

OTIF



**ORGANISATION INTERGOUVERNEMENTALE POUR
LES TRANSPORTS INTERNATIONAUX FERROVIAIRES**

**ZWISCHENSTAATLICHE ORGANISATION FÜR DEN
INTERNATIONALEN EISENBAHNVERKEHR**

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION FOR INTER-
NATIONAL CARRIAGE BY RAIL**

Press release

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Swiss Confederation committed to rail safety

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing the common principles of a certification system of the Entities in Charge of Maintenance (ECM) of railway freight wagons was signed by Switzerland on 22 January 2010 at the OTIF headquarters in Berne.

This MoU was already signed in May 2009 by 10 other OTIF Member States. It is the result of excellent cooperation between the railway industry associations (CER, ERFA, UIC, UIP), the safety authorities of the Member States, the European Railway Agency, the European Commission and the OTIF Secretary General.

After the entry into force of COTIF 1999 in July 2006 wagon keepers are no longer obliged to register their wagons with a railway undertaking. Recent EU regulations and amendments to the COTIF Convention adopted in December 2009 both allocate the task and responsibility of maintaining rolling stock to an entity called the ECM, which can be the keeper itself, a railway undertaking or an infrastructure manager

The MoU establishes a provisional voluntary system of certification of ECMs for freight wagons including detailed rules for certification and audits of the ECMs, their tasks and interfaces with other actors and the principle of mutual recognition by all parties of certificates issued. The MoU is temporary, as both the EU and OTIF intend to set up the necessary mandatory legal regulations in this field.

The Secretary General of OTIF said that “establishing a voluntary certification system will accelerate the certification regime until mandatory rules of international law have been adopted and are in force and it will therefore enhance safety standards for rolling stock in Europe”.

He added that “by signing the MoU, Switzerland has confirmed that it constantly contributes to initiatives promoting higher safety levels of railway traffic”. Also Dr. Max Friedli, Director of the Swiss Federal Office of Transport stressed in relation to the signing of the MoU its contribution to safety: “Switzerland supports simple but efficient solutions, especially if the measures promoted the transfer of freight transport from the roads to the railways”.

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