS

After intensive discussions in the RID Committee of Experts' working group on tank and vehicle technology, it was possible to overcome the industry's resistance to provisions for extra-large tank-containers that go beyond those applicable to normal tank-containers. This was made possible as a result of negotiations by various participants before the meeting.

The standing working group agreed to include a definition of extra-large tank-containers in RID and ADR, which provides for a capacity of at least 40,000 litres in order to distinguish them from conventional ISO tank-containers. With this definition, it will be easier to assign provisions that only apply to these new tank-containers.

The second decision of principle was to set the minimum wall thickness of extra-large tank-containers at 4.5 mm. Until now, extra-large tank-containers have been built on the basis of the construction requirements for conventional ISO tank-containers, which stipulate a minimum wall thickness of 3 mm. In order to take account of corrosion, the wall thickness was increased to 3.4 mm in practice. One manufacturer of extra-large tank-containers had already used the discussion at the RID Committee of Experts' working group on tank and vehicle technology as an opportunity to increase the wall thickness of the extra-large tank-containers it builds to 4.1 mm.

As extra-large tank-containers are also carried by road, at least over short distances, both decisions of the standing working group still had to be confirmed by the RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting in March 2022.

## MULTILATERAL SPECIAL AGREEMENTS

Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, various multilateral special agreements had to be concluded in 2020 because training and examinations for dangerous goods safety advisers and the periodic and intermediate inspections of tanks for the transport of dangerous goods could not be carried out on time due to the lockdown. Another special agreement was required in order to enable the transport of gas cylinders for medical gases - which were in great demand because of the pandemic - to continue after the deadline for the periodic inspection has passed. Owing to the continuation of the pandemic, these special agreements, which, for safety reasons, had only been planned for a short period, had to be renewed in 2021.

## COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

### HARMONISATION OF OTIF'S RID AND OSJD'S SMGS ANNEX 2

For a number of years, the Secretariat of OTIF has been making successful efforts to press ahead with the harmonisation of RID and SMGS Annex 2, which is applied in the Member States of OSJD (Organisation for the Cooperation of Railways). In addition to some European states, many states in Asia are Member States of OSJD. On the basis of the 2021 amendments to RID, SMGS Annex 2 was also amended and the amended version entered into force on 1 July 2021.

From 1 July 2022, SMGS Annex 2 includes a new Chapter 6.20 containing construction, testing and approval provisions for 1520 mm gauge tank-wagons. As such tank-wagons are also used in RID Contracting States, the RID Committee of Experts' standing working group will in future deal with the question of whether Chapter 6.20 of SMGS Annex 2 should also be included in RID in an adapted form.

## UN SUB-COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS

The RID Department took part as an observer in the 58<sup>th</sup> and 59<sup>th</sup> sessions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods. The decisions adopted at these sessions will be reflected in the 23<sup>rd</sup> revised edition of the UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (UN Model Regulations) and will be included in the 2025 edition of RID in the context of harmonisation.

The work on transport regulations for sodium-ion batteries, which was already carried out in the last two biennia of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts, was brought to a conclusion. Sodium-ion batteries are a cost-effective alternative to lithium-ion batteries because the raw material sodium is much more readily available. Although they have a lower energy density and a lower power output than lithium-ion batteries, they are safer because they can be carried in a deep-discharged state, which has a significant influence on the heat release rate and thus on the thermal stability of a battery during transport. An increase in the production of sodium-ion batteries is already anticipated in the near future, as several large companies and small start-ups have announced their intention to begin mass production by 2023. In order to bridge the period until the new provisions for sodium-ion batteries enter into force, which is planned for 1 January 2025, multilateral special agreement RID 6/2021 has been initiated, which enables the new provisions to be applied between the signatory states to the special agreement already.



## OTHER ORGANISATIONS

On 10 March 2021, the RID Department organised a workshop on the carriage of dangerous goods by rail for the Gulf Cooperation Council. This was held as a video-conference.

On 9 June 2021, the RID Department explained the regulations for the carriage of dangerous goods by rail at the Universal Postal Union's (UPU) Rail Forum, as these regulations must also be observed when carrying postal consignments.

The RID Department also took part in the meetings of the UNECE Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15), the European Commission's Group of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, the Technical Committee on the Transport of Dangerous Goods of the Western Balkans Transport Community and the UIC Group of Experts on the transport of dangerous goods.

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## OVERVIEW OF MEETINGS HELD IN 2021

### 15 TO 19 MARCH (VIDEO-CONFERENCE)

RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting

### 21 TO 23 APRIL (VIDEO-CONFERENCE)

Ad hoc working group on harmonising RID/ADR/ADN with the UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

### 16 TO 20 AUGUST

RID/ADR translation conference for the German versions

### 7 AND 8 SEPTEMBER

5<sup>th</sup> session of the Joint Coordinating Group of Experts (together with the TECH Department and the European Commission)

### 21 SEPTEMBER TO 1 OCTOBER (HYBRID CONFERENCE)

RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting

### 15 TO 18 NOVEMBER (HYBRID CONFERENCE)

13<sup>th</sup> session of the RID Committee of Experts' standing working group

# JOINT COORDINATING GROUP OF EXPERTS

The Joint Coordinating Group of Experts (JCGE) is an ad hoc working group that has been tasked with identifying issues that require coordination in order to align the provisions of the Regulation concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail (RID) and the legislation relating to the interoperability and safety of railways, in particular UTPs/TSIs, and to make them more consistent with each other.

In 2021, the JCGE held a remote meeting on 7 and 8 September.

The RID Committee of Experts' standing working group identified the need for specifications relating to derailment detectors for use on wagons for the transport of dangerous goods. The European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) was requested to develop such requirements for the WAG TSI and LOC&PAS TSI. JCGE reviewed and discussed progress on this issue.

JCGE reviewed developments with regard to digitalisation. In August 2020, the European Union's Regulation on electronic freight transport information (eFTI) entered into force. Subsequently, in 2021, experts on the transport of dangerous goods by rail, road and inland waterways at the RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting (for which OTIF and the UNECE jointly provide the secretariat) adopted harmonised guidelines for paperless documentation and the exchange of information on the transport of dangerous goods. These guidelines, which include an architecture and data model for the digital exchange of information, will contribute to the successful implementation of the EU's eFTI Regulation. Furthermore, the JCGE identified the need to analyse possible interactions between the TAF UTP/TSI and RID.

JCGE discussed passive safety in the event of a collision. The existing requirements for crash buffers in RID are not suitable for the future digital automatic coupler, and only apply to tank-wagons and not to the carrying wagons of tank-containers. JCGE concluded that functional high-level safety objectives would have to be defined in RID, while the detailed technical requirements could be defined in the relevant UTPs and TSIs.

The JCGE experts provided feedback on ERA's draft proposal for the Common Safety Methods for assessing the safety level and safety performance of railway operators (CSM ASPL), which should take into account the transport of dangerous goods.

JCGE also discussed a solution to help competent authorities carry out a vehicle authorisation process and avoid potential duplication inspections for tanks that have already been certified. Such inspections should not be mandatory. As a result, the RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting agreed on a new text in RID and ADR to explain that the competent authority might occasionally require an entry into service verification for tanks in order to verify conformity with the applicable requirements.

# PROMOTE SAFE TECHNICAL INTEROPERABILITY



**Bas LEERMAKERS**  
Head of Technical  
Interoperability Department

## CONTEXT OF THE ACTIVITIES IN 2021

2021 was again characterised by restrictions and adaptations in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Technical Interoperability Department was nevertheless able to organise all its scheduled meetings. This enabled the further uninterrupted development of the technical provisions of COTIF. The Committee of Technical Experts was held in June as a remote meeting. The June and September sessions of WG TECH had to take place as remote meetings as well and the November WG TECH meeting of 2021 was held in a hybrid format.

At the meetings and externally, the Secretariat continued to work closely with the Member States, the European Union, sector associations and other partners.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE APTU UR

The APTU UR are the basis on which the Committee of Technical Experts adopts Uniform Technical Prescriptions (UTPs).

In 2021, the Committee of Technical Experts adopted two new UTPs:

- UTP concerning train composition and route compatibility checks (**UTP TCRC**) and
- UTP concerning Infrastructure (**UTP INF**)

The provisions in **UTP TCRC** enable the harmonised and correct application of Article 6 § 2 and Article 15 of the ATMF UR, which define responsibilities for railway undertakings in connection with the operation of trains. It contains a table showing the infrastructure, vehicle and train parameters that must be checked to ascertain whether a train is compatible with the route it is intended to run on. The UTP TCRC also requires infrastructure managers to provide any railway undertaking running on its infrastructure with the information defined.

The new **UTP INF** has been under development for several years and was preceded in 2018 by an in-depth analysis of how infrastructure provisions would fit into the general purpose and scope of COTIF (see document [TECH-18012](#)). As COTIF applies to international traffic only and as infrastructure does not move across borders, careful consideration had to be given to the scope and implementation of the new rules. The resulting UTP INF sets out the parameters for railway infrastructure that are relevant in terms of compatibility with vehicles and the specific methods for checking these parameters. Contracting States may decide whether to apply the UTP INF to particular lines. Applying the provisions on (new) lines will facilitate international traffic.

Furthermore, the Committee of Technical Experts modified four existing UTPs:

- UTP concerning freight wagons (**UTP WAG**)
- UTP concerning locomotives and passenger rolling stock (**UTP LOC&PAS**)
- UTP applicable to the accessibility of the rail system for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility (**UTP PRM**)
- UTP concerning telematics applications for freight services (**UTP TAF**)

Both the **UTP WAG** and the UTP LOC&PAS were modified to include new rules that apply when existing units or types are modified, and when the area of use is extended. Specific cases applicable to the Great Britain network of the UK were included, in so far as international traffic is concerned.

Other modifications to the **UTP LOC&PAS** included clarification of the technical scope and the addition of requirements concerning the automatic variable gauge system, eddy current brakes, aerodynamic effects of the on-board energy measuring system, and new optional requirements for units to be used in general operations, which is particularly relevant for passenger coaches in international traffic.

The **UTP PRM** was revised to a minor extent. The revision included clarification of the technical scope, editorial modifications, updates of legal references and the inclusion of specific cases applicable to the Great Britain network of the UK, in so far as international traffic is concerned.

Modifications to the **UTP TAF** were limited to its Appendix I. The changes were necessary in order to correct errors, take feedback into account and keep up with technical progress.

All the adopted and modified UTPs ensure continued equivalence with the corresponding Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSIs) applied in the EU. All the provisions are published on OTIF's website under [Reference Texts](#) > [Technical Interoperability](#) > [Prescriptions and Other Rules](#).

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE ATMF UR

### REQUEST TO THE REVISION COMMITTEE TO MODIFY THE ATMF UR

The Committee of Technical Experts considered proposals for modifications to Articles 3a § 5 and Article 15 § 2 of the ATMF UR. The modifications to the text are necessary in order to ensure consistency with the new rules for the certification of Entities in Charge of Maintenance, which are set out in Annex A of ATMF UR. These changes to the ATMF UR fall within the competence of the Revision Committee. The Revision Committee is expected to vote on the proposals in a written procedure in 2022.

## VEHICLE REGISTERS AND ACCESS TO VEHICLE-RELATED DATA

The Committee of Technical Experts and its working group discussed the legal and practical changes with regard to vehicle registers. Until 2024, the European Union will migrate all connected national vehicle registers to one central European vehicle register (EVR). The European Union indicated that it did not intend to connect its EVR to national registers of non-EU states. This migration therefore has significant implications for the connection of registers at OTIF level, which, in essence, will cease to exist. The European Union also offered non-EU states the opportunity of using the EVR on the basis of an additional agreement to be concluded on the matter.

The OTIF Secretariat carried out an analysis of the feasibility of establishing an OTIF/international railway vehicle register, which could potentially be connected to the EVR. Unfortunately, the analysis revealed that there was still a great deal of uncertainty and lack of critical information. The Committee of Technical Experts could not therefore draw conclusions. The Committee of Technical Experts requested the OTIF Secretariat to publish a list of all vehicle registers on OTIF's website, including information on how to contact the registration entity of each Member State to obtain access rights.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE EST UR

In September 2018, the 13<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly adopted the EST UR. The EST UR set out uniform rules for the safe operation of trains in international traffic. They provide general principles and responsibilities for the cross-border operation of trains for states that already fully apply the APTU and ATMF UR. The rules are compatible with the provisions of the European Union on safety of the railway system. Entry into force of the EST UR is pending approval by two-thirds of the OTIF Member States.

When adopting the EST UR, the General Assembly recommended that the Committee of Technical Experts prepare proposals for annexes to the EST UR before the EST UR enter into force. The proposals could then be adopted by the Committee of Technical Experts without delay after the EST UR enter into force.

In 2021, WG TECH developed drafts of the first two annexes, one concerning common safety methods on safety management system requirements, in the form of a draft Annex A to the EST UR, and the second concerning common safety methods on monitoring, set out in a draft Annex B to the EST UR.

## MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION

### MONITORING AND ASSESSING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF APTU AND ATMF UR BY OTIF MEMBER STATES

A Draft Decision on the monitoring and assessment of legal instruments was prepared by the Working Group of Legal Experts in 2019. The Secretary General requested the organs of OTIF (including the Committee of Technical Experts) to apply the Draft Decision provisionally and to share their experience. The Draft Decision was later adopted at the 15<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly in September 2021.

On the basis of the Draft Decision, the Committee of Technical Experts decided on specific steps to implement the monitoring and assessment of the APTU and ATMF UR by Contracting States. A questionnaire based on three areas of enquiry was addressed to the Member States: firstly, implementation of the rules by Contracting States. Secondly, a quantitative measure of relevance, and thirdly, the perceived relevance. The results were discussed by the Committee of Technical Experts in 2022. The next step would involve stakeholders.

## COOPERATION AND DISSEMINATION

The Technical Interoperability Department fostered relations with several other organisations and explained the relevance of its work at several meetings external to OTIF. A summary of activities in this respect is given below.

Cooperation between the OTIF Secretariat, the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) and the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport of the European Commission (DG MOVE) is based on the administrative arrangements of 2020. In connection with this, there were two trilateral coordination meetings in 2021.

In addition, the Technical Interoperability Department participated as an observer in ERA's work on the further development of TSIs, including requirements for derailment detection devices, the digital automatic coupler, telematics applications and the facilitation of combined transport. The objective of this participation is to ascertain whether the proposals are compatible with COTIF so that if necessary, they can be taken over in COTIF provisions, such as the UTPs.

ERA also organised several meetings in connection with the EUMedRail project, in which the Technical Interoperability Department participated. One of the objectives of this project and the OTIF Secretariat's participation is to promote accession to OTIF by countries in the southern Mediterranean area.

The Technical Interoperability Department also took part as an observer in meetings of the Railway Interoperability and Safety Committee of the European Union (RISC). RISC is where the EU



Member States meet with the European Commission to give their opinion on proposals for legislation in the area of railway interoperability and safety.

In March 2021, a workshop was organised for the benefit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), at which the scope, purpose and provisions of the APTU UR, ATMF UR and future EST UR were explained.

Together with the Administration and Finance Department, the Technical Interoperability Department represented the OTIF Secretariat at meetings of the UNECE Group of Experts on the Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock. This group discusses how the unique number assigned according to the Luxembourg Protocol should in future be marked on rail vehicles.

Based on the Memorandum of Understanding with the International Union of Railways (UIC), two management level liaison meetings took place in 2021, which the Technical Interoperability Department coordinated on behalf of the OTIF Secretariat.

The Technical Interoperability Department fostered its relations with the Organisation for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD) by attending its 5<sup>th</sup> Commission and by welcoming an OSJD representative to the OTIF meetings organised by the Department.

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## MEETINGS OF THE TECHNICAL INTEROPERABILITY DEPARTMENT IN 2021

### 22 AND 23 JUNE

14<sup>th</sup> Committee of Technical Experts

### 23 AND 24 JUNE

43<sup>rd</sup> WG TECH

### 7 AND 8 SEPTEMBER

Joint Coordinating Group of Experts

### 8 AND 9 SEPTEMBER

44<sup>th</sup> WG TECH

### 3 AND 4 NOVEMBER

45<sup>th</sup> WG TECH

# ENSURE THAT THE SECRETARIAT FUNCTIONS PROPERLY



**Lunesterline  
ANDRIAMAHATAHITRY**  
Head of Administration and  
Finance Department



2021 was a busy year for the Administration and Finance Department with the organisation of the 15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly held on 28 and 29 September 2021. For the first time, the General Assembly was held as a hybrid meeting, which led to some adjustments.

Otherwise, the main objectives set out in the 2020-2021 work programme concerning finance, human resources and IT were able to be achieved. In addition, the headquarters renovation project and the preparations for the Luxembourg Protocol progressed well.

## MAINTAIN REGULAR DIALOGUE WITH THE MEMBER STATES

The exceptional situation that emerged in early 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic continued throughout 2021.

Based on advice from OTIF's Legal Department on the holding of hybrid and remote meetings by OTIF's bodies, including the Administrative Committee, the Administrative Committee decided that, in view of the uncertain situation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, its sessions could also be held as remote or hybrid meetings.

The Administrative Committee in its previous composition was thus able to approve several important documents at its last (134<sup>th</sup>) session in May 2021, including the revised 2021 and 2022 budgets and the financing scenario for the renovation of the headquarters.

Contacting, discussing and corresponding with Member States on the new composition of the Administrative Committee from 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2024 was time-consuming, but has strengthened the relationship between the Secretariat and the delegates of Member States.

OTIF's 15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly was held on Tuesday, 28 and Wednesday, 29 September 2021 in Berne at the Universal Postal Union (UPU). The session was held as a hybrid meeting for the first time in the history of the General Assembly.

In addition to the institutional matters to be decided by the General Assembly every three years, such as the election of the Secretary General and the appointment of the members of the Administrative Committee, as well as the maximum amount that the Organisation's expenditure may reach during each six-year budgetary period, the General Assembly instructed the Secretary General to prepare, in consultation with OTIF's organs, in particular the ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation, a long-term strategy for OTIF and to submit it for adoption to the next ordinary session of the General Assembly, which is scheduled to be held in autumn 2024.

It adopted a new draft regulation on the election and conditions of service of the Secretary General, which gives the Administrative Committee a key role.

## **CONTROLLING EXPENDITURE AND STABILISING MEMBER STATES' CONTRIBUTIONS**

The Organisation's expenditure in 2021 amounted to approximately CHF 3.709 million and continues to be below the ceiling of expenditure set by the General Assembly.

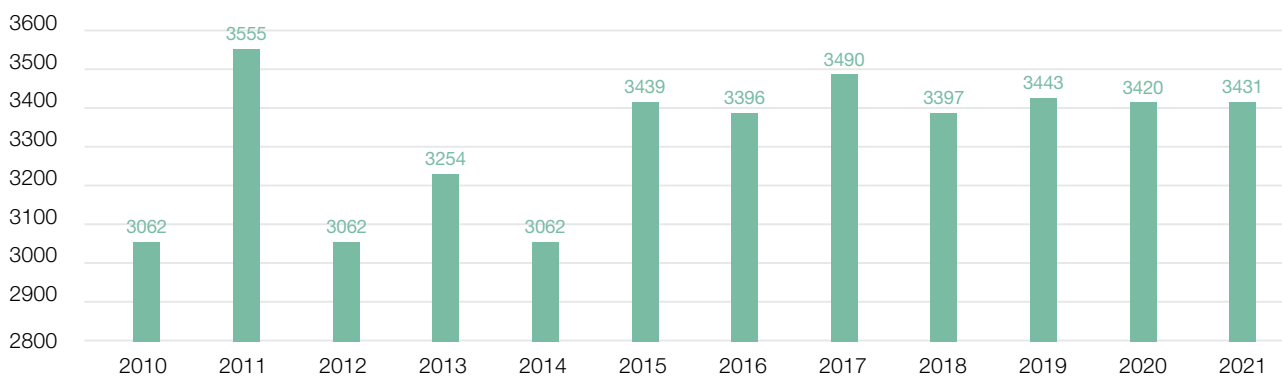
It is important to note that the budgetary framework for 2021 was based on the decisions taken by the 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, i.e. a ceiling of expenditure of CHF 4 million. In addition, expenditure in connection with the renovation is financed by the reserve fund and not by the Member States' contributions.

The 15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in September 2021 increased the ceiling of expenditure for 2022-2027 to CHF 4.2 million for recurrent expenditure and set a ceiling of CHF 7.4 million for expenditure on the renovation project. These new spending limits will only apply from the 2022 budget.

Other important information is that the 2021 budget was characterised by the quality of the forecast, with an average budget execution rate of close to 98%, excluding renovation, despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on activities.

Lastly, Member States' contributions, which are the Organisation's main source of income to cover expenses, have stabilised at between CHF 3.4 and 3.5 million since 2019. The graph below shows how Member States' contributions have changed between 2010 and 2021.

GRAPH: CHANGES IN MEMBER STATES' CONTRIBUTIONS FROM 2010 TO 2021 (IN KCHF)



## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IT STRATEGY AND START OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES STUDY

Information and communication technologies play a key role in the provision of services to the Member States, as well as contributing to the OTIF Secretariat's performance. They are an essential tool that enables the departments of the Secretariat to carry out their tasks effectively.

The 2020-2021 work programme therefore included the definition of an IT strategy to modernise the IT infrastructure and ensure continuity of services. The investment plan adopted covers a three-year period from 2021 to 2023.

In 2021, OTIF replaced the network firewall to provide sufficient bandwidth for online video-conferences at OTIF's premises, which has resulted in much better audio and video quality during online meetings. OTIF invested in a new server and redundant data backup, therefore ensuring business continuity.

With regard to human resources, a training plan covering the period 2020-2021 consistent with the Organisation's strategy had been drawn up in 2020, with particular attention paid to cross-cutting training based on the core competencies common to all departments, so as to enable a large number of staff to benefit. All staff were able to attend either individual or group training. Among the group training organised in 2020-2021, the leadership and management training for all heads of department should be noted.

45% of staff were able to take advantage of individual training, 40% undertook language training, the members of OTIF's building renovation project team took part in training in Building Information Modelling and OTIF organised an information session for all staff on PUBLICA pension schemes. In summary, all staff had the opportunity to take part in a training course. Following a second call for tenders, the study on human resources requirements and conditions of service of the Secretariat's staff was launched in 2021.

The main objective of the HR study was to provide the Secretary General with a report and recommendations on the social benefits available to staff in order to retain and attract competent personnel for the Organisation's benefit. The other objective was to analyse the human resources requirements and make recommendations to close any gaps in terms of human resources requirements in order that the Organisation can carry out its functions properly.

This study has been split into two phases, as follows:

- Phase I: conditions of employment and benefits – completed in 2021 with a draft report submitted in September 2021.
- Phase II: human resources requirements and in-depth analysis of the OTIF staff situation – planned for 2022.

The Secretary General will draft and propose suitable improvements and adaptations to the Staff Regulations once Phase II of the study has been completed.

## RENOVATION OF OTIF'S HEADQUARTERS

The current OTIF headquarters building was built in the 1960s. There has been no general renovation of the building and its interior since it was inaugurated.

The project to renovate OTIF's headquarters entails much more than just carrying out the work. It also provides for the extension of the conference room so that it can be used for meetings of OTIF's bodies.

Owing to the complexity of the project, it was decided to hire a client assistant to assist the OTIF project team involved.

The project is currently well underway. As part of its role, the client assistant submitted an initial estimate of the duration of the work and the associated costs in 2021, on the basis of which the Secretariat proposed a financing scenario at the 15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

Following an in-depth inspection of the site, the client assistant made some recommendations on the steps that are essential before the project manager is selected. These include identifying measures to strengthen the building against earthquakes and to check the existence of pollutants in the building. Both studies were carried out in the first half of 2021 and were included in the documents constituting the tender documents for the selection of the project manager.

The tender procedure for the project management was launched in the last quarter of 2021. The project management contract was awarded to the group of companies that submitted the best offer.

Lastly, as a reminder, a mixed financing scenario was chosen for this project: 80% financed by a loan from the Swiss Confederation via the Foundation for Buildings for International Organisations (FIPOI) and 20% by the reserve fund. Several meetings were held in the second half of 2021 with the representative of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation and FIPOI experts in order to initiate the loan application procedure.

## THE LUXEMBOURG PROTOCOL

The Luxembourg Protocol is the Rail Protocol to the Cape Town Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment. Its aim is to facilitate the financing of railway rolling stock by establishing a new general legal system for recognising and prioritising securities held by creditors for railway equipment.

As a reminder, the 7<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail held in Berne on 23 and 24 November 2005 (doc. AG 7/9 of 24 November 2005) approved OTIF's taking over the task of the Supervisory Authority of the International Registry that has to be established in accordance with the Luxembourg Protocol.



In order to enter into force, the Luxembourg Protocol must be ratified by four states. Until the Protocol enters into force, it is the Preparatory Commission established by the final act of the Luxembourg diplomatic conference in 2007, which includes UNIDROIT, OTIF, the countries that have ratified the Convention, and the sector, which works with a view to its implementation.

The 9<sup>th</sup> session of the Preparatory Commission regarding the establishment of the International Registry of Railway Rolling Stock under the Luxembourg Rail Protocol took place on 8 April 2021 at OTIF's headquarters in Berne and remotely. Among other things, the Preparatory Commission adopted a revised version of the draft regulations for the International Registry of Railway Rolling Stock, which will be issued in due course by the Supervisory Authority.

The 10<sup>th</sup> session of the Preparatory Commission decided, by written procedure, to give a small group consisting of the co-chairmen of the Preparatory Commission, the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General of UNIDROIT, the Secretary General and the Head of the Administration and Finance Department of OTIF and the Chairman of the Rail Working Group, a mandate to conduct negotiations with the ISC and SITA on the proposed change of ownership/control. Negotiations are underway.

# THE PROVISION OF HIGH-QUALITY LANGUAGE SERVICES

## DELIVER GOOD QUALITY TRANSLATIONS ON TIME



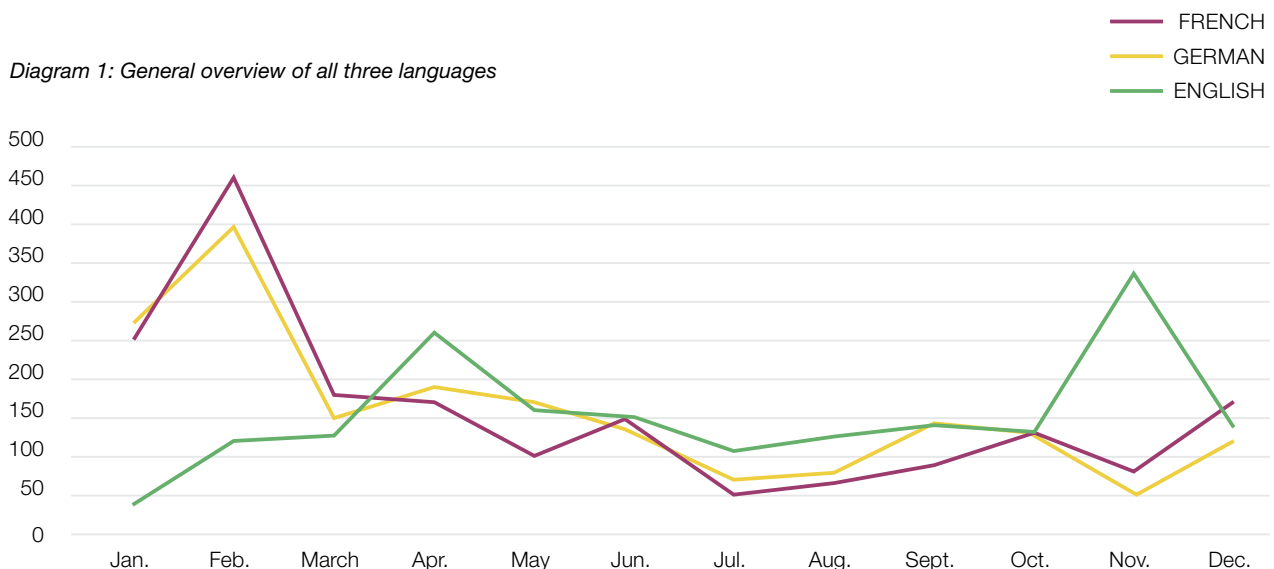
**Joana MEENKEN**  
Head of Translation  
Department

For the Translation Department, 2021 was both a year of consolidation and a year of innovation again. On the one hand, the continuing pandemic and the resulting teleworking, some of which was full time, made it possible to consolidate further the new working methods introduced in 2020, such as the increased use of digital communication technologies and “remote interpreting”. On the other hand, as a result of a considerable increase in the workload for various reasons, there was external cooperation at short notice (see “workload in figures” below).

## DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATION OF WORKLOAD

It is probably easiest to illustrate the above-mentioned increase in the number of pages<sup>1</sup> compared to the previous year by means of diagrams and concrete figures. To this end, there is first a general overview of all three languages, followed by a separate presentation of the translated and proofread pages per language.

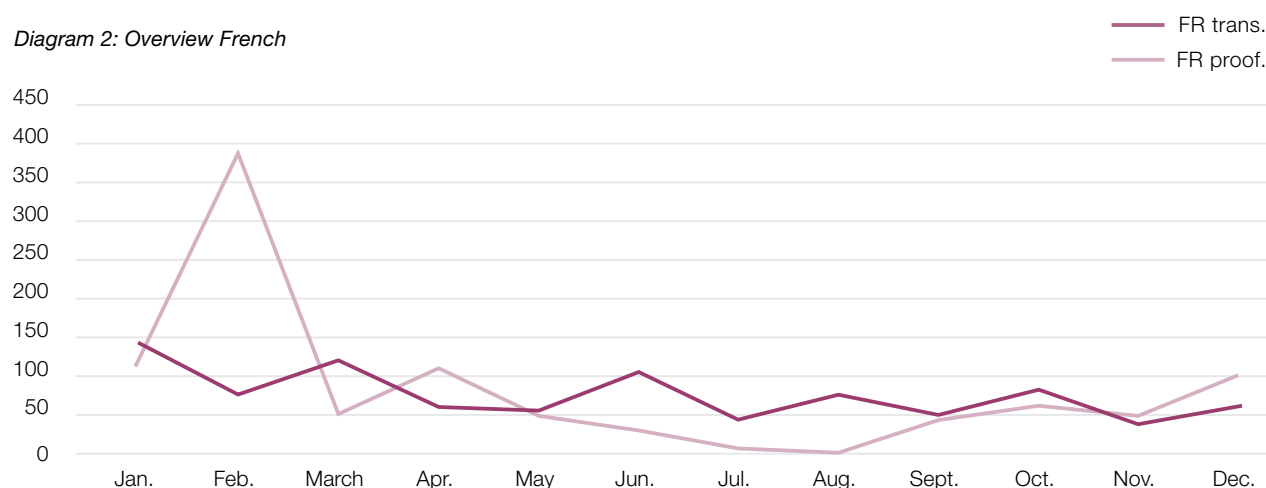
Diagram 1: General overview of all three languages



Overall, the picture here is similar to the previous year, with the individual peaks at the beginning of the year (FR/DE) and the end of the year (EN) becoming even more pronounced.

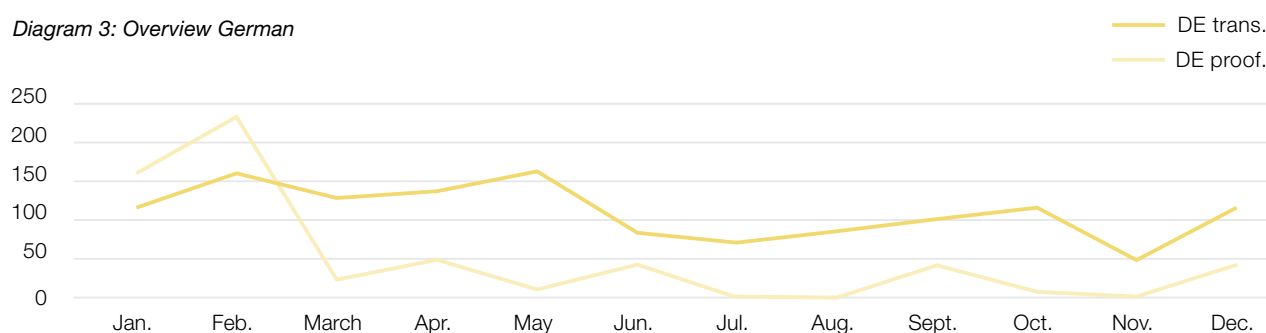
<sup>1</sup> As in the previous year, standardised pages of 330 words were used for the calculation. In other organisations, this number varies between 250 and 350 words per standard page.

Diagram 2: Overview French



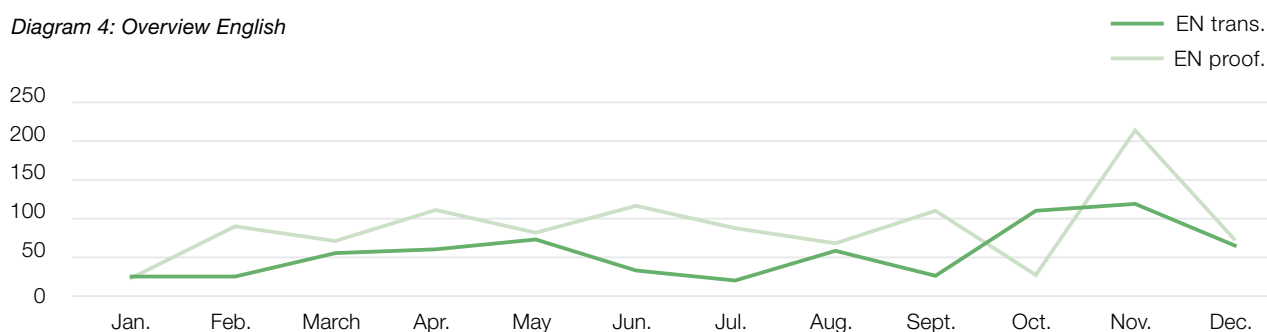
The sharp peak in February was due to the very extensive preparation of the 13<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee of Technical Experts. For this session, several uniform technical prescriptions (UTP) were revised so extensively that they had to be completely proofread. Translation and proofreading in French more or less balance each other out over the rest of the year.

Diagram 3: Overview German



In addition to the peak at the beginning of the year, which is explained in diagram 2, it is noticeable that in German, the workload is distributed relatively evenly throughout the year, with significantly more work on translation, as in the previous year.

Diagram 4: Overview English



Unlike the other two languages, the highest workload in English occurs at the end of the year rather than at the beginning. This is because in order to prepare various meetings, a number of texts drafted in English have to be proofread in November/December before they can be translated in January/February.

## WORKLOAD IN FIGURES

The diagrams are followed below by a comparison of the page numbers in 2020 and 2021, expressed in figures.

	FRENCH			GERMAN			ENGLISH		
	Translation	Proofreading	Total	Translation	Proofreading	Total	Translation	Proofreading	Total
2020	549	575	1124	898	347	1245	469	824	1293
2021	898	1004	1902	1351	557	1908	722	1096	1818
% (+/-)	+63.57	+74.61	+69.22	+50.45	+60.52	+53.25	+53.94	+33.01	+40.60

This jump in the number of pages in all three languages led to a reaction immediately after the particularly busy months at the beginning of the year and contracts were concluded with external translators in the second quarter in order to relieve the Translation Department during peak periods. A total of 173 pages were outsourced for German and 98 pages for French.

Experience with the responsiveness and quality of the outsourced translations has been positive so far, so it was decided to continue this cooperation for the time being, not least because of the flexibility this solution offers.

## PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION BY DEPARTMENT

In addition to the number of pages, it is interesting to note how the work is spread between OTIF's various areas of activity. The following picture emerges:

	FRENCH		GERMAN		ENGLISH	
	Translation	Proofreading	Translation	Proofreading	Translation	Proofreading
ADMINISTRATION	13.8 %	24.1 %	13.1 %	3.4 %	45.7 %	17.6 %
COMMUNICATION	11.4 %	15.6 %	6.5 %	29.2 %	5.6 %	6.6 %
LAW	32.4 %	13.4 %	34.8 %	1.9 %	24.5 %	49.8 %
RID	4.3 %	0.1 %	15.1 %	0 %	20.1 %	12.3 %
TECHNOLOGY	37.3 %	46.8 %	25%	65.4 %	0 %	10.4 %
OTHER	0.8 %	0 %	5.5 %	0 %	4.1 %	3.2 %

The above table makes clear that for the various languages, there are very different requirements, depending on the department/area of work, in terms of translation and proofreading.

With regard to *French*, it is noticeable that the area of technical interoperability clearly generated the largest amount of work, both in terms of translation and proofreading. This is because, as already mentioned above, a disproportionately large number of extensive documents had to be prepared for the Committee of Technical Experts (CTE) this time. Close behind in terms of translation is the legal work. In this context, the spring session of the Working Group of Legal Experts and the ad hoc Committee increased from two to three days, and in addition, the Legal Department shared responsibility with the Administration and Finance Department for the preparation of documents for the 15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. Compared to the previous year (21.5%), the RID part has fallen considerably, which is due to the fact that various RID meetings in 2020 were cancelled at short notice, so most of the meeting documents for 2021 already existed. The second highest amount of proofreading work was in the area of administration, which can be explained by the fact that French is the main language used for drafting documents in this area.

The time-consuming preparation of the CTE is also reflected in the *German figures*, which show the highest (65% for proofreading) and second highest (25% for translation) values. For German, this (second) value is only exceeded in the field of law, which is because everything from the Legal Department is drafted in French and English and has to be translated into German. In the area of RID, which, for the reasons mentioned above, was comparatively low at 15% in 2021, the RID Department itself translated a substantial number of the documents into German. As usual for German, it is usually only official publications that are systematically proofread, which results in the second-highest value for proofreading in the area of “communication” (29%).

With regard to English, preparation of the 15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly emerges very clearly. Just under 50% each for administration (translation) and law (proofreading). An interesting point worth mentioning here is that there is no translation into English in the area of technology, which is because all three members of the Technical Interoperability Department draft their documents in English.

## TERMINOLOGY DATABASE AND EDITORIAL RULES

In contrast to the previous year, owing to the 69% increase in the workload of OTIF’s terminologist, there were no extensive terminology activities, apart from some ongoing “routine tasks” (updates, additions/ corrections to existing terminology entries during the translation process). In order to facilitate terminology work in the future, and with regard to the terminology database that is envisaged for the whole Secretariat, the focus has been on webinars looking at ways of dealing with terminology.

With regard to the second major project decided in 2019, OTIF’s internal editorial rules (see the 2020-2021 Work Programme approved by the Administrative Committee in December 2019), the structure was streamlined and individual chapters have been reorganised.

## VIDEO-CONFERENCES AND INTERPRETING

The extensive comparison of various video-conferencing platforms carried out in 2020 showed that for meetings with interpretation, Interprefy is the best suited for OTIF's purposes overall. As in 2020, all multilingual OTIF meetings in 2021 were organised either solely as video-conferences with remote interpreting or in a hybrid format using Interprefy. The only exception was the General Assembly, for which Zoom was chosen due to special requirements. From the interpreters' point of view, Interprefy has proved to be the best tool, especially for video-conferences, due to the "virtual booth", although this costly solution is not absolutely necessary if the interpreters are present on site. Although the use of such tools has now become more or less routine for the interpreting team, it still sometimes had to deal with technical problems and/or poor sound and image quality.

As two of OTIF's translators are also part of the interpreting team, the following provides an overview of the conference days. The table contains a comparison of the three working languages of OTIF since 2019:

	2019	2020	2021
ENGLISH	22	15	19
GERMAN	16	11	19
FRENCH	16	11	19

The table paints a positive picture, as all meetings were able to take place again in 2021. The significant increase in the number of conference days in German and French is due to the fact that for the first time, OTIF provided all the interpreters for the Joint Meeting in March.

# CONSOLIDATE AND INCREASE AWARENESS OF OTIF



**Sarah PUJOL**  
Communication Officer

The Communication Department is a “support” department for the operational departments of OTIF. In this respect, in 2021, at the request of the Legal Department, the communication team took part in holding the 4<sup>th</sup> session of the ad hoc Committee on Cooperation and in the design, publication and dissemination on social networks of the “Questionnaire on the interfaces between customs regulations and the CIM UR”.

2020 opened the two-year cycle of the new 2020-2021 work programme, with the design of OTIF's publications being revitalised. In 2021, the revitalised publications appeared on OTIF's website and via the Organisation's “communication” mailing list.

As in 2020, 2021 was also marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, which made the use of new information and communication technologies essential and mandatory. In this context, the Organisation's digital presence was crucial.

## THE BULLETIN OF INTERNATIONAL CARRIAGE BY RAIL AND PRESS RELEASES

### THE BULLETIN OF INTERNATIONAL CARRIAGE BY RAIL

In accordance with the frequency principle, the Bulletin was published quarterly as usual in March, June, September and December.

The Bulletin is a publication provided for in Article 23 of the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF). In view of the success of the “Depositary Notification” section (reader satisfaction survey carried out in 2020) and on the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of OTIF, the Bulletin's role as an official communication tool was reinforced by the publication of the “aims of OTIF's Secretary General for the period of office from 2022 to 2024”.

Lastly, the Bulletin's readership in 2021 was the same as in 2020 and more than 800 contacts continued to receive it.



## PRESS RELEASES

Press releases reflect the statements and activities that the Organisation wishes to make public.

In 2021, 13 press releases were published. They were disseminated in the specialist press. Since 2015, OTIF has been working to inform journalists in the sector more frequently and more widely. In 2021, we can see that this long-term task has borne fruit, as the specialist press now regularly relays information deemed important for the sector.

## DIGITAL PRESENCE

The Organisation's digital presence must partly abide by the concept of short timeframes and partly its status as an intergovernmental organisation.

## THE WEBSITE

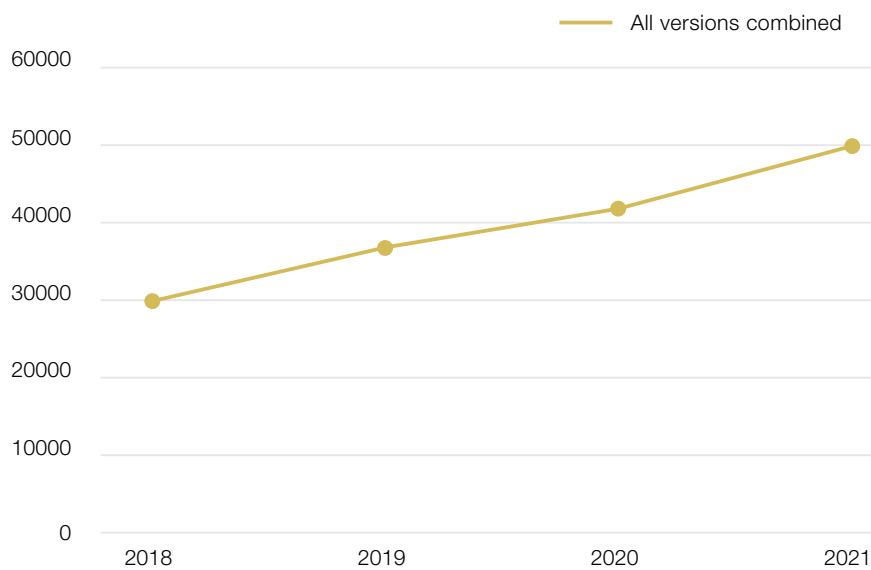
Technically, there are three OTIF websites. Three independent sites to minimise the risk of unavailability: even if one of the sites goes down, the other two are still online and accessible.

In this 2021 Annual Report, as in previous and subsequent reports, we simply refer to “the website” in order to simplify understanding, without lessening the quantity and quality of the work carried out. It is therefore important to make clear that specifically, the communication team, with the support of the webmaster technician and the Translation Department, maintains and works on the website in a threefold manner.

In 2021, the website was visited 50,000 times. This is 750 more visits per month than in 2020. Since 2018, the distribution of visits among users has remained constant: 85% are new users and 15% are regular users.

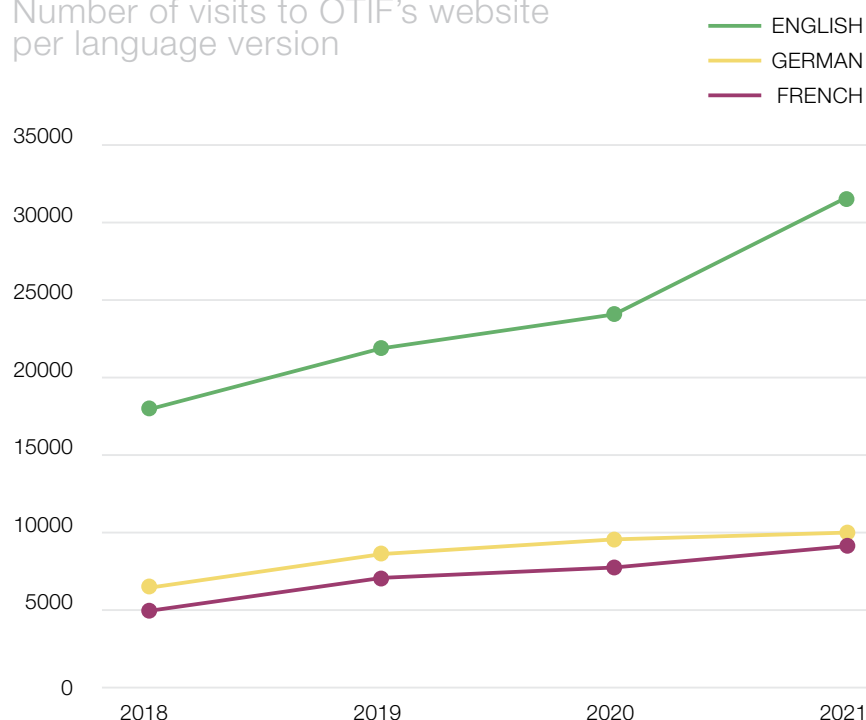
The statistical tool on OTIF's website went live in the course of 2017. For more reliability, visits from 2018 onwards are shown in the graph below:

#### Number of visits to OTIF's website:



Since 2018, it is clear that the number of visits to the website has been increasing. This increase demonstrates increased awareness of the Organisation.

Number of visits to OTIF's website  
per language version



It should be noted that in 2021, 63% of visits were made to the English version of OTIF's website. In 2020, the percentage of visits to the site in English was 58%. In addition, the German version shows the lowest increase in the number of visits.

Looking at the most viewed pages of the site by language version (see below), it can be concluded that:

- The German version of the site attracts an audience that is mainly interested in the subject of dangerous goods and the associated regulations,
- The English version of the site is a showcase for the Organisation, with the majority of the most visited pages being general information pages.

Lastly, it should be noted that the subject of technical interoperability has entered the ranking of the most viewed pages with the page "Prescriptions and Other Rules" in English and German. This is explained by the fact that in 2021, a number of Uniform Technical Prescriptions (UTPs) were amended or newly adopted and put online.

### The pages visited most frequently by language:

FRENCH	GERMAN	ENGLISH
Homepage	Homepage	Homepage
RID 2021	RID 2021	RID 2021
COTIF 1999	Latest documents	COTIF 1999
Latest documents	Dangerous goods	Convention (description of COTIF)
Job opportunities	2021 working documents (RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting)	Members
OTIF	Notifications from the Member States (RID)	Latest documents
Dangerous goods	COTIF 1999	OTIF
Notifications from the Member States (RID)	OTIF	Dangerous goods
News/press releases 2021	RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting	Prescriptions and Other Rules (Technical interoperability)
Members	Prescriptions and Other Rules (Technical interoperability)	Job opportunities

The website is updated very regularly and quickly, depending on the technical requirements, topicality and activity of the Organisation's operational departments. More than 830 updates and document uploads were carried out by OTIF's communication team in 2021.

## SOCIAL NETWORKS

The Organisation has a Flickr, LinkedIn and Twitter account and was visible on the social networks in 2021.

LinkedIn is the social network on which OTIF has the most subscribers and in 2021, the Organisation obtained 180 new subscribers compared to 129 in 2020.

The rate of involvement is the number of user interactions (likes, comments, shares) divided by the scope of the posts (the number of views). The level of involvement is a performance indicator and is one of the statistics that should be studied regularly to find out whether the digital communication strategy is effective. On LinkedIn, this rate is 6.8%. This rate increased in 2021 compared with 2020. With more than 5%, the rate of involvement on LinkedIn is very good, which means that the community is active and contributes to the awareness of OTIF.

## VIDEOS/PHOTOS

In 2021, the communication team produced two videos in-house, which are directly accessible on OTIF's website ([https://otif.org/en/?page\\_id=228](https://otif.org/en/?page_id=228)) and on the Vimeo platform.

The first video (<https://vimeo.com/521790291>) was about the Bulletin. The aim of the video was to highlight the value of the Bulletin and to thank all participants in the 2020 satisfaction survey (for the main results of the survey, see the 2020 Annual Report).

The second video (<https://vimeo.com/654849767>) was made in order to send season's greetings for 2022. It was decided that in December 2021, OTIF should no longer send out greeting cards by post for New Year 2022, but would release a trilingual "Happy New Year 2022" video.

A video for the retirement of a former Swiss delegate to OTIF's Administrative Committee was also designed and produced by the communication team.

Official OTIF photos have regularly been posted on Flickr.



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**OTIF**

Organisation intergouvernementale pour les transports internationaux ferroviaires  
Zwischenstaatliche Organisation für den internationalen Eisenbahnverkehr  
Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail

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