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**Commission d'experts techniques
Fachausschuss für technische Fragen
Committee of Technical Experts**

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INTERCHANGEABLE COACHES

Status update

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with APTU Art.11 § 2a, the UTP LOC&PAS, which entered into force on 1.1.2015, takes precedence over the RIC technical provisions for interchangeable passenger coaches. As the UTP/TSI contain some open points and specific cases, they do not provide the full specifications needed for single admission prescribed in ATMF Article 6 § 3. The UTP/TSI also includes new specifications for functions which were not previously covered by RIC, such as the signals for the passenger alarm, and call for aid device. For these reasons there is no longer a legal basis or a standard for passenger coaches which can circulate freely in international traffic.

As interchangeable coaches are important for international passenger traffic, OTIF has promoted this issue so that it is placed on the agendas of different organisations. This paper provides a status update of activities.

2. DEVELOPMENT AND STRUCTURING OF THE WORK

In 2013, the Secretariat wrote in its “Strategy and work programme for the OTIF Technical section for 2013 and 2014” that: “*With the entry into force in the EU of the LOC&PAS TSI, the new “RIC” coaches coming from outside the EU are no longer automatically authorised for “placing in service” in EU Member States. The UTP PAS¹ may help to bridge this gap*”, and that “*If feasible, the UTP PAS may include provisions similar to section 7.1.2 of the UTP WAG by providing voluntary technical solutions to close open points². Applying these technical solutions would allow one admission for international operation to be valid in all Contracting States.*” This message was echoed in the strategy and roadmap for the UTP LOC&PAS as input to the WG TECH 20 of 11 September 2013 in Istanbul.

On 6 February 2014 the first joint workshop between ERA and OTIF was held to discuss the interchangeability of passenger coaches. In accordance with the conclusions reached during the workshop, CER was invited to provide information regarding passenger coaches with respect to the subjects listed below:

- Inventory of market requirements.
- A list of all the sector’s requirements (existing or not), specifying the assessment/application methods that exist or which need to be set up.
- Need to develop standards, UIC leaflets, application guidelines, etc.
- Analysis of the need for specific markings.

CER sent a letter, dated 25.6.2014, to both ERA and the OTIF Secretariat. The letter contained a list of parameters that CER suggested should be covered. These parameters were not yet detailed enough to use them in a specification.

Based on the available information, the OTIF Secretariat prepared a discussion document for WG TECH 23, which was held in September 2014. The Secretariat suggested dividing the specification into three different categories:

1. Unique authorisation: the vehicle must not be subject to specific cases which affect compatibility with the network, and

¹ UTP PAS finally became the UTP LOC&PAS in accordance with the decision of the CTE.

² The primary focus will be on the 1435mm network, since for other gauge networks the EU regulations have open points for which no technical solution may be defined (in particular the future LOC&PAS TSI).

2. Harmonised inter-vehicle interfaces: there should be no open points in the UTP/TSI relating to compatibility with the infrastructure, and
3. Agreements between railway undertakings and/or manufacturers to use, e.g., harmonised operational and communications concepts.

These categories are illustrated in figure 1.

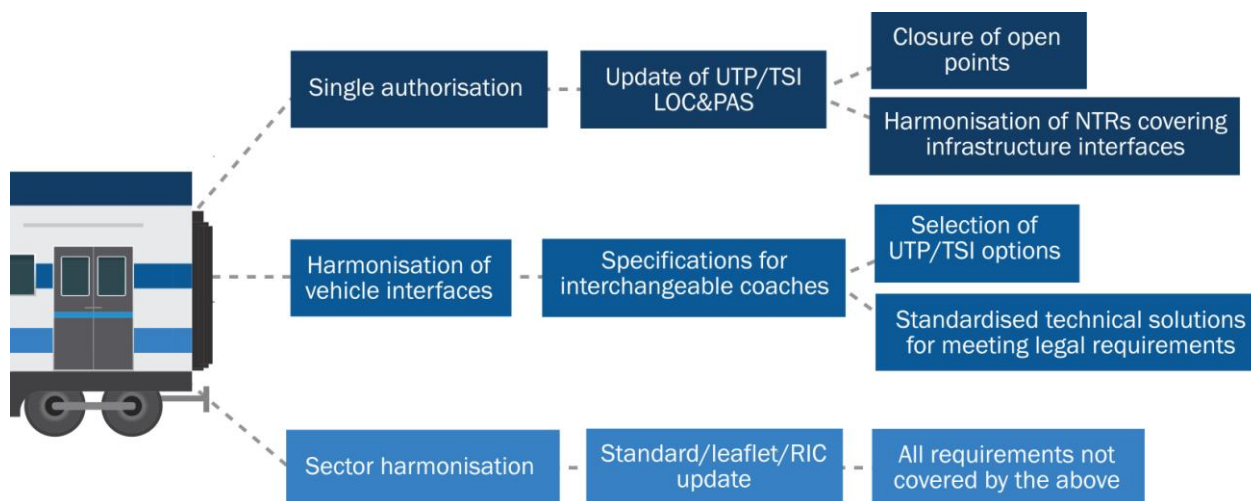


Figure 1, three categories of specifications

The WG TECH confirmed both the relevance of specifications supporting the use of coaches in international traffic as well as the model in figure 1.

The normal process for developing technical provisions is that ERA first develops a proposal, for which ERA is assisted by a working party to which EU National Safety Authorities, sector representative bodies and the OTIF Secretariat are invited. ERA then sends its proposal to the European Commission as a recommendation. The Commission then proposes the specifications to the Railway Interoperability and Safety Committee (RISC), in which EU Member States are represented. The OTIF Secretariat is also invited to RISC meetings as an observer. After a positive opinion from RISC, the Commission adopts the specification, after which it is published as EU law.

The OTIF Committee of Technical Experts and its standing working group (WG TECH) only start the work on transposing the EU specifications into COTIF after the EU provisions are stable (after RISC opinion). This sequential work flow was agreed in order not to develop specifications at two levels at the same time, so as to avoid inconsistencies and complicated coordination.

3. UNIQUE AUTHORISATION

For the first category above relating to vehicle authorisation, the definition of corresponding specifications was in the scope of ERA activities. ERA therefore launched a working party in charge of “unique authorisation” in April 2014; this working party completed its work in December 2015, by issuing the corresponding recommendation to the European Commission. The recommendation suggested adding point 7.1.4., which is split into two parts:

- Conditions related to EC verification
- Conditions for mutual recognition of the vehicle’s first authorisation for placing in service.

As a next step the requirements should be discussed at the Railway Interoperability and Safety Committee of the EU, with a view to adopting them as amendments to the LOC&PAS TSI. Subsequently the provisions will be proposed to the CTE for adoption in the scope of COTIF.

4. HARMONISATION OF VEHICLE INTERFACES

For the second category, the harmonisation of vehicle interfaces, ERA started the discussion in their working party in January 2016, on the basis of a list of requirements previously reviewed and discussed by the WG TECH. The idea is to develop a new section with additional requirements to make it easier to couple TSI/UTP compliant passenger and/or existing RIC coaches in a train composition. The new section will be voluntary in its application, but if applied, it will allow the coach to be marked in a particular way to indicate its particular technical features.

The parameters covered in this new section may include:

- References to existing/amended TSI clauses by making them applicable to these coaches, such as manual UIC coupling systems, UIC brake systems
- Gangways
- Power supply
- Cables and plugs for data transmission
- Data transmission protocol
- Markings.

Several standardisation activities have to be finalised before the provisions can be successfully applied. For this reason ERA is in contact with CEN, CENELEC and UNIFE.

5. SECTOR HARMONISATION

Harmonisation above and beyond what needs to be specified in the other categories (unique authorisation and harmonisation of interfaces) is in the hands of the sector. Multilateral contracts can be agreed to cover elements that are not regulated, but which are relevant for business needs. For example the sector may agree on a revised RIC agreement, or conclude other provisions that are useful.

6. NEXT STEPS

After ERA has finalised its activities by issuing all the relevant recommendations to the Commission for both unique authorisation (done in December 2015) and for vehicle interfaces (foreseen in the second half of 2016), the Commission will obtain the opinion of the EU Member States and adopt the provisions accordingly. It may be worth noting that the EU's decision-making process is likely to take place at the same time as implementation of the fourth railway package.

The EU process will presumably lead to amendment of the LOC&PAS TSI at the end of 2016 or the beginning of 2017, after which equivalent amendments will be proposed to the CTE for the UTP LOC&PAS.

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