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OTIF

Organisation intergouvernementale pour les transports internationaux ferroviaires
Zwischenstaatliche Organisation für den internationalen Eisenbahnverkehr
Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail

Executive summary

In 2025, the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) continued to implement its mandate to develop and promote a uniform legal framework for international rail transport, while enhancing safety, technical interoperability and operational efficiency.

Among the objectives set out in the 2024-2025 Work Programme, Objective 1, 'Monitor and assess COTIF and its appendices', was one of the priorities of the ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation, which intensified its work with the adoption of an ambitious work programme for the period 2025-2027. Significant progress has been made on key issues such as the digitalisation of rail transport documents, wagon law and the gradual development of a sanctions regime to ensure compliance with the rules of COTIF. OTIF has also strengthened its role as depositary and continued its efforts to promote and assist accession to COTIF, with a view to the geographical expansion of unified railway law.

Safety in the transport of dangerous goods has remained a central focus of the Organisation's activities. The revision and harmonisation of the Regulation concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail (RID) have made it possible to incorporate scientific, technical and regulatory developments, particularly in the context of energy transition and decarbonisation. Close cooperation with the United Nations and the other modes of land transport has helped to maintain the international consistency of the regulatory framework and prepare for the entry into force of the amendments planned for 2027.

In terms of technical interoperability, 2025 marked the completion of the revision of most of the Uniform Technical Prescriptions (UTPs), thus ensuring their compatibility with European Union law, while maintaining an open approach based on efficiency and openness beyond the European Union. Discussions on digitalisation in rail transport, telematics systems and opening up to new markets have laid the foundations for future developments.

Lastly, the Organisation strengthened its internal efficiency with the completion of its headquarters renovation, organisational adjustments relating to the appointment of the new Secretary General, and the maintenance of high-quality translation, communication and financial management services. These developments place OTIF in a strong position to respond to future challenges and support the sustainable development of international rail transport.

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List of abbreviations

AAR

Association of American Railroads

ADN

European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways

ADR

Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road

APTU UR

Uniform Rules concerning the Validation of Technical Standards and the Adoption of Uniform Technical Prescriptions applicable to Railway Material intended to be used in International Traffic (Appendix F to COTIF)

ATMF UR

Uniform Rules concerning the Technical Admission of Railway Material used in International Traffic (Appendix G to COTIF)

CIM UR

Uniform Rules concerning the Contract of International Carriage of Goods by Rail (Appendix B to COTIF)

CIT

International Rail Transport Committee

CIV UR

Uniform Rules concerning the Contract of International Carriage of Passengers by Rail (Appendix A to COTIF)

COTIF

Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail

CS(s)

Contracting State(s)

CSM

Common Safety Method

CTE

Committee of Technical Experts

CUI UR

Uniform Rules concerning the Contract of Use of Infrastructure in International Traffic (Appendix E to COTIF)

CUV UR

Uniform Rules concerning the Contract of Use of Vehicles in International Rail Traffic (Appendix D to COTIF)

ECM

Entity in Charge of Maintenance

ECO

Economic Cooperation Organization

ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

ERA

European Union Agency for Railways

ERFA

European Rail Freight Association

EST UR

Uniform Rules concerning the Safe Operation of Trains in International Traffic

EU

European Union

FIATA

International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations

GCC

Gulf Cooperation Council

GEN

General Provisions

IMDG Code

International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code

INF

Infrastructure

LOC&PAS

Locomotives and Passenger rolling stock

OECD

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OSJD

Organisation for Cooperation between Railways

OTIF

Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail

PRM

Accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility

RID

Regulation concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail (Appendix C to COTIF)

RISC

Railway Interoperability and Safety Committee

RNE

RailNetEurope

SMGS

Agreement concerning International Freight Traffic by Rail (OSJD)

TAF

Telematics Applications for Freight Services

TAIEX

Technical Assistance and Information Exchange

TCRC

Train Composition and Route Compatibility Checks

TRACECA

Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia

TSI

Technical Specification for Interoperability (European Union)

UIC

International Union of Railways

UIP

International Union of Wagon Keepers

UN

United Nations

UNCITRAL

United Nations Commission on International Trade Law

UNECE

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

UNESCAP

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

UNIDROIT

International Institute for the Unification of Private Law

UPU

Universal Postal Union

UTP

Uniform Technical Prescription (OTIF)

WAG

Freight wagons

WG TECH

Working group Technology of the Committee of Technical Experts

WHO

World Health Organization

Introduction

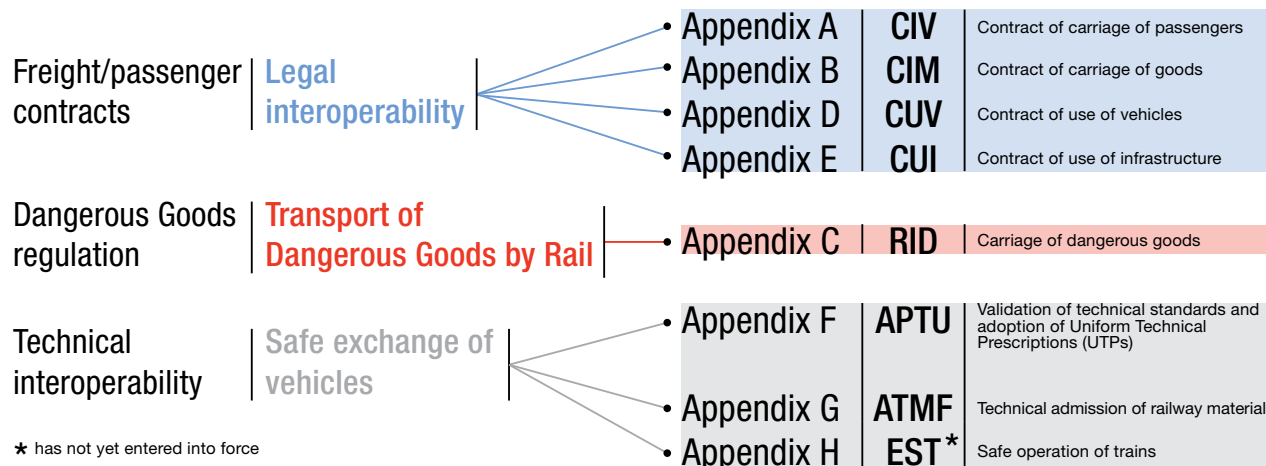
The Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF) established the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF). OTIF's aim is to manage and develop uniform railway law. OTIF's institutional law regulates the Organisation's legal status, including its aim, organs and their procedures, financing, budget, dispute settlement (between Member States and between Member States and the Organisation), membership and the depositary.

The appendices to COTIF constitute uniform railway law for international railway transport among OTIF's Member States. They regulate contractual relations, the transport of dangerous goods and technical interoperability, thereby providing a comprehensive legal framework aimed at ensuring legal certainty, safety and the efficient operation of international rail transport.

COTIF Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail

1st International transport convention

Applied on **270,000 km** of railway lines



* has not yet entered into force

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This Annual Report concludes the implementation cycle of the 2024–2025 Work Programme. It presents the activities carried out and the results achieved during the second year of that biennium. At the same time, it reflects the transition towards the next programming period: during 2025, the 2026–2027 Work Programme 2026–2027 was developed in alignment with the Organisation's long-term strategy, ensuring continuity of objectives while adapting to evolving legal, technical and institutional priorities.

PROMOTE AND ADMINISTER COTIF ITSELF AND UNIFORM RAIL CONTRACT LAW

The Legal Department is one of three operational departments within the OTIF Secretariat. It is responsible for legal and administrative matters relating to COTIF itself and Appendices A (CIV UR), B (CIM UR), D (CUV UR) and E (CUI UR). It supports the implementation and application of the Convention, assists with accession procedures and performs depositary functions. In addition, the Legal Department provides secretariat services for the General Assembly (partially), the Revision Committee (partially) and the ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation (ad hoc Committee). The Legal Department also prepares and reviews amendments to COTIF, represents OTIF in external meetings and promotes OTIF law through various activities.

The Legal Department saw change in 2025, with its head, Mr Aleksandr Kuzmenko, taking up office as Secretary General from 1 January 2025. Mr Steve Davey and Ms Emilia Carcabassi stepped up to continue the smooth running of the Legal Department.

1. Monitor and assess OTIF legal instruments

The monitoring and assessment of legal instruments in accordance with the General Assembly's decision OTIF-21002-AG 15 is a cross-cutting priority for the Organisation in the area of institutional law and uniform railway law.

Implementation of the Convention

The Legal Department continued to monitor and assess implementation of the Convention during 2025, primarily its incorporation into the respective legal orders of OTIF members. The main objective is to assist OTIF members in fulfilling their international obligations under COTIF, including all the modifications that have entered into force at international level.

To progress its work in this area, the Legal Department, with the support and input of the Technical Interoperability Department, organised the first OTIF Roundtable meeting. OTIF Roundtables are a new series of meetings intended to address a variety of topics related to international railway law and associated issues. They are designed to be simple, accessible and inclusive, generally held remotely and used to tackle important topics in a less formal setting.

This inaugural meeting was dedicated to the modifications to COTIF and its appendices adopted by the 12th and 13th General Assemblies. The meeting examined the substance of the modifications, the current status of approvals and the steps needed to expedite their entry into force. It was well attended by OTIF Member States and the European Commission, with active engagement shown by interventions and questions from participants.

As an OTIF Member State that has approved both sets of modifications, the Secretariat was pleased to invite Norway to share its experience in approving the modifications domestically and to set out why doing so is so important.

Application of OTIF's legal instruments

In the framework of the ad hoc Committee, with the participation of the registered stakeholders where appropriate, monitoring and assessing the application of OTIF's legal instruments (in particular COTIF itself and uniform rail contract law) was discussed. The ad hoc Committee held two sessions in 2025 (in April and December), both with full agendas.

It is important that the work of the ad hoc Committee is organised and structured to deliver maximum benefit for Member States. In order to do this effectively, in April 2025, the ad hoc Committee approved its most ambitious work programme yet, covering the three years from 2025 to 2027. The content of the 2025-2027 Work Programme was partly informed by responses received to the consultation carried out by the Legal Department to consider potential revisions to the contractual appendices of COTIF (namely Appendices A (CIV UR), B (CIM UR), D (CUV UR) and E (CUI UR)), which closed early in 2025.

Almost 40 responses were received from a range of stakeholders including OTIF Member States, a regional economic integration organisation, those in the sector, associations and academia. The responses represented a cross-section of views and provided a wide range of opinions on potential revisions to COTIF and its contractual appendices.

Taking those responses forward, the 2025-2027 Work Programme is organised according to the provisions of COTIF and its appendices, with topics grouped together in themes, each having a high, medium or low priority. In 2025, the ad hoc Committee was able to make progress on all high-priority topics as well as on a number of medium-priority topics.

Sanctions to ensure compliance with the obligations under COTIF

Following the adoption by the General Assembly at its 16th session of basic regulatory principles to guide the work of the ad hoc Committee in developing a sanctions regime to ensure compliance by OTIF Member States with their obligations under COTIF, at its 7th session in April 2025, the ad hoc Committee discussed this topic in detail and instructed the Secretariat to organise the 2nd ad hoc working group on sanctions (ad hoc Working Group).

The ad hoc Working Group met in September 2025 and had two full days of discussions to consider a sanctions regime to be included in the Convention. It was attended by representatives from Belgium, Russia, Türkiye, Ukraine and the United Kingdom, as well as the European Commission for the European Union and its Member States.

Good progress was made in discussing the circumstances that should lead to the imposition of sanctions under COTIF and the nature of the sanctions themselves. The ad hoc Working Group also looked at how any sanctions regime could operate and be administered, recognising that this would need a significant amount of further detailed consideration.

The report of the ad hoc Working Group was submitted to the ad hoc Committee at its 8th session in December 2025 and the Secretariat was instructed to arrange a 3rd session of the ad hoc Working Group during 2026 to build on the significant progress made in 2025.

Wagon law

Two topics have been grouped together under the heading of wagon law: the movement of empty freight wagons and liability for loss or damage caused by a vehicle (Article 7 of the CUV UR). Both were actively progressed during 2025.

The ad hoc Committee discussed each topic at its 7th session in April 2025 and instructed that a sector-focussed survey asking a series of specific questions be launched in relation to each topic. The survey took place over the summer of 2025, with the results being reported to the ad hoc Committee at its 8th session.

1. Movement of empty freight wagons

Following careful consideration of the responses to the survey, the ad hoc Committee instructed the Secretariat to propose any necessary modifications to the Explanatory Report on the CIM UR and the CUV UR. These modifications should confirm the contractual flexibility available to the parties, provide illustrative examples of typical empty wagon movements, reduce any identified uncertainty and potential overlap between the CIM UR and the CUV UR, improve consistency in documentation and the treatment of liability across contracts and clarify that a 'railway vehicle' is a vehicle with or without a means of traction. Any modifications will be progressed during 2026.

2. Liability for loss or damage caused by a vehicle (Article 7 of the CUV UR)

The ad hoc Committee concluded that this second wagon law topic required further input and consideration: responses received as to whether Article 7 of the CUV UR imposes liability on the party best placed to manage the relevant railway safety risks contained diverging views, with some respondents replying to suggest how difficult it is to prove fault on the part of a wagon keeper and others replying to suggest that the regime as it exists today is appropriate, given the practical way risks arise. Almost all respondents commented that hidden defects, as well as complex defects and defects requiring significant amounts of technical investigation, have proved the most difficult to assess and respondents supported the adoption of clearer or additional provisions to cover such cases.

In order to take this topic forward, a seminar will be organised in 2026 with Member States, the regional economic integration organisation and relevant sector representatives and experts to gather information on existing rules and practice to enable further proposals for modification to be considered.

Digitalisation of the CIM UR

Digitalisation of the CIM UR has been a topic on the ad hoc Committee's agenda for many years, but 2025 saw concrete progress. The ad hoc Committee decided that it wished to consider proposals to amend and update the provisions of the CIM UR to provide fully and expressly for the use of electronic transport documents and the Legal Department presented proposals designed to do that.

In its paper to the ad hoc Committee at its 8th session, the Legal Department set out detailed provisions for the modification of the CIM UR in relation to the use of electronic transport documents, adopting a high-level, international approach to the topic and taking into account the following seven principles:

- i. minimal intervention;
- ii. non-discrimination of paper-based and paperless transport (new provisions must not only provide for electronic transport documents to be used, but also continue to respect and allow the use of paper documents);
- iii. technological neutrality (provisions cannot favour one technology solution over another);
- iv. functional equivalence (there needs to be a degree of functional equivalence between all functions of electronic and paper documents, whether it be the authenticity, integrity and reliability of data or any of the content of those documents);
- v. compatibility with international electronic commerce law and transport law, in particular with the European Union legislation covering those matters;
- vi. take into account current practices and solutions in the railway sector;
- vii. give due respect to the autonomy of the parties involved in the carriage of goods.

The proposals looked closely at two sets of model laws developed by UNCITRAL, a series of non-binding, legislative texts offering a framework that countries can use to modernise and harmonise national law related to international trade. They also took into account similar provisions that exist in conventions covering road and maritime transport. This was to make best use of modern thinking and concepts and to make sure that provisions can interface across different modes and sectors where they need to do so.

Member States have been asked to provide detailed feedback on these proposals and it is anticipated that further significant progress will be made in 2026.

2. Perform depositary functions

The Secretary General is the Depositary of COTIF. The depositary functions are administrative and non-political. Among other things, the Secretary General's depositary functions include receiving and keeping custody of any instruments and notifications relating to COTIF.

In 2025, the Depositary issued depositary notifications concerning, in particular:

- approval of amendments to COTIF adopted by the General Assembly at its 12th and 13th sessions;
- appointment of Permanent Representatives to OTIF.

Following the work the Secretariat carried out in 2024 in relation to the CIV and CIM lists of railway lines and the CIV and CIM lists of maritime and inland waterway services to make the lists easier to read and apply and to simplify their presentation, at its 8th session, in relation to the lists of services, the ad hoc Committee was asked to consider whether the current lists of services should be simplified further. The proposal was to update the lists so that they include only lists of the services themselves, without reference to the undertakings involved in providing those services: the question was whether, in the light of current developments in transport law, it remained appropriate for a convention to apply directly to individual companies. The Secretariat's inception paper was noted by the ad hoc Committee and it will return to the topic at a future session.

3. Promote and support the implementation and application of OTIF law

The Secretariat continued to promote OTIF law at bilateral and multilateral meetings by discussing and raising awareness of the provisions in COTIF and its appendices. It also supported the implementation and application of OTIF law by providing assistance with its interpretation.

Handbook on COTIF and its implementation and application by international associations

The ad hoc Committee set the objective of clarifying the roles and responsibilities of international associations with regard to the implementation and application of COTIF, thus promoting and facilitating the uniform implementation and application of COTIF. The Legal Department, in cooperation with CIT, ERFA, RNE, UIC and UIP, prepared the 'Handbook on International Freight Transport by Rail (Contract Law and Operational Instruments and Tools)', which was published on 15 October 2024.

To complement that publication, on 3 July 2025, the Legal Department, in cooperation with CIT, RNE and UIC and on the instructions of the ad hoc Committee, produced a second publication relating to the carriage of passengers by rail, the 'Handbook on International Passenger Transport by Rail (Contract Law and Operational Instruments and Tools)'.

The purpose of these handbooks is to promote international railway contract law for the international carriage of passengers and goods by rail under COTIF, in particular by presenting and clarifying the instruments and tools developed by the relevant international associations. The handbooks are intended to serve as practical reference guides for OTIF Member States, states interested in acceding to COTIF and entities operating in the railway sector.

4. Promote and assist accession to COTIF

Uniform international railway law ensures legal certainty and reduces costs and delays, thus facilitating international trade and the movement of passengers.

Promoting accession to COTIF and providing assistance to states and regional economic integration organisations interested in acceding to COTIF is an ongoing priority for OTIF: enlarging OTIF's membership and extending its geographical scope will benefit existing Member States and acceding states. The Secretariat therefore continues to provide legal advice and assistance on the procedure for accession to COTIF.

International cooperation

Now more than ever, the achievement of OTIF's aim depends on effective and efficient cooperation with relevant international organisations, associations and experts. Many are either registered stakeholders or standing observers in the ad hoc Committee.

It is critical that there is an efficient process to allow international organisations, associations and experts to become registered stakeholders so that they can participate in sessions of the ad hoc Committee. At its 7th and 8th sessions, the ad hoc Committee considered and decided on a modification to the procedure to allow an application for the granting or revocation (as the case may be) of registered stakeholder status to proceed in a case where fewer than one third of members object. This will mean that genuine applications for registered stakeholder status can in future be processed more quickly, delivering benefits earlier.

In 2025, cooperation with the following international organisations and associations is worth mentioning (in alphabetical order of their acronyms and abbreviated titles): CIT, ECO, FIATA, GCC, OECD, OSJD, TRACECA, RNE, UIC, UNCITRAL, UNECE and UNESCAP.

In particular, the Secretariat has for a number of years been following UNCITRAL’s work on negotiable cargo documents, focussing on possible conflicts and overlaps between the CIM UR and any new instrument. A negotiable cargo document is a transport document which also acts as a document of title. It should be noted that the CIM consignment note is not a document of title: Article 6 § 5 of the CIM UR states that ‘[t] he consignment note shall not have effect as a bill of lading’ and other provisions on the delivery of goods, the right to dispose of goods etc. confirm the position. However, at least for international railway transport between China and Europe, there is demand to facilitate trade and financial settlement by using transport documents which are documents of title.

During 2025, the Secretariat participated in relevant UNCITRAL meetings on this topic. UNCITRAL attended the 7th session of the ad hoc Committee and informed it of its work on negotiable cargo documents.

On 15 December 2025, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention on Negotiable Cargo Documents and further work to identify fully and address possible conflicts and overlaps with the CIM UR will take place in the context of other planned modifications to the CIM UR.

Outlook for 2026

The ad hoc Committee will hold its 9th and 10th sessions in 2026, as follows:

- 23-24 June 2026: 9th session
- 3-4 November 2026: 10th session

There will be a 3rd session of the ad hoc Working Group on sanctions in the second half of 2026.

Quantitative results/data

8-10 April 2025	7 th session of the ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation
3 July 2025	Publication of ‘Handbook on International Passenger Transport by Rail (Contract Law and Operational Instruments and Tools)’
18 September 2025	1 st OTIF Roundtable: Delivering the Modifications Adopted by the 12 th and 13 th General Assemblies
23-24 September 2025	2 nd session of the ad hoc Working Group on sanctions
2-4 December 2025	8 th session of the ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation

Four articles from the Legal Department were published in OTIF’s Bulletin

Progress made on all high-priority topics in the 2025-2027 Work Programme

Active participation in workshops and meetings held by international associations and other intergovernmental organisations

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF SAFETY IN THE TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS

The aim of the Regulation concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail (RID) is to ensure the safe transport of dangerous goods and to prevent accidents and damage to persons, property and the environment.

The Transport of Dangerous Goods Department is responsible for developing RID (Appendix C to COTIF) and adapting it to the current state of science and technology. RID is fundamentally revised every two years to ensure that the regulations are up to date. To achieve this objective, the Transport of Dangerous Goods Department must organise closely-scheduled international conferences, for which it provides secretariat services. The department represents OTIF at external conferences and promotes the application of RID through various activities.

5. Consideration of global developments in all modes of transport

UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

The UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods contain basic regulations, in particular on classification and packaging, which apply to all modes of transport.

OTIF attended the 66th (Geneva, 30 June to 4 July 2025) and 67th (Geneva, 24 November to 3 December 2025) sessions of the ECOSOC Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods as an observer. The decisions adopted at these sessions will be reflected in the 25th revised edition of the UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (UN Model Regulations). They will be included in the 2029 edition of RID in the context of harmonisation.

Common dangerous goods provisions for land transport

The RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting develops harmonised provisions for the carriage of dangerous goods by rail, road and inland waterways. The secretariat for this meeting is provided by OTIF's Transport of Dangerous Goods Department in cooperation with the secretariat of the Transport Division of the UNECE. Delegates from more than twenty states and more than ten non-governmental organisations regularly take part in the sessions of the Joint Meeting. This reflects the importance attached to this area of law by both the Member States and the industry concerned.

In 2025, the Joint Meeting held a one-week session and an eight-day session. It dealt mainly with the harmonisation of RID, ADR and ADN with the 24th revised edition of the UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods. The aim of harmonisation is to have the same regulations for all modes of transport as far as possible in order to facilitate the intermodal transport of dangerous goods. This work was prepared by a two-day ad hoc working group organised jointly by the UNECE and OTIF secretariats. Among the numerous amendments resulting from this, the following topics can be highlighted, four of which relate directly to the important goals of decarbonisation and the energy transition:

- use of the pressure-volume product as a new limit for pressure receptacles

The pressure volume product is calculated by multiplying the (usable) water capacity of a pressure receptacle by the maximum filling and working pressure specified for the respective type of pressure receptacle. Establishing this value is intended to limit the physical and, indirectly, the chemical energy stored in a pressure receptacle and to contain potential incidents during carriage to a non-catastrophic level. The maximum permissible value for the pressure volume product was set at 1.5 million bar litres;

- clarification of the indicative list of Category A infectious substances

In view of the recent, emerging international health situations, the need for a flexible and dynamic indicative list of Category A infectious substances has become apparent. This is evidenced by the number of requests received by the WHO for guidance on how to transport the implicated pathogens, including their classification. For emerging health situations, up-to-date information on the applicable category of infectious substances may now be obtained from intergovernmental organisations responsible for human and animal health and from relevant national authorities;

- the main and secondary hazards for various substances have been revised on the basis of incidents or new test results. In some cases, this has led to the transport provisions being adapted;
- new UN numbers have been added for chlorophenols whose main hazard is their corrosivity. The existing UN numbers were limited to chlorophenols whose main hazard is toxicity. This enables more precise adaptation of the necessary transport provisions;
- inclusion of heating machines in the existing UN number for refrigerating machines

The carriage of heat pumps has increased significantly due to the replacement of heating systems as part of the energy transition. Heat pumps are considered dangerous goods because they contain a refrigerant. To be eligible for the same exemptions as refrigerating machines when the amount of refrigerant does not exceed a certain value, they have been integrated into the existing entry for refrigerating machines;

- new products in the liquid petroleum gas industry

Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) is used as a fuel and consists mainly of propane and butane. Until a few years ago, it was obtained from petroleum refining or natural gas processing. As part of the energy transition and with the aim of moving away from fossil fuels and decarbonisation, propane and butane of biological or renewable origin are now also used, as well as dimethyl ether, which can be obtained from non-fossil and/or renewable or recycled carbon sources. It was decided to permit the admixture of up to 12% dimethyl ether to the UN numbers used for the carriage of liquefied petroleum gas;

- carriage of liquid organic hydrogen carriers

Hydrogen plays an important role in the decarbonisation of energy systems. Hydrogen can be carried under high pressure as a gas or in a refrigerated liquefied state. However, it is also possible to chemically bind hydrogen molecules to organic liquid carrier substances, known as Liquid Organic Hydrogen Carriers (LOHC). The chemically bound hydrogen cannot be released under normal conditions of carriage, so this type of transport has major safety advantages compared with carriage under high pressure or in a refrigerated liquefied state. However, for safety during carriage, it must be noted that in the process of binding hydrogen to the hydrogen carriers (hydrogenation), traces of hydrogen in physically dissolved form, i.e. not chemically bound, can remain in the hydrogen carrier. Although even under extreme conditions there is only a very low risk of explosive atmospheres forming, a limit value has been set for physically dissolved hydrogen;

- sodium ion batteries installed in cargo transport units

Cargo transport units in which lithium batteries are permanently installed, and which serve as energy storage devices, have been listed in the dangerous goods regulations of the various modes of transport for several years. Now that sodium ion batteries are also being installed in such mobile energy storage devices due to their good performance at low temperatures, their low price and the abundant availability of raw materials, it has been decided to introduce separate UN numbers depending on the batteries used in the cargo transport units. This was deemed necessary in order to provide emergency services and those involved in the transport operation with more accurate information about the chemical composition of the batteries contained in the cargo transport units and, at a later stage, to enable the assignment of special transport provisions depending on the respective chemical composition of the batteries, if necessary;

- magnetic resonance imaging scanners

Magnetic resonance imaging scanners contain helium to cool the electromagnets to almost absolute zero and thus achieve superconductivity in the coils. While older models contain between 125 and 250 kg of refrigerated liquefied helium, new models contain only a maximum of 1.5 kg of compressed helium. Like dangerous goods containing comparable small quantities of non-flammable and non-toxic gases, the latest generation of magnetic resonance imaging scanners can be exempted from the dangerous goods regulations;

- service equipment made of fibre-reinforced plastics on portable tanks

Following the inclusion of provisions for the construction and testing of portable tanks with shells made of fibre-reinforced plastics (FRP) in the 2023 editions of the dangerous goods regulations for the individual modes of transport, these have now been supplemented by provisions for service equipment made of fibre-reinforced plastics. These can be used for both FRP and metal shells;

- elimination of the dual approval of tanks

Many tank-containers are approved both as RID/ADR tank-containers and as multimodal portable tanks. Up to now, this has enabled these tank-containers to be used efficiently. As the provisions for both types of tank-containers are not identical in all cases, it has been decided that dual approval will no longer be permitted from 1 January 2030. For existing tanks with dual approval, a decision must be made by the next periodic inspection to be carried out after 1 July 2031 as to whether they will continue to be used exclusively as RID/ADR tank-containers or exclusively as portable tanks. As this decision has major consequences for the industry, measures to mitigate its impact are still being discussed.

6. Constant updating of the dangerous goods regulations for rail taking into account scientific and technical progress

In 2025, the focus in the Transport of Dangerous Goods Department was on completing the amendments that are due to come into force on 1 January 2027. To this end, the 19th session of the RID Committee of Experts' standing working group took place from 18 to 21 November 2025 in Luxembourg, at the invitation of Luxembourg.

Approval of texts adopted in 2023 to 2025

The standing working group first approved a document prepared by the Secretariat, which contained all the texts adopted by the RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting in 2024 and 2025 and by the standing working group in 2023 and 2024. The texts on which the Joint Meeting in March 2026 still has to make a final decision remained open.

Carriage of extra-large tank-containers in single wagon traffic

As tank-containers are usually carried in train-load consignments, the provisions contained in RID up to now concerning the strength of tank-containers and their fastening devices assume use with shunting restrictions in order not to exceed the acceleration value of 2g required by RID. Shunting restrictions are intended to ensure that impact speeds of more than 7 km/h do not occur. Against the background of efforts to use container carrying wagons – including those used to carry extra-large tank-containers – without shunting restrictions, the standing working group decided to include clarification in RID. The discussion can be continued later, once work on defining a new class of carrying wagons has been completed. For extra-large tank-containers, a design value of 3g would also have to be specified.

Transfer of technical vehicle requirements for wagons used for the carriage of dangerous goods from RID to the Uniform Technical Prescriptions (UTP) and Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI)

The standing working group decided at its 16th session in November 2023 to transfer the technical requirements applicable to wagons for the carriage of dangerous goods, which are currently only contained in RID, to OTIF's Uniform Technical Prescriptions (UTP) and to the European Union's Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI), and to retain only protective aims in RID. As it is essential that the new RID provisions and the amended UTP and TSI come into force at the same time, an entry into force date of 1 January 2027 was envisaged at that time.

In the meantime, a few adaptations and additions have been made to the agreed texts. The transitional measures have so far assumed that tank-wagons can be marked with the new codes of the special provisions for wagon equipment (WE) during the first periodic inspection taking place after 1 January 2027. After the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) subsequently determined that WE codes may only be used for marking if the wagon has been approved by a notified body, the standing working group looked at these transitional measures again.

Due to the fact that tank-wagons have an estimated service life of 40 years and that tank-wagons based on RID 2025 can still be approved until 31 December 2032 in accordance with the former responsibilities without specifying WE codes, the majority of the standing working group was of the view that the previous special provisions, which have been replaced by the new special provisions for wagon equipment, must continue to be reflected in RID for reasons of user-friendliness. As this still requires work by an informal working group, this work cannot be completed until May 2026.

Spark arresters

The new UTP/TSI Freight Wagons will in future also include technical requirements for spark arresters. These must be tested for flammability and the possibility of flame spread.

For a long time, RID has stipulated requirements to equip wagons with spark arresters for substances with explosive properties. The standing working group decided to include a new special provision for wagon equipment, which refers to the UTP/TSI Freight Wagons with regard to the specifications for spark arresters.

Use of the term ‘vehicle’ in RID

The term ‘vehicle’ is used in many places in RID and can have different meanings depending on the context. In some cases, both railway vehicles and road vehicles are meant, while in other cases only road vehicles are included. The OTIF Secretariat carried out a comprehensive analysis of the provisions, which the standing working group used as a basis to adopt numerous amendments to RID.

Safety measures for transport of ammonia

The standing working group studied a rail accident that occurred in Serbia on 25 December 2022, which resulted in a derailment and the release of large quantities of ammonia. The ammonia leak was caused by a derailed tank-wagon sliding onto the manhole cover, shearing off several of the cover’s screw bolts. Ammonia is a toxic and flammable gas that can cause skin irritation, eye damage, respiratory problems and even death by asphyxiation. Ammonia is carried in large quantities and is required in particular for the production of fertilisers. In future, this gas could also play a key role in the energy transition as an efficient hydrogen carrier and climate-friendly substitute for fossil fuels, meaning that an increase in transport volumes is to be expected.

The standing working group discussed lowering the manhole cover, or at least lowering the screw bolts, as possible measures to prevent similar accidents. It noted that any solution should not be sought for a single substance, but should also cover other gases with toxic and corrosive properties. However, as the design-related avoidance of protruding parts might also have an impact on other tank equipment, such as safety valves, and since a similar solution should simultaneously be sought for tank-containers and tank-vehicles, it was recommended that further discussion take place within the framework of the RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting.

7. Facilitation of the transport of dangerous goods beyond the scope of COTIF

For a number of years, the Secretariat of OTIF has been making successful efforts to press ahead with the harmonisation of RID and SMGS Annex 2, which is applied in the Member States of OSJD. Apart from some European states, the majority of OSJD Member States are Asian. On the basis of the 2025 amendments to RID, SMGS Annex 2 was also amended and the amended version entered into force on 1 July 2025.

8. Promoting the application of RID in non-Contracting States

The handbooks published by the OTIF Secretariat on the application and implementation of the various appendices to COTIF were developed to make it easier for interested states to accede to COTIF. The standing working group updated the Handbook on Appendix C to COTIF (RID) prepared by the Transport of Dangerous Goods Department to take account of the transfer of the technical requirements for wagons used to carry dangerous goods from RID to the UTP/TSI.

Cooperation with other organisations

OTIF took part in the meetings of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15), the European Commission's Group of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and the UIC Expert Group on the Transport of Dangerous Goods.

OTIF took part in a TAIEX workshop on the transport of dangerous goods, with a particular focus on the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code (IMDG Code), organised jointly by the Albanian Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, the Port Authority of Durrës (Albania), the Montenegrin Ministry of Maritime Affairs and the Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community. At this workshop, OTIF presented the dangerous goods regulations for international and intermodal transport and the new features of RID/ADR 2025.

Outlook for 2026

The RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting will complete its work on the 2027 editions of RID, ADR and ADN in March 2026. The focus will be on topics that could not be fully discussed at the Joint Meeting in September 2025 and at the meeting of the RID Committee of Experts' standing working group in November 2025.

The RID Committee of Experts' standing working group will hold a two-day meeting at the end of May 2026, at which amendments to RID planned for entry into force in 2027 are to be adopted. Immediately following the meeting of the standing working group, the RID Committee of Experts will meet and formally adopt the 2027 amendments.

Quantitative results/data

24 to 28 March 2025	RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting, Berne
15 and 16 April 2025	Ad hoc working group on harmonising RID/ADR/ADN with the UN Model Regulations, Geneva
17 to 25 September 2025	RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting, Geneva
18 to 21 November 2024	19 th session of the RID Committee of Experts' standing working group, Luxembourg

Active participation in the informal working group on references to the competent authority in RID/ADR/ADN

Active participation in OSJD meetings on the transport of dangerous goods

Active participation in the meetings of the UIC Expert Group on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

Active participation in the TAIEX workshop on the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code (IMDG Code), Kotor, Montenegro

Six articles in the Bulletin of International Carriage by Rail, in which the legal amendments in RID are examined in more detail

PROMOTE SAFE TECHNICAL INTEROPERABILITY – FROM THE EXCHANGE OF VEHICLES TO TRULY INTERNATIONAL TRAIN OPERATIONS

Technical interoperability concerns subjects in the scope of the ATMF UR and APTU UR, which mainly relate to the admission of vehicles to international traffic, their maintenance, and their use in such traffic. Technical interoperability also includes matters in the scope of the future EST UR concerning the safe operation of trains in international traffic.

In 2025, the Committee of Technical Experts held its 17th session and its standing working group, WG Tech, held its 55th, 56th and 57th sessions. All meetings were held in a hybrid format, which enabled in-person or remote participation.

9. Harmonise technical requirements and maintain compatibility with EU law

The Committee of Technical Experts adopts Uniform Technical Prescriptions (UTPs) in accordance with its competences laid down in Article 20 of COTIF and in the APTU UR. UTPs lay down harmonised rules for the railway system.

In 2025, the project to revise most of the UTPs was finalised. The project started in 2023, to reflect technical progress and keep the UTPs aligned with the EU's technical specifications for interoperability (TSIs). The Committee of Technical Experts divided the work into two stages; firstly, it focused on UTPs relevant to freight wagons and secondly, it worked on the remaining UTPs. In the meantime, several documents with guidance and explanations were also updated. The first stage of revising the UTPs was concluded in 2024 and concerned the UTPs WAG, Noise and TCRC. These entered into force on 1 January 2025. The remaining UTPs LOC&PAS, PRM, INF and Marking were revised by the Committee of Technical Experts in June 2025. On 1 January 2026, these revised UTPs entered into force. Further details concerning the UTPs and other documents are provided below under objective 11.

10. Develop the technical interoperability regulations in accordance with agreed principles

Objective 10 of OTIF's 2024/2025 Work Programme lists eight principles that underpin the further development of the technical provisions of COTIF, including the UTPs. These principles were set by the Committee of Technical Experts in 2023. The principles focus on the relevance and effectiveness of the rules, so that they attract the widest possible geographical application, while ensuring compatibility with EU law and allowing flexibility for different levels of interoperability.

In 2025, WG Tech discussed and developed four strategic documents drafted by the Secretariat, which focused on expanding the legal and technical scope of OTIF's interoperability rules to include digitalisation, new markets in other geographical areas, and domestic application. The Committee of Technical Experts will consider these documents in 2026.

The first document concerned digitalisation and the role of OTIF in international rail transport. The paper introduced some key aspects of rail digitalisation, exploring use cases from freight tracking to capacity management, and reviewing ongoing initiatives by the European Union and the United Nations. It delineated OTIF's potential contribution, focusing on promoting the harmonisation of data formats, issuing common rules for administrative registers, and recommending application interfaces and practices to avoid fragmentation.

The second document concerned developments related to telematics in the European Union and their consequences for the UTP TAF. The paper reflected on the EU's merging of the former TAF (freight) and TAP (passenger) TSIs into a single, comprehensive TSI Telematics. This significant revision impacts the current UTPs applicable to telematics applications for freight services (UTP TAF). The document analysed the challenges of maintaining compatibility between EU and OTIF law and proposed options for the future of the UTP TAF.

The third document explored the feasibility of developing multi-system freight wagons for traffic between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) area and Europe. The analysis compared OTIF's performance-based UTPs with the highly standardised, rules-based requirements of the AAR used by the GCC. The paper suggested that while the core OTIF legal framework can generally accommodate technically different systems, challenges remain in reconciling conflicting standards for critical components, such as coupling and braking systems. The proposal in the document suggested an approach that would require wagons to meet both sets of standards for their entire area of use and highlighted the possibility of new UTP appendices and engagement with GCC authorities.

The final document concerned the domestic application of OTIF's technical rules. The focus was on non-EU Contracting States, as EU Member States apply EU rules that do not distinguish between domestic and international application. The paper explored the benefits and feasibility for states of aligning national vehicle approval requirements with OTIF's UTPs on a voluntary basis. The rationale behind this was to reduce administrative burdens, leverage economies of scale through standardisation, and increase legal certainty for the rail industry. The document recognised obstacles such as network-specific technical characteristics and proposed mitigating solutions.

11. Keep regulations relating to the APTU UR updated

OTIF's 2024/2025 Work Programme set out the priorities for revising the UTPs. The following table provides an overview of the UTP revision priorities and the results.

Priorities (high to low)	Result
UTPs relevant to freight wagons (UTPs WAG, Noise)	Revised versions of these UTPs entered into force on 1 January 2025. During 2025, WG Tech discussed additional modifications to the UTP WAG, which will be proposed for adoption in 2026.
UTPs relevant to the use of vehicles in international traffic (UTPs TCRC, Marking)	A revised version of the UTP TCRC entered into force on 1 January 2025. A revised version of the UTP Marking entered into force on 1 January 2026.
UTPs relevant to locomotives and passenger rolling stock (UTPs LOC&PAS, PRM)	Revised versions of these UTPs entered into force on 1 January 2026. During 2025, WG Tech discussed additional new modifications to the UTP LOC&PAS, which will be proposed for adoption in 2026.
Telematics applications (UTP TAF)	During 2025, WG Tech discussed the consequence of the revision of the EU's telematics TSIs on the UTP TAF. This work continues into 2026.
Infrastructure (UTP INF)	A revised version entered into force on 1 January 2026.

Below is a description of the UTPs that were modified in 2025 and entered into force on 1 January 2026.

Revision of the UTP LOC&PAS

The UTP LOC&PAS lays down requirements for locomotives, including those used for freight services, and passenger rolling stock. Compliance with this UTP is mandatory for new vehicles admitted to international traffic and, in some cases, for upgraded vehicles. A major addition to the UTP LOC&PAS 2026 concerns new optional requirements for interchangeable coaches. These allow the admission of coaches in a wide area of use in one procedure. This will facilitate international use of these coaches. Furthermore, requirements were added concerning the compatibility of locomotives with derailment prevention and detection devices on freight wagons. The implementing rules were also updated, so that it is clearer how the UTP applies to new wagons built to an existing design, or to existing wagons when these are upgraded or renewed. Furthermore, references to EU legislation were updated and specific implementing rules were included.

Revision of the UTP PRM

The UTP PRM lays down requirements for the accessibility of persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility. These requirements are mandatory for passenger rolling stock admitted to international traffic. The requirements concerning stations are not mandatory but it is recommended that they be applied. The changes in the 2026 version relate to clarification of the scope, audible door signals and implementing rules.

Revision of the UTP INF

The UTP INF covers rail infrastructure that is used for international traffic. The purpose of the UTP INF is to promote compatibility between neighbouring lines and networks, without compromising coherence between the international lines and the domestic network. The requirements are not mandatory but it is recommended that they be applied, particularly on lines that are substantially used for international traffic. States may declare that a particular line complies with the UTP, but only if the design, construction and conformity assessment of the line comply with all provisions of the UTP. The revised 2026 version contains clarification of its scope and includes new requirements for combined transport.

Revision of the UTP Marking

The UTP Marking lays down mandatory requirements for the external marking of rail vehicles used in international traffic. An important element is the composition and application of the unique vehicle number. The 2026 version did not bring about substantive changes. However, the references to EU law were updated and certain key provisions were reworded to make them clearer.

Update to Appendix I to the UTP TAF

Appendix I to the UTP TAF contains references to technical documents that include software coding necessary for the exchange of information and the harmonised implementation of the TAF provisions. These technical documents are updated from time to time, requiring an update to Appendix I to the UTP TAF as well.

Development of guidance and explanations

A significant achievement in 2024 was to issue the first version of the Handbook for the implementation and application of the APTU and ATMF UR. The handbook, drafted by the Secretariat, describes the requirements for the implementation of these appendices to COTIF and the various roles and responsibilities in connection with their application. It serves as a practical reference for OTIF members, particularly for the authorities, entities and actors in their respective railway sectors, and for states interested in acceding to COTIF. The Committee of Technical Experts approved the second, updated version in 2025. The latest version is available [here](#).

The work to update the application guides and explanatory documents for various UTPs continued in 2025. UTP application guides are based on TSI application guides issued by ERA, whilst explanatory documents are authentic OTIF texts. The Committee of Technical Experts approved updated application guides for the UTP WAG and the UTP Noise and an explanatory document for the UTP Marking. WG Tech considered updated draft versions of application guides for the UTP LOC&PAS and UTP PRM. These texts will be submitted to the Committee of Technical Experts for approval in 2026.

The table below provides a summary of the status of each UTP and the activities in 2025 that relate to it.

List and status of UTPs

UTP abbreviation	Subject	Date of entry into force of latest version	Status
UTP GEN-A	Essential requirements	1 12 2017	Stable
UTP GEN-B	Subsystems	1 6 2019	Stable
UTP GEN-C	Technical file	1 12 2017	Stable
UTP GEN-D	Assessment procedures (modules)	1 10 2012	Stable
UTP GEN-E	Assessing entity - qualifications and independence	1 1 2024	Stable
UTP GEN-G	Common safety method on risk evaluation and assessment (CSM RA)	1 1 2024	Stable
UTP WAG	Freight wagons	1 1 2025	Amendments proposed for adoption in 2026 to align with RID, among other subjects
UTP Noise	Rolling stock noise	1 1 2025	Stable
UTP LOC&PAS	Locomotives and passenger rolling stock	1 1 2026	Amendment proposed for adoption in 2026 to include personnel carriages. Application guide to be updated
UTP Marking	External vehicle marking	1 1 2026	Stable
UTP PRM	Accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility	1 1 2026	Stable. Application guide to be updated
UTP TAF	Telematics applications for freight services	1 1 2026	To be reviewed for alignment with TSI Telematics
UTP INF	Infrastructure	1 1 2026	Stable
UTP TCRC	Train composition and route compatibility checks	1 1 2025	Stable

All UTPs and guidance relating to them are available [here](#).

12. Keep the ATMF UR updated

OTIF's 2024/2025 Work Programme reflected on the possibility of revising the ATMF UR, in particular to simplify the rules, improve the correlation between its provisions, limit the risk of different interpretations and facilitate harmonised application of its rules. After considering the matter in 2024, the Committee of Technical Experts was of the view that the objectives of revising the ATMF UR could be achieved only by a full revision in the form of a new consolidated version. A final decision to this effect is in the competence of the General Assembly. The Committee of Technical Experts was of the view that proposals should be brought to the General Assembly only after the modifications to Article 34 §§ 3 to 6 and Article 35 § 4 of COTIF adopted by the General Assembly at its 13th session (25-26 September 2018) have entered into force. The entry into force of these modifications is still pending, so no further developments took place in 2025.

The work programme also mentioned developments in the EU related to vehicle registers. In 2025, the European Commission and the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) presented to WG Tech the latest developments on the EU registers. These developments in the EU did not reach a point where WG Tech or the Committee of Technical Experts could discuss the revision of related OTIF rules.

In 2025, WG Tech considered a draft proposal for a new consolidated version of the provisions for the uniform formats of certificates, which would become Annex C to the ATMF UR. The aim was to define the structure and content of the certificates and the procedures for their issuance, updating, withdrawal, suspension, and access. Another aim was to ensure the consistency and compatibility of information across Contracting States and compatibility with vehicle registers established under OTIF or EU rules. In the proposal, the content and structure of the certificates were aligned with OTIF's specifications for vehicle registers and the UTP TCRC. The proposal considered the possibility of certificates being issued digitally by default, although it would still be possible to issue certificates in paper form. The new text will be proposed to the Committee of Technical Experts in 2026.

In 2025, WG Tech drafted an explanatory document based on problem areas identified in Türkiye’s experience regarding the application of the ECM Regulation. The document analysed four specific issues: the visibility of ECM technical capabilities regarding maintenance delivery, certification body oversight during outsourcing, the risk of unverified vehicle modifications during a change of ECM, and the limited traceability of activities in annual reports. WG Tech favoured addressing these issues through the development of explanatory notes rather than regulatory amendments. Consequently, draft non-binding guidance to promote the uniform application of the ECM Regulation will be proposed to the Committee of Technical Experts in 2026.

The table below provides a summary of the status of the rules that are based on the ATMF UR.

List and status of rules that are based on the ATMF UR

Reference	Subject	Date of entry into force of latest version	Status
Annex A	Rules for certification and auditing of Entities in Charge of Maintenance (ECM)	1 4 2021	Stable
Annex B	Rules, guidelines and explanations concerning derogations	1 1 2023	Stable
Certificates (new: Annex C)	Uniform formats of certificates which verify the technical admission of a vehicle or of a type of vehicle according to Article 12 § 1	1 12 2012	New version proposed for adoption in 2026 as ATMF Annex C
Registers	Specifications for vehicle registers in accordance with Article 13 of ATMF	1 4 2021	Stable

All rules based on the ATMF UR and guidance relating to them are available [here](#).

13. Develop annexes to the EST UR

In 2018, the 13th session of the General Assembly adopted the EST UR. The requirements for the entry into force of the EST UR have not yet been met. The General Assembly recommended that the Committee of Technical Experts prepare proposals for annexes to the EST UR before the EST UR enter into force. The proposals could then be adopted by the Committee of Technical Experts without delay after the EST UR enter into force. OTIF has been working on these annexes since 2021.

In 2025, the Committee of Technical Experts finalised the development of these draft annexes by reviewing for a second time draft Annex D concerning a Common Safety Method for Supervision. The table below provides a summary of the development of future rules that are based on the EST UR.

List and status of draft annexes to the EST UR

Reference	Subject	Status
Annex A	Common safety method for safety management system requirements	Reviewed by the CTE in 2022
Annex B	Common safety method on monitoring	Reviewed by the CTE in 2022
Annex C	Harmonised procedures for issuing safety certificates	Reviewed by the CTE in 2023
Annex D	Common safety method on supervision	Reviewed by the CTE in 2024
		Reviewed by the CTE in 2025

14. Monitor and assess implementation of the APTU and ATMF UR

The Committee of Technical Experts continued monitoring and assessing the implementation and application of rules by Contracting States, which started in 2022. In 2025, the CTE built upon the previous steps with a plan to promote full and correct application of the ATMF UR, recognising that non-implementation poses risks to safety and interoperability. In 2025, there were 43 ATMF Contracting States, 25 of which were also members of the EU. The 18 non-EU Contracting States were grouped on the basis of agreed objective indicators (such as the notification of competent authorities and registered entities) and subjective indicators (such as participation in OTIF meetings and responsiveness to questionnaires). EU Member States were not grouped, because by implementing EU law, they were also *de facto* implementing the ATMF UR. Six Contracting States were categorised in group A, indicating that there were no current questions concerning their implementation of the ATMF UR or their involvement in the work of OTIF. The 12 remaining Contracting States were categorised in groups B and C, which indicates either limited implementation of the ATMF UR or low involvement in OTIF's work, or both. The Secretariat contacted these Contracting States and by the end of 2025, several meetings had been held. The initial objective was to establish contact and offer these states targeted assistance. This work will continue in 2026.

15. Ensure compatibility between RID and the UTPs

The preparations to migrate vehicle requirements from the Regulation concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail (RID) to the UTPs and TSIs were nearing completion in 2025. This migration will ensure consistency, eliminate regulatory duplication, and maintain the highest safety standards for the international transport of dangerous goods.

The modifications to the UTP WAG prepared in 2025 include the addition of requirements for spark arresters for specific freight wagon designs (such as tread-braked wagons and flat units) and the introduction of new WE (Wagon Equipment) marking on new wagons. This is to ensure that the technical requirements governing vehicles are fully integrated into the legal framework for technical interoperability. The required modifications will be submitted to the Committee of Technical Experts for adoption in 2026, and are expected to enter into force on 1 January 2027, which will coincide with the entry into force of the aligned 2027 version of RID. This will finalise the transition of vehicle requirements from RID to the UTP/TSI, work that started nearly a decade ago.

Outlook for 2026

9 June 2026	18 th session of the Committee of Technical Experts, Berne
10-11 June 2026	58 th session of the working group TECH, Berne
9 September 2026	59 th session of the working group TECH, Berne
10 November 2026	60 th session of the working group TECH, venue tbc

Quantitative results

16-17 June 2025	17 th session of the Committee of Technical Experts, Berne
19 June 2025	55 th session of the working group TECH, Ittigen (hosted by Switzerland)
9 September 2025	56 th session of the working group TECH, Berne
18 November 2025	57 th session of the working group TECH, Brussels (hosted by the European Commission)

Five articles relating to technical interoperability were published in OTIF's Bulletin

ENSURE THAT THE SECRETARIAT FUNCTIONS PROPERLY AND THAT THE MEMBER STATES ARE PROVIDED WITH AN EFFICIENT SERVICE

The support functions are essential to the smooth operation of the OTIF Secretariat, enabling departments responsible for the development of international railway law to focus on their core activities and support OTIF Member States in the implementation and application of that law. Administrative and financial support simplifies daily organisational and logistical processes and ensures efficient management of the Organisation's resources.

The Administration and Finance Department is responsible for financial and administrative management.

16. Renovation of the OTIF building and change management

The renovation works were completed in spring 2025, in accordance with the project timetable. The Secretariat returned to the newly renovated headquarters in August 2025. Thanks to the commitment and dedication of all staff members during this period, continuity of operations was ensured and the staff's return to the premises took place smoothly.

Importantly, the renovated headquarters has significantly increased the Organisation's capacity to host meetings by providing modern conference facilities and permanent interpretation infrastructure and equipment. At the same time, the renovation opened up the possibility for external users to rent the conference room, enabling them to hold meetings in a fully equipped conference environment within a historic landmark.

In 2025, the OTIF Secretariat was able to welcome delegates to three OTIF meetings in the new conference room: working group Tech, the Administrative Committee and the ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation.

17. Secretariat of the General Assembly and Administrative Committee

In 2025, responsibility for the overall organisation and management of the secretariat of the Administrative Committee was transferred from the Administration and Finance Department to the direct supervision of the Secretary General.

Two sessions of the Administrative Committee were held during the year, one in Vienna and one in Berne. In its new composition, the Administrative Committee adopted several major decisions aimed at modernising and streamlining the Organisation. In addition to its annual functions, including approval of the Financial Management Report, the Committee amended its Rules of Procedure, revised the Financial and Accounting Regulations and the Staff Regulations, introduced a secondment programme, and approved the Organisation's work programme for 2026 and 2027, which is aligned with the long-term strategic objectives.

18. Secretariat of the Supervisory Authority of the International Registry of railway rolling stock set up under the Luxembourg Protocol

In 2025, the Administration and Finance Department continued to provide the secretariat functions of the Supervisory Authority established under the Luxembourg Protocol. In particular, it organised the second session of the Supervisory Authority and the first session of the Commission of Experts.

While the Administration and Finance Department ensured the organisational and administrative aspects of the secretariat functions, a significant number of legal and procedural issues arose in the course of these activities. Responsibility for addressing these legal and procedural matters was therefore primarily assumed by the Legal Department.

19. Financial management

In order to ensure that the Organisation's expenditure remained under control, initial measures were taken to optimise administrative processes, including the consolidation of certain responsibilities following the retirement of a staff member. These measures contributed to maintaining operational efficiency while limiting the requirement for additional resources.

The 2025 budget was characterised by the quality of its estimates, with a solid level of budget execution, excluding renovation projects. Member State contributions remained the Organisation's main source of income to cover expenditure and continued to be stable over the year.

20. Planning and management of human resources

The new Secretary General took office on 1 January 2025. As is often the case with a change in senior management, this led to organisational adjustments and the introduction of new working methods. The newly elected Secretary General introduced measures with a view to optimising resources and strengthening the Organisation's overall effectiveness.

The Administrative Committee adopted a series of measures to improve staff management and provide greater legal certainty. It also introduced a secondment programme, the aim of which is to strengthen institutional links and enhance cooperation with Member States.

Outlook for 2026

2026 will again be a busy year, notably with the planned introduction of nearly paperless working methods.

In addition to some of the meetings under the responsibility of the operational departments, the Administrative Committee and the Supervisory Authority will also hold their meetings at headquarters in 2026.

14 April 2026	3 rd session of the Luxembourg Protocol Supervisory Authority
19-20 May 2026	142 nd session of the Administrative Committee
2 December 2026	143 rd session of the Administrative Committee

Quantitative results/data

2025 was a particularly busy year. A number of important meetings and events were held:

23 April 2025	2 nd session of the Luxembourg Protocol Supervisory Authority
26-27 May 2025	140 th session of the Administrative Committee in Vienna
5-6 November 2025	141 st session of the Administrative Committee
5 November 2025	Inauguration of the renovated building with a large number of participants

THE PROVISION OF HIGH-QUALITY LANGUAGE SERVICES

The particularity of OTIF as an intergovernmental organisation with three working languages and areas of work with very different linguistic and terminological features places high demands on the Translation Department. As a cross-cutting department that provides services for all the other departments within OTIF and all the organs of COTIF, the Department has to satisfy a diverse range of requirements: firstly, all the deadlines set down in COTIF, the Rules of Procedure and the internal planning have to be met, and secondly, translations and interpretation at the meetings of OTIF's organs have to satisfy the linguistic demands of diplomatic, legal, technical and financial usage.

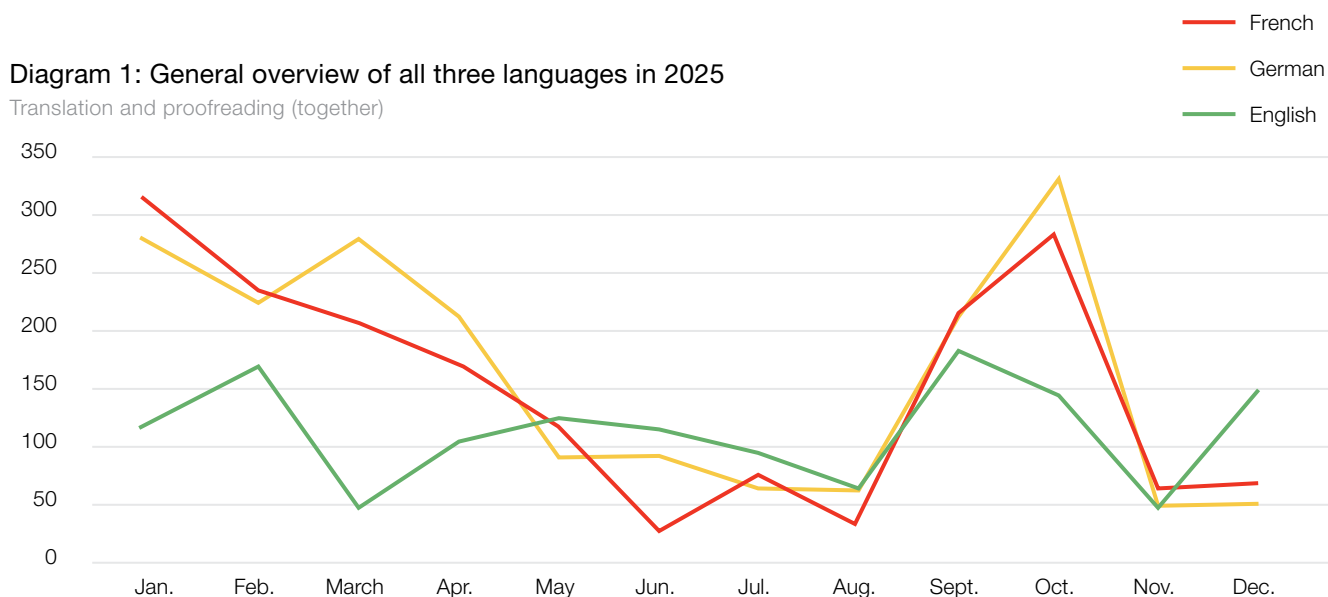
21. Deliver good quality translations on time

Translation and proofreading

Achieving this core task of the Translation Department was also the main priority in 2025, and all other tasks were subordinate to this.

Diagrammatic representation of workload

The development and distribution of numbers of pages¹ is probably easiest to show in specific figures. To this end, there is first an overview of all three languages, followed by a presentation of the translated and proofread pages, divided by language.



Overall, the picture here is similar to previous years, although the peaks in the German and French curves are particularly striking; it is clear that there was more work to be done in the first half of the year, particularly in the area of proofreading (see also Figures 2 and 3 below), due to the fact that the very voluminous UTPs had to be prepared in January and February for the meeting of the CTE in June. In English, the workload was distributed more evenly throughout the year. As in previous years, the German and French curves run almost parallel. One of the reasons why it is not possible to compare the swings in the English curve is that the proofreading of various documents that are only written in English has to be added. Otherwise, the English proofreading curve would have to peak one to two months before the translation peaks for the other two languages. This can be seen in December, when the English curve shoots upwards. Experience shows that French and German will follow in January.

¹ As usual, standardised pages of 330 words were used for the calculation. In other organisations, this number varies between 250 and 350 words per standard page.

Diagram 2: French translation and proofreading

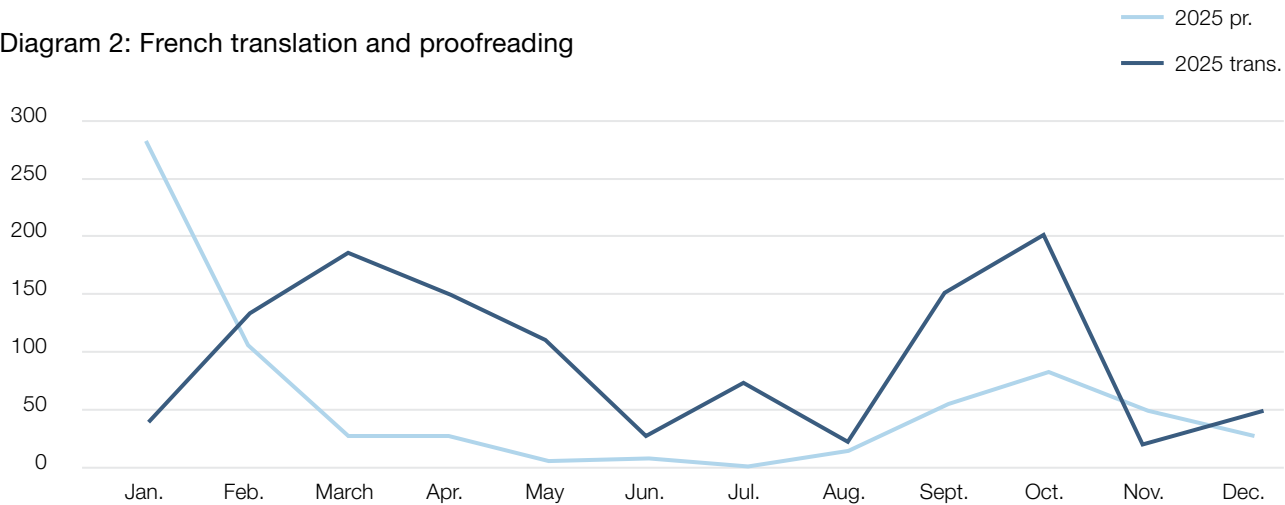
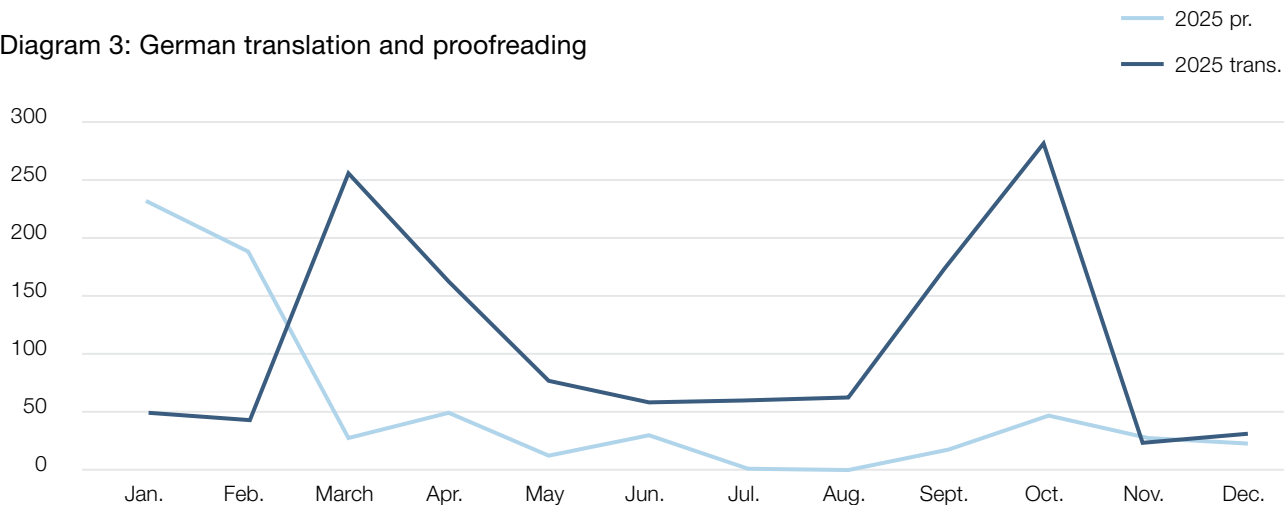


Diagram 3: German translation and proofreading

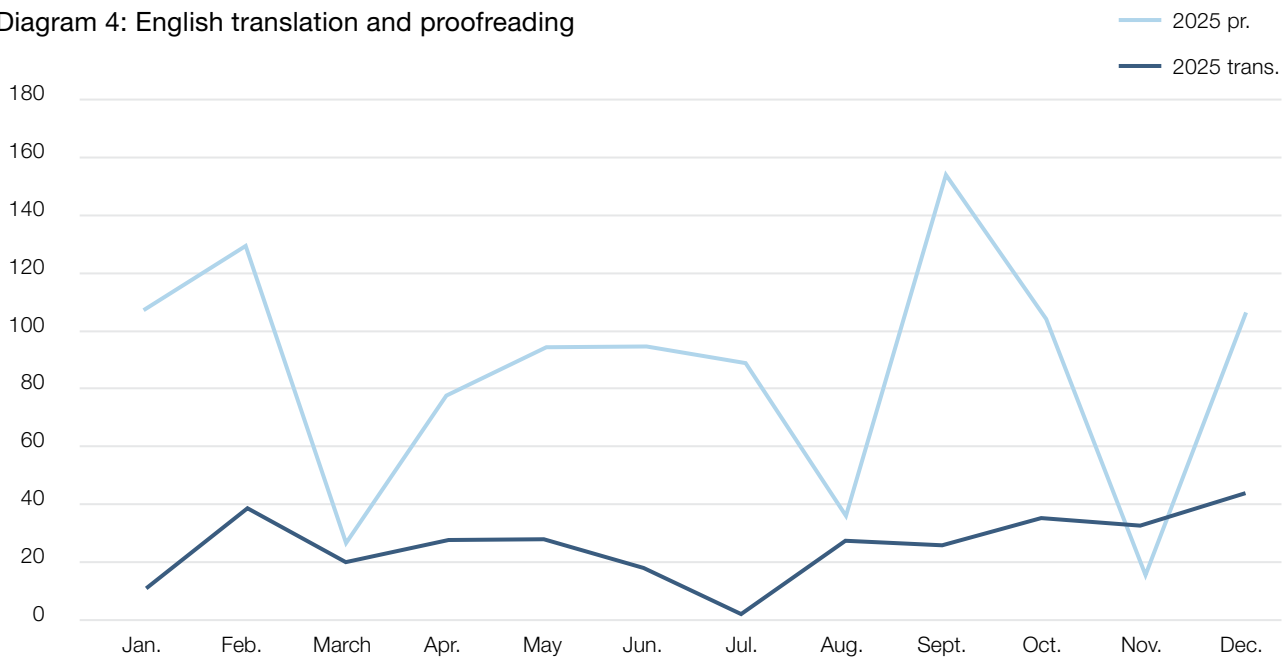


The curves for German and French show clear parallels in the volume of translation and proofreading work throughout the year. In January and February, in addition to the documents for the CTE and the Joint Meeting² (January), the contributions for the annual report and the first documents for the ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation also had to be translated. The peak in March is mainly due to preparations for the 7th session of the ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation, the 140th session of the Administrative Committee and the Bulletin. In April, the main focus was on the second package of CTE

² Only concerns German, as the English and French versions are produced by the United Nations.

documents. Translation work for the 141st session of the Administrative Committee began in September and took a particularly long time this time due to the fundamental revision of the Staff Regulations. The busiest month was October, which included the documents for the 8th ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation, the remaining documents for the Administrative Committee and various documents for the RID Committee of Experts' standing working group. Overall, it should be noted that peaks and troughs may be slightly flatter in reality, as documents are always entered into the statistics file on the day translation begins, whereas the translation itself, especially in the case of longer documents, often extends beyond the end of the month.

Diagram 4: English translation and proofreading



The high volume of editing work in English in January and February is due to the preparations for the CTE and the ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation. In April, May, June and July, there was initially a lot of proofreading to be done in connection with the preparation of the ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation and the Administrative Committee, followed by the preparation of WG Tech, the return of the Secretariat to its renovated headquarters and various official trips undertaken by the Secretary General. As already mentioned above for German and French, September was spent preparing the Administrative Committee, including the new Staff Regulations, October was spent on the documents for the ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation, and December was once again dedicated to preparing the 18th session of the CTE.

Workload in figures

The diagrams are followed below by a comparison of the number of pages between 2020 and 2025, expressed in figures.

Diagram 5: Comparison of the number of pages generated since 2020

	French			German			English		
	Translation	Proofreading	Total	Translation	Proofreading	Total	Translation	Proofreading	Total
2020	549	575	1124	898	347	1245	469	824	1293
2021	898	1004	1902	1351	557	1908	722	1096	1818
2022	844	620	1464	1193	443	1636	560	889	1449
2023	899	567	1466	1155	376	1531	386	822	1208
2024	947	854	1801	1118	704	1814	523	1092	1615
2025	1125	663	1788	1275	658	1918	307	1037	1344

In German and French, there has been a noticeable increase in translation volume accompanied by a simultaneous decline in the volume of proofreading. Overall, the volume in these two languages remains stable or is increasing slightly. In English, the total volume is below the previous year's level, but above that of 2023.

³ The German translations in connection with RID and the Joint Meeting carried out by the Dangerous Goods Department are not included.

As the workload in German and French translation remained relatively stable at a high level and was not evenly distributed throughout the year, the cooperation with external translators was continued so that they could continue to relieve the Secretariat noticeably at peak times. A total of 89 pages³ were outsourced for German (previous year 157) and 144 pages for French (previous year 86) (a total of 233 pages). Experience with the responsiveness and quality of outsourced translations continued to be positive in 2025. As a result in particular of the flexibility offered by this solution, and as a result of an analysis of the outsourcing spread over the year and the costs it entails, it was decided to keep this solution for the time being.

With the introduction of an AI tool to support the translation process (DeepL Pro), it was decided to pursue staggered reduction targets for outsourcing translations, starting in 2025. The reduction target for 2025 compared to the average of previous years was around 8 per cent of outsourced words and was met.

Percentage distribution based on the area of activity

In addition to the total number of pages, the distribution between OTIF's individual areas of activity might also be of interest. The following picture emerges:

	French		German		English	
	Translation	Proofreading	Translation	Proofreading	Translation	Proofreading
Admin.	10.4%	9.2%	13.6%	2.7%	11.2%	9.7%
Comm.	6.9%	16.4%	6.5%	25.3%	39.3%	5.0%
Law	45.1%	9.8%	35.5%	5.3%	12.3%	28.3%
Dangerous Goods	6.6%	3.7%	15.2%	0%	36.8%	1.9%
Technology	14.2%	55.7%	11.6%	61.7%	0%	28.9%
SG	16.4%	5.1%	16.9%	3.9%	0.4%	25.4%
Luxemb.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0.5%
Other	0.5%	0.2%	0.7%	1.1%	0%	0.2%

22. Ensure good linguistic quality of all OTIF texts: terminology database and editorial rules

Apart from ongoing “routine tasks” (updates, additions and corrections to existing terminology entries, as well as the generation of new entries during the translation process) and minor structural adjustments to improve user-friendliness, there were no noteworthy terminological activities in 2025.

Due to time-consuming activities related to testing various AI tools to support the translation process, creating internal Secretariat ‘translation workflows’ and other administrative work related to streamlining and reorganising workflows, work on the Translation Department’s second long-term project, OTIF’s internal editorial rules, had to be put on hold in 2025.

23. Format of meetings and interpreting

With the exception of the Committee of Technical Experts, which was organised in a hybrid format, all meetings were held in person. This also applied to the interpreting, most of which was again done from the booths on site.

The following table contains a comparison of the number of conference days in OTIF’s three working languages of OTIF since 2019:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
English	22	15	19	20	20	19	20
German	16	11	19	19	26	21	26
French	16	11	19	19	19	18	20

The table shows a stable picture overall since 2021. In German, there were five more days than in the previous year, as the Joint Meeting in Geneva⁴ in September meets for two weeks in odd years (only one week in even years) in connection with the biennial revision cycle of RID. In 2025, as in every year since 2021, all scheduled meetings took place.

24. Continuation of external cooperation

The long-standing and proven cooperation with external translators continued to prove its worth in 2025 and has been extended. Given the uneven workload with various peaks throughout the year, this flexible solution has proven to be the option best suited to the Secretariat's needs, which is why the contracts were extended in September for a further three years (instead of just one year as previously) following a call for tenders. In line with the general aim of streamlining administrative procedures, these three-year framework contracts are intended to reduce the annual administrative burden caused by annual tenders.

⁴ As the Joint Meeting in September is held at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva, OTIF only provides the German cabin.

DEVELOP AND INCREASE AWARENESS OF OTIF

The Communication Department is a 'support' department within the Organisation. The communication team is responsible for a wide range of tasks, including events, graphic design, writing and publishing documents and disseminating information about the activities of OTIF and the Secretariat. The Communication Department also provides a service to the public and the press, and regularly responds to external requests.

2025 was marked by significant changes: IT expertise was integrated into the Communication Department, internal decision-making processes were adapted to allow for greater flexibility and proactivity, and working conditions took a step forward in the renovated headquarters building.

25. Guidelines and framework for action

Attractiveness and consistency

In 2025, the OTIF Secretariat's Communication Department worked on a variety of media accompanying the Secretariat's activities, and in particular:

- the blueprint – text and image – for the OTIF Roundtables;
- all the media relating to the building inauguration.

In 2024, OTIF's General Assembly adopted a decision on copyright and open access. As a result, in 2025, the Communication Department began updating all the graphic elements (maps, diagrams, etc.) used and published by the Secretariat to bring them into line with this decision.

In general, the communication team tries to ensure that the image, messages and publications are consistent with OTIF's identity and tasks, while continuing to develop a modern and attractive image for the Organisation.

Frequency and monitoring

The OTIF websites (French, English and German) are updated frequently, as is the extranet.

In addition, whether through the Bulletin, press releases, 'OTIF NEWS' or communications on social networks, OTIF's presence is also maintained through regular publications.

The department also adopted a new e-mailing tool that has increased the 'successful delivery' of e-mails; it also ensures that the Bulletin subscription lists are kept up to date.

Lastly, the Communication Department has a number of tools at its disposal to measure awareness of the Organisation. This includes quantitative data about the website and activity on social networks.

26. The hybrid presence of the Organisation: 360° dissemination

Digital publications

The Bulletin is a publication provided for in Article 23 of the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF). It reports on the activities of OTIF's bodies and the Secretariat. It contains information relevant to the application of COTIF. The Bulletin is also published on OTIF's website. In 2025, four editions of the Bulletin were published.

News and press releases reflect the statements and activities that the Organisation wishes to make public. The following is a list of news and press releases published in 2025:

10.01.2025	Ratification of the modifications to COTIF
12.02.2025	High-level meeting
19.02.2025	Courtesy visit
21.02.2025	Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan
21.02.2025	Permanent Representative of Armenia
11.03.2025	Courtesy visit
17.03.2025	FIATA HQ Meeting, logistics issues and the role of rail transport
20.03.2025	RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting
04.04.2025	Vacancy for Head of the OTIF Legal Department
07.04.2025	Publication of the 2024 Annual Report
12.05.2025	Survey: Wagon Law
04.06.2025	Courtesy visit
05.06.2025	17th Session of the Committee of Technical Experts
30.06.2025	New version of the Handbook for the implementation and application of the APTU and ATMF Uniform Rules
03.07.2025	Handbook on COTIF and its implementation and application by international associations: publication of volume 2
26.08.2025	Autumn session of the Joint Meeting
22.09.2025	Courtesy visit
26.09.2025	New Permanent Representative of Belgium
31.10.2025	RID Committee of Experts' standing working group: last session of the 2024–2025 biennium
21.11.2025	Ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs: 8th Session in Berne

The OTIF Secretariat's Communication Department also designed other materials, such as the 2024 Annual Report and the 2026–2027 Work Programme. It also coordinated their publication.

Lastly, the Communication Department stocks and maintains an image bank specific to OTIF: photos, illustrations, maps, diagrams, etc. These images are used in the Organisation's publications and by OTIF's Secretariat and Member States. In 2025, a major update was carried out following the General Assembly's decision on copyright and open access.

Digital tools

Social networks

The Organisation has a presence on Flickr, LinkedIn and X. On Flickr, the department regularly publishes new photos illustrating OTIF's activities (https://www.flickr.com/photos/otif_cotif/albums/).

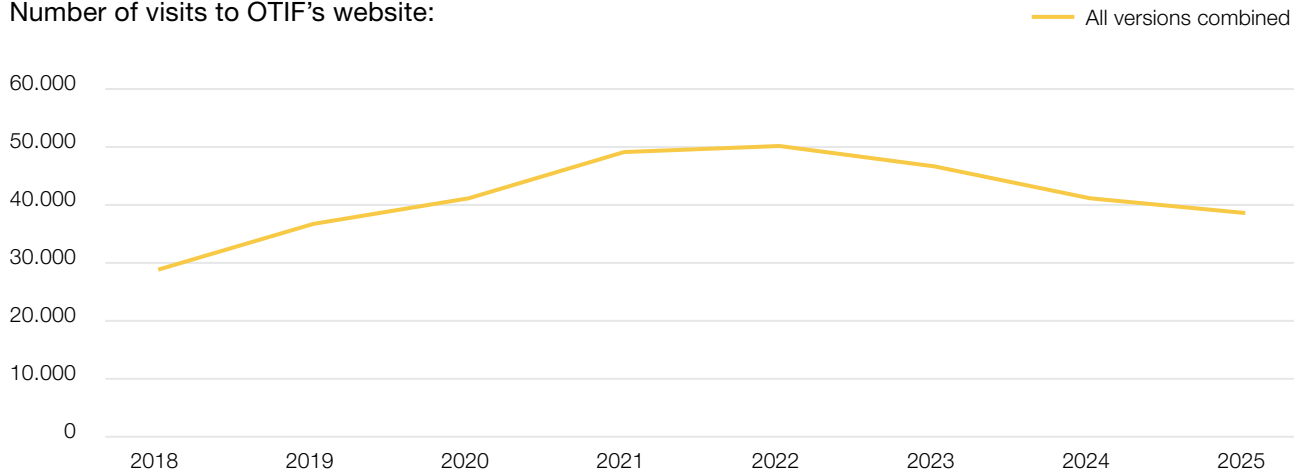
LinkedIn is the social network where OTIF has the most subscribers. In 2025, the Organisation gained 270 new subscriptions compared to 340 new subscriptions in 2024 and 195 in 2023. The level of involvement on LinkedIn is increasing. In 2025, it averaged 14%, while in 2024 it was 7.5%. This is a performance indicator, a measure of the relevance of published messages. The level of involvement on LinkedIn measures the level of interaction that posts generate in relation to the number of people who have seen them or who follow the OTIF page. At over 5%, a level of involvement is generally considered good: it shows the genuine interest of the subscriber community.

Websites

Technically, there are three OTIF websites, one for each of the Organisation's working languages, i.e. three independent sites to minimise the risk of unavailability: even if one of the sites goes down, the other two are still online and accessible. The Communication Department, with the support of the webmaster technician and the Translation Department, maintains and works on the website in a threefold manner.

In 2025, the website was visited more than 39,000 times. The number of visits corresponds to the number prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Meetings are now held more frequently in person, much of the information is distributed directly by the Secretariat to Member States, and many documents are now published on the extranet. All these factors form a set of indicators that help explain the reduction.

Number of visits to OTIF's website:



Events

In 2025, the Communication Department was involved in holding some of the meetings of the OTIF bodies. The department was also responsible for 'commissioning' the new conference room in the renovated building and for monitoring and negotiating with new and existing IT service providers.

Lastly, the Communication Department organised the inauguration reception for the Organisation's renovated building. More than 120 people attended the event.

Quantitative results/data

In 2025, the Communication Department wrote and published:

20 news and press releases

35 articles in the Bulletin

1 post-publication every 9 days on average on social networks

In 2025, the Communication Department carried out:

+ 160 updates on the website

1 inauguration

1 part of the arrangements for the renovated building

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