



Press release

Berne, 20.03.2014

Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail

Signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF)

Berne, 19 March 2014

It was with great pleasure that OTIF welcomed at its headquarters in Berne the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) delegation.

The GCC Member States, namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have transferred their competence in the railway sector to this regional organisation.

The GCC's Steering Committee approved the prospect of accession to the Convention

concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF).

The signing of this MoU ([click here @ for English](#) and [here @ for Arabic](#)), following negotiations held in the second half of 2013, is an important step towards the accession of the GCC and its six Member States to COTIF.

During the exchange of signatures, the GCC was represented by its Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Affairs, Mr. Al Shibli, and OTIF by its Secretary General, Mr. Davenne.



The construction of a railway network connecting the six GCC Member States by 2017 is a sign of the growing importance of the Arabian Peninsula for international rail transport.

Once complete, the 2000 km railway network will help strengthen trade between the countries of the Arabian Peninsula.

It will also offer an alternative to air and maritime transport, whether for passengers or goods.





Eventually, the network could be connected to other Arab countries outside the GCC and could reach the Turkish network to the west. To the east, the network could be connected to the Asian railways through the former Soviet states, particularly towards China.

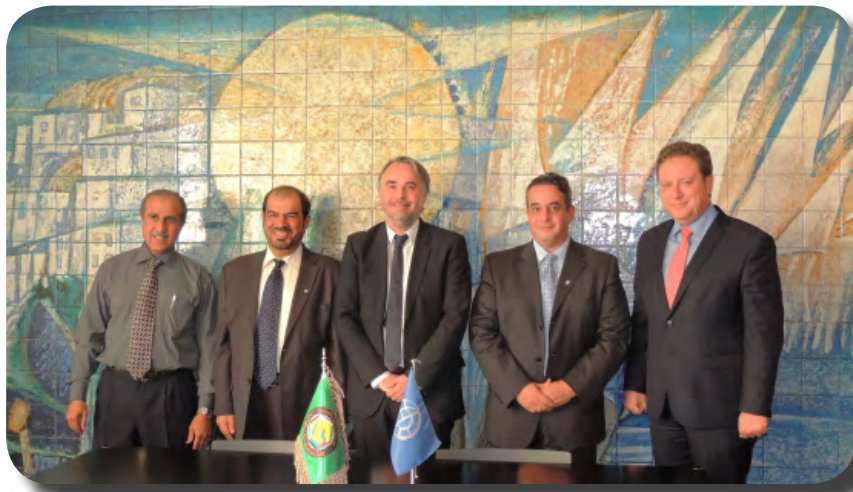
Nowadays, this geographical area is witnessing an impressive revival in the rail sector. The recent inauguration

of the Marmaray, a railway tunnel crossing the Bosphorus and connecting the Asian and European sides of the city of Istanbul, is the perfect example of this progress.

This MoU allows for the organisation of a joint seminar between GCC, OTIF and CIT, by the end of 2014, in order to determine the areas of cooperation between these organisations.



GCC Member States



Mr. Ibrahim Al Sabti, Mr. Abdullah Al Shibli, Mr. François Davenne, Mr. Ramiz Al Assar, Mr. Erik Evtimov (left to right)

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- GCC website news (in Arabic), please [click here ! @](#)

