



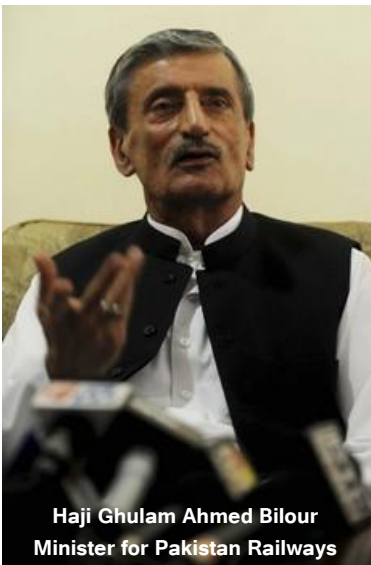
OTIF

Press Release
Berne, 15.12.2011

Intergovernmental Organisation for international Carriage by Rail

Pakistan, on the cusp of OTIF membership

“We want it and we will do it !”



Haji Ghulam Ahmed Bilour
Minister for Pakistan Railways

Following the success of several test trains that have run between Islamabad and Istanbul via Tehran since August 2009 and against the background of Turkey's and the Islamic Republic of Iran's membership of OTIF, the Government of Pakistan has taken a decision of principle to start negotiations on acces-

sion with OTIF.

On 7 and 8 December 2011, the Government of Pakistan, with support from the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), hosted a workshop at which leading members of the secretariats of both organisations, Pakistan Railways and the Government exchanged basic information on the content and mode of operation of COTIF, details of the

accession process and the consequences of Pakistan's membership of the Organisation in terms of participation rights and funding obligations.

The workshop was opened by Pakistan's **Minister for Railways, Haji Ghulam Ahmed Bilour** and was attended by high-ranking representatives of various Pakistani Ministries, major forwarders and the various branches of Pakistan Railways. OTIF's delegation was headed by the Secretary General, Stefan Schimming.

From the discussions that followed each of the extensive presentations, it was clear that the Pakistani contingent already had a great deal of knowledge of the legal basis, its target-oriented application and how to use it to develop cross-border rail traffic towards Europe. The questions the OTIF representatives were asked also showed that all the participants had prepared the workshop down to the last detail. It was particularly noted that efforts were being made to fill gaps in knowledge and to prepare the next steps in the process of the Government level decisions that still have to be taken. The CEO of Pakistan Railways, **Mr Arif Asim, who also assumes the tasks of the Secretary of State** in Pakistan's Ministry of Railways,



expressed the Government's determination to accede by declaring that **"We want it and we will do it!"**.

The further prospects Pakistan's Government saw in acceding to OTIF were also significant, particularly from the point of view of railway policy. The focus was not just on creating all the conditions for cross-border rail links to China, but also to put in place all the basic conditions necessary for using the option of transport opportunities on the railways, as well as developing rail traffic further on the subcontinent with India and beyond, as soon as the general political situation permits.

As a result of close cooperation with the ECO Secretariat and its contributions to the workshop, it also emerged from the event that the Memorandum of Understanding on working together, which the two organisations signed in June 2009, has been given a new lease of life.

For OTIF, the fact that the event was able to take place, as well as the large, high-level attendance and the concentrated substantive work during the workshop, must be seen as a successful outcome of its efforts to achieve intercontinental legal certainty for the rail sector by continuing to expand the geographical scope of COTIF. The crucial point is to follow the dynamics of trade flows and always to be one step ahead of the resulting developments in terms of transport links by providing the international legal regimes required for this to happen. ■

OTIF in brief

The Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) currently has 47 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 further information

see www.otif.org - [General Information](#)

Press service

Katja Bürkholz

Tel.: +41.31.359.10.30

Fax: +41.31.359.10.11

e-mail: Media@otif.org

Website: www.otif.org - [NEWS](#)