

OTIF



ORGANISATION INTERGOUVERNEMENTALE POUR
LES TRANSPORTS INTERNATIONAUX FERROVIAIRES

ZWISCHENSTAATLICHE ORGANISATION FÜR DEN
INTERNATIONALEN EISENBAHNVERKEHR

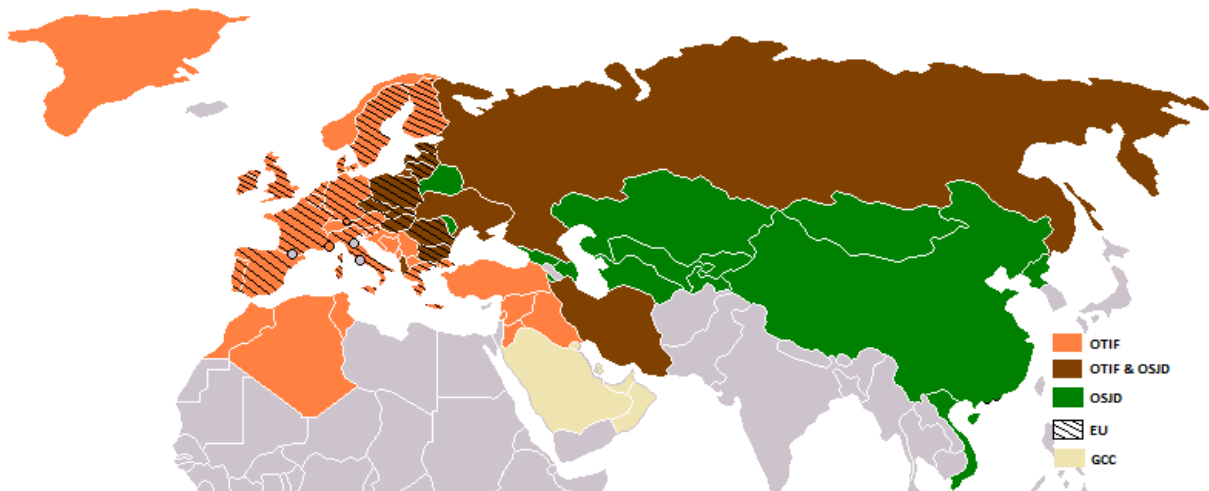
INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION FOR INTER-
NATIONAL CARRIAGE BY RAIL

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Reactivating the iron curtain?

OTIF responds with international cooperation

Whilst OTIF is strengthening cooperation worldwide and building up contacts with economically forward-looking States, the European Commission, the European Railway Agency (ERA) and most of the EU Member States refuse to cooperate with OTIF.



Smoothly running rail traffic between the most dynamic economic centres in Asia and Europe is the fundamental prerequisite for the development of international trade. Only when the States bordering these linking axes recognise that they all – without exception – benefit from unhindered rail freight traffic will the latter be able to develop its full potential.

It is precisely this aim that the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail is striving to achieve. To do this, it not only provides its Member States with the necessary legal and technical bases, but also works continuously to improve and extend them. In so doing, it also actively pursues the interests of the EU and its Member States.

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This also requires the Organisation to focus on the conditions of current economic developments and flows of trade that are opening up, to put the direction of its work to the test each year and, when necessary, to take consequent corrective action.

The generally known problems of delays caused to Eurasian rail transport operations at the almost “endless” seeming border crossings (passenger, customs and technical controls) are reaching a level of unreliability that is unacceptable for logistics. This subject area belongs to the aims and tasks of OTIF. If there is not close cooperation with other regional and international organisations, it will not be possible to increase average speeds to a reasonable level, thus offering rail transport logistics the opportunity to increase significantly the distance over which goods can actually be carried by rail.

The facilitation of border crossing in the international carriage of freight by rail in Europe and Asia would also have a positive effect on trade relations within the EU. Instead of forward-looking dedication to the potential referred to and working to achieve competitiveness that will allow this mode of transport to exploit its trump cards of extremely attractive transport speeds, reliability, safety and environmental friendliness, not only is the European Commission again closing the “iron curtain” between the internal market and non-EU Member States, it is also inciting its Member States to neglect their duties towards OTIF and has instructed ERA to cease cooperation.

This policy is even less understandable when looking at the map of Eurasia, which reveals immediately the importance of effective rail links, or the importance they should have. It would seem that a paradigm shift in Brussels is urgently required.

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OTIF in brief

The Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) currently has 46 Member States (Europe, Near/Middle East and North Africa). At present, international carriage by rail on railway infrastructure of around 250,000 km and the complementary carriage of freight and passengers on several thousand kilometres of shipping routes, inland waterways and (in domestic carriage) roads are concerned by the uniform law created by OTIF. The headquarters of the Organisation are in Berne, Switzerland.

For more information, see www.otif.org – [General information](#)