



# OTIF



**Press Release**  
**Berne, 01.05.2012**

## **Intergovernmental Organisation for international Carriage by Rail**

### **Georgia – 48<sup>th</sup> Member State of OTIF**

**Because COTIF stands for promotion, improvement and facilitation**

**Berne \* Tbilisi. From today, the Republic of Georgia is a legally bound Contracting State to the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF) and a Member State of the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail – OTIF.**

The Organisation's remit is to provide those States that both recognise and specifically exploit the potential of the railways as a means of transport with enormous advantages.

This remit, which the 48 Governments of the Member States and the European Union have conferred upon the Organisation, is enshrined in COTIF as international law, and is aimed at promoting, improving and facilitating international carriage by rail.

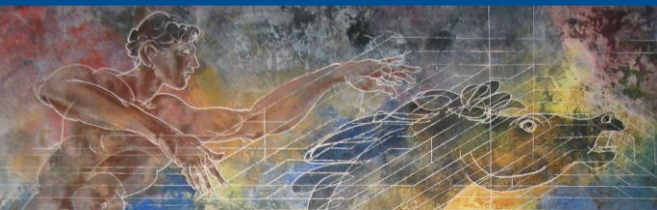
A key point is that this law is supranational, neutral and rail-specific – a global first. For the rail sector, logistics specialists and consequently for those commissioning transport, this degree of legal certainty plays a central role.

OTIF can only do justice to its remit if its actions go beyond those of an administrator of the Convention. And it does exactly this. With an eye on economic, geopolitical, environmental policy and technological developments, the Secretariat in Berne works continually on proposals to promote, improve and facilitate – and in some cases make possible for the first time – the transport of goods by rail across continents.

In order that international rail transport can be performed safely, in an ongoing process the Secretariat

not only revises and supplements for the Member States the technical specifications for rolling stock and infrastructure, but also continuously revises provisions in the most fundamental part of COTIF, the transport of dangerous goods.





Particular emphasis should be placed on the forward-looking aim for the development of rail transport of removing obstacles to border crossing. So-called “seamless transport”, overdue for decades, can only be achieved if lines of action for the rail sector are implemented as soon as possible.

OTIF’s Rail Facilitation Committee for example, has drafted preliminary proposals in this respect, which will be submitted to the 11<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in September this year.

**Almost** 130 years after the original building of the Caucasian railway line, an ultra-modern 826km long line will connect Azerbaijan (Baku) with the Turkish railway network (in Kars) via Georgia (Tbilisi) by the end of the year. This will result in a vital link from the Caspian Sea to the Aegean Sea, with further rail transport opportunities towards the Russian Federation in the north and towards Asia in the south east via Iran and Pakistan.

However, the Republic of Georgia’s membership will only reach its full potential when the third State crossed by the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars line becomes a Contracting State to COTIF: Azerbaijan’s accession is at an advanced stage of negotiation.

The foundation stone for close cooperation with the Caucasus region and the Economic Cooperation Organization with its headquarters in Tehran, of which Turkey and Azerbaijan are members, was only laid by the Secretary General of OTIF, Stefan Schimming, in 2009. ■

## OTIF in brief

The Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) currently has 48 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](http://www.otif.org) - [General Information](#)

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