



OTIF



Press release

Berne 21.04.2015

Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail

OTIF and the 1st «International Conference on Railway Interoperability, Standardisation and Harmonisation for Middle East Railways»

The 1st International Conference on Railway Interoperability, Standardisation and Harmonisation for Middle East Railways was held in Doha on 30 and 31 March 2015. It was jointly organised by the Qatar Railway Company (QRC) and the International Union of Railways (UIC).

At the kind invitation of the Qatar Railway Company, the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) and the International Rail Transport Committee (CIT) worked in close cooperation with UIC to organise this conference.

One of the aims of the 1st «International Conference on Railway Interoperability, Standardisation and Harmonisation for Middle East Railways» was to highlight the consistency of OTIF's approach with its key partners, CIT and UIC.

The key presentations to open the conference were given by Abdulla Abdulaziz Al Subaie, an engineer and the Director General of Qatar Rail, Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, the Director General of UIC and Mr François Davenne, the Secretary General of OTIF.

The conference covered three main topics: «legal interoperability framework», «railway harmonisation and standardisation», and «railway safety».

OTIF's attendance was part of the continued implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in Berne on 19 March 2014 between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and OTIF. The conference was also attended by representatives of the authorities responsible for transport in various states of the Middle East, particularly those that are members of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

At the conference, OTIF reaffirmed the role of COTIF and its Appendices as a reference for harmonising legal regimes and the development of uniform technical regulations and dangerous goods regulations. CIT demonstrated the practical role of the model contracts it is developing on the basis of the uniform rules of COTIF, particularly for contracts of carriage of freight (CIM) and passengers (CIV).

The heads of the dangerous goods and technology services, Mr J. Conrad and

Mr .B. Leermakers, and the Secretary General of OTIF, Mr F. Davenne, explained the added value of the principles of COTIF and its Appendices in terms of developing seamless exchanges by rail between the GCC states and, in the medium term, between the Middle East and western Europe.

The Secretary General of CIT, Mr C. Brand, also gave a convincing presentation on practical aspects of the general conditions of carriage developed by CIT for railway undertakings, which the sector broadly accepts.

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