



Press Release

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**Intergovernmental Organisation
for International Carriage by Rail**

Conference in Tehran on the application of COTIF organised in conjunction with UIC, ECO and RAI



On 11 and 12 November 2014, a conference on the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF) was held in Tehran in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

This conference on the application of COTIF in the Middle East was organised by the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the International Union of Railways in the Middle East (UIC RAME) and the Railways of the Islamic Republic of Iran (RAI).

The conference programme dealt with the international application of COTIF, the role of the various organisations

involved in the harmonisation of transport law, technology, dangerous goods and various developments in rail transport in the Middle East region and on the region's corridors.

The COTIF conference was chaired by Mr Mohsen Pour Seyed Aghaie, the Islamic Republic of Iran's Deputy Minister for Transport, Roads and Urban Development and chairman of Iranian Railways (RAI). Among the participants were Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, the Director-General of UIC, Mr Mohsen Esperi, Director of ECO's transport section and the Secretary General of OTIF, Mr François Davenne.

Other participants at the conference included departmental representatives from Afghanistan, Jordan, Turkey and Pakistan and a large number of managers and technicians from Iranian Railways.

Mr Mohsen Pour Seyed Aghaie opened the conference and welcomed those attending. He underlined the importance of this conference in encouraging cooperation between railway undertakings and helping them to meet the challenges currently facing rail transport.

Mr Loubinoux then presented UIC's main actions in the Middle East and UIC's involvement in technical harmonisation and the operational conditions for the development of international rail transport.

Representing OTIF, Mr Davenne gave an introduction to the Organisation and the COTIF Convention and highlighted its role in terms of legal and technical harmonisation and as a bridge between the markets of the Middle East and Europe. He particularly emphasised the key role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in a zone which has ambitious aims for the railways, such as the Marmaray Tunnel opened under the Bosphorus.

Mrs Khorsandnia, the representative of ECO, explained her organisation's activities in the rail transport sector and especially its efforts to encourage container train traffic between its Member States, as well as the main construction projects for new railway lines in the region.

Mr del Olmo, the head of OTIF's legal service, underlined the most important points in the application of the CIV, CIM and CUV Uniform Rules and the latest developments in the law on passenger transport, freight and wagon transport and the common CIM/SMGS consignment note.



Mr Nazari, Director-General of International Affairs at RAI and Director of UIC's Middle East regional office gave a presentation on the application of the various COTIF Appendices in Iran, its neighbours and in the Middle East region, the different gauges, etc. and pointed out that this was the first time a conference on the application of COTIF had been held in Iran.



Mr Leermakers, the head of OTIF's technical service, gave a presentation on COTIF Appendices APTU and ATMF and explained their scope of application, the principles for the admission of vehicles to international traffic and the resulting questions of responsibility for the Member States and for operations and maintenance.



Lastly, Mr Conrad, the head of OTIF's dangerous goods service, underlined the importance of the RID Appendix to COTIF for the carriage of dangerous goods by rail and explained the process of harmonisation that is underway, not just for all the transport modes, but also with OSJD's SMGS Annex 2.

These technical presentations led to a number of specific questions on the implementation of these rules, which showed the level of involvement and professionalism of the experts represented and the operational nature of the questions raised.

To conclude the conference, the organisations that took part in the event drafted a **joint declaration** which the Secretary General of OTIF read out to all participants and which should enable OTIF to get involved in activities in the region in due course.

OTIF would like to take this opportunity once again to thank Mr Mohsen Pour Seyed Aghaie, the Islamic Republic of Iran's Deputy Minister for Transport, Roads and Urban Development and chairman of Iranian Railways (RAI), and Mr Abbas Nazari, Director-General of International Affairs at RAI and Director of UIC's Middle East regional office, and all his team, for their warm welcome and the perfect organisation of the conference.



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