



Bulletin

OTIF

Organisation intergouvernementale pour les transports internationaux ferroviaires
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Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail

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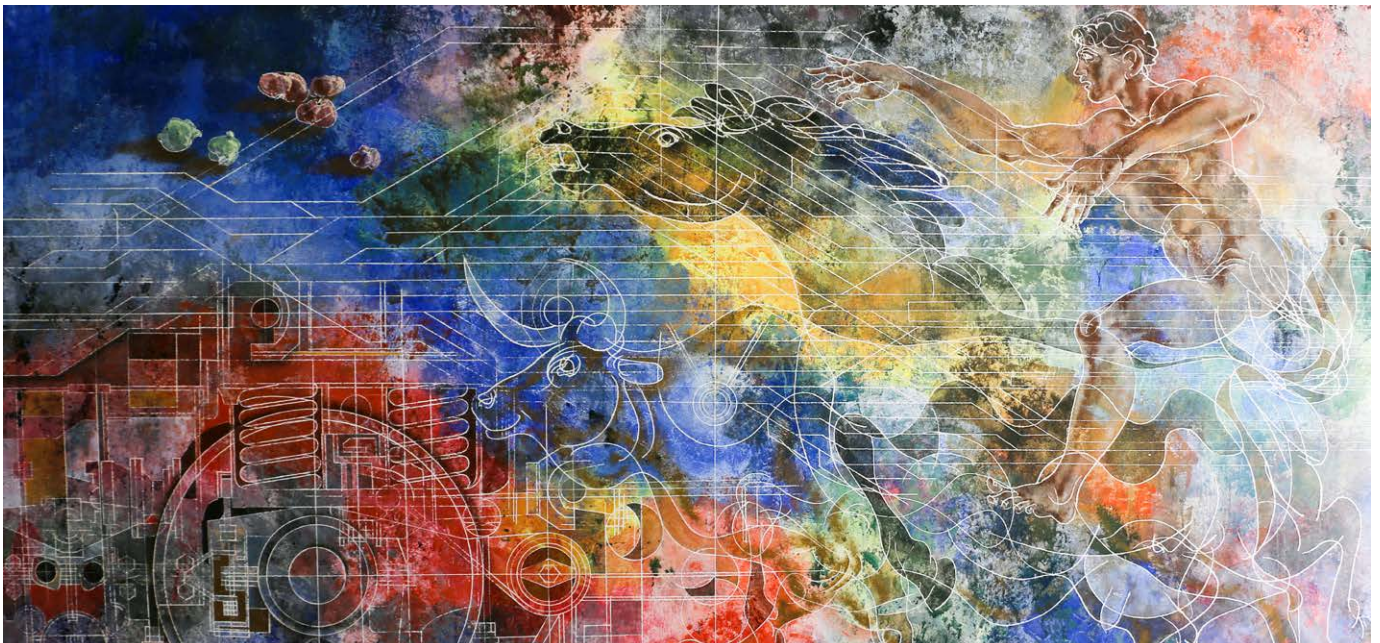
As we near the close of 2025, the Organisation can look back on a year marked by tangible progress, strengthened partnerships and an ever-clearer vision of the role that international railway law must play in a complex global environment. Each of the advances presented in this Bulletin reflects a shared conviction: that a unified, predictable and modern legal framework is indispensable for resilient, interoperable and sustainable rail transport.

Throughout the year, OTIF has continued to engage actively with its Member States and international partners. The Organisation's participation in global dialogues, including the ITF Summit and the Global Transport Connectivity Forum, has reaffirmed that the challenges facing railways, whether digital, environmental or geopolitical, require coordinated regulatory solutions rooted in sound international law.

The Secretariat's return to its renovated headquarters in Berne earlier this year has symbolised renewal and continuity. The modernised working environment will better support the Organisation in accomplishing its mandate, while remaining firmly anchored in its institutional heritage.

Looking ahead to 2026, OTIF will continue to focus on implementing its long-term strategy: ensuring the effective application of COTIF, promoting legal harmonisation beyond its traditional geographical scope, and engaging constructively with partners in regions where rail connectivity is rapidly expanding. The momentum achieved in 2025 demonstrates that, together, we can reinforce the role of rail transport as a safe, sustainable and forward-looking mode of international mobility and trade.

Aleksandr Kuzmenko
Secretary General



Hans Erni, mural, approximately 20m², 1965, entrance to the Secretariat

OTIF AT THE EBRD AND UNIDROIT CONFERENCE ON THE CAPE TOWN CONVENTION

On 5 September 2025, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (Unidroit) organised an international conference in London on facilitating economic growth and trade through equipment financing, focusing on the Protocol on Matters specific to Mining, Agricultural and Construction Equipment (MAC Protocol) and the Luxembourg Protocol on Matters specific to Railway Rolling Stock (Rail Protocol) – two protocols to the Cape Town Convention.

The Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) was represented by the Secretary General, Mr Aleksandr Kuzmenko.

OTIF plays an essential role in the Luxembourg Rail Protocol by providing the secretariat for the Supervisory Authority, which is responsible for overseeing the International Registry of railway rolling stock. The Railway Protocol provides an international legal framework designed to facilitate the financing of railway rolling stock. It

therefore supports modernisation of the railway sector.

In his speech, Mr Kuzmenko also pointed out that “there could be no rail traffic, international or domestic, without rolling stock. Modern and safe equipment is essential for the interoperability, modernity and reliability of services. The Luxembourg Protocol is therefore not only useful, but crucial.” He also highlighted the complementary nature of the Rail Protocol and the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF), which together offer “three elements that are essential for cross-border investment and operations: legal certainty, multi-jurisdictional enforceability and risk reduction. This in turn reduces costs, unlocking private investment and accelerating modernisation.”

The conference brought together

a diverse and expert audience. It highlighted the functioning and application of the MAC Protocol and the Rail Protocol; the discussions were extensive and of high quality.

In this regard, and in conclusion to his speech, Mr Kuzmenko emphasised the need for regular dialogue between the relevant stakeholders on the various legal regimes: the implementation and application of the Luxembourg Rail Protocol can teach us a great deal about other protocols, and over time, the learning will be mutual. It is therefore important regularly to compare progress and practice in the various regimes.”

For OTIF, participating in this type of international and interinstitutional event helps to strengthen cooperation and promote the development of international rail transport.



UNIDROIT

International Institute for the Unification of Private Law
Institut International pour l'Unification du Droit Privé

11th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARTNERSHIP OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS (OECD): STRENGTHEN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE IN THE FACE OF GLOBAL TRANSFORMATIONS

The Secretary General of the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF), Mr Aleksandr Kuzmenko, participated in the 11th Annual Meeting of the Partnership of International Organisations organised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Paris on 15 and 16 September 2025.

For several years, OTIF has been actively participating in the Partnership of International Organisations for more effective international rule-making, an OECD initiative that aims to strengthen coordination and consistency among international organisations in the production, implementation and monitoring of international instruments.

Focusing on the theme of strengthening the performance, effectiveness and communication of international organisations in response to a changing world, this 11th meeting brought together numerous international organisations to examine possible collective responses to profound global transformations – whether technological, geopolitical or environmental.

The event consisted of two parts: an interactive workshop on international governance and institutional

resilience in the face of global risks, and a high-level meeting focusing on ways to increase the effectiveness, performance and communication of international organisations.

During the plenary session, Mr Kuzmenko spoke to emphasise the essential role of multilateral cooperation in developing modern, consistent and adaptable international rules. He reiterated that the rapid pace of change in global challenges requires regulatory frameworks that are both agile and inclusive, capable of adapting

to technological advances while ensuring security and legal certainty.

OTIF's participation in this meeting demonstrates its ongoing commitment to cooperating with other international institutions with a view to strengthening the consistency and effectiveness of the legal framework applicable to rail transport.

The Secretariat of OTIF would like to thank OECD and the organisers of this 11th Annual Meeting for the depth of the discussions and the lessons learned.



picture by: OECD

COURTESY VISIT – MONTENEGRO

On 22 September 2025, Her Excellency Ms Marija Lakić Barfus, Ambassador of Montenegro to Switzerland, visited Mr Aleksandr Kuzmenko, Secretary General of OTIF.

Ms Marija Lakić Barfus has recently been appointed to Switzerland, and wished to meet Mr Aleksandr Kuzmenko and maintain the link between Montenegro and the Organisation.

Among other topics, Ms Barfus and Mr Kuzmenko discussed improvements to international rail transport.

The Secretary General welcomed this visit and thanks Ms Barfus for the discussion.



NEW PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BELGIUM

On 26 September 2025, His Excellency Mr Patrick Van Gheel, Ambassador of Belgium to the Swiss Confederation, visited the headquarters of the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) in Berne.

He presented his letter of appointment from Mr Maxime Prévot, Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium and Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Development Cooperation, to the Secretary General of the Organisation, Mr Aleksandr Kuzmenko.

Ambassador Patrick Van Gheel has been appointed as Belgium's Permanent Representative to OTIF, replacing Mr Pascal Heyman.

During this courtesy visit, the Secretary General of OTIF welcomed this appointment, which will enable a continuous connection between Belgium and OTIF to be maintained.

The Secretary General of OTIF renews to Mr Van Gheel the assurances of his highest consideration.



OTIF AT SAUDI INTERNATIONAL RAIL 2025

On 19 and 20 October 2025, Mr Aleksandr Kuzmenko, Secretary General of OTIF, spoke at the Saudi International Rail 2025 event held in Riyadh. This forum, one of the region's leading railway events, brought together a wide range of international experts.

Mr Kuzmenko participated in two high-level sessions: one dealing with digital innovations transforming

railways for an accessible, integrated and sustainable network; the other focusing on the future of mining railway corridors in Saudi Arabia in terms of infrastructure and policy.

During these discussions, he emphasised the importance of a consistent international regulatory framework as a necessary condition for interoperability and safety,

particularly for developing industrial corridors. He noted that OTIF plays a key role in defining international standards that could be integrated into major emerging railway projects in the region.

This involvement has strengthened the link between OTIF's strategic priorities and the Arabian Peninsula's railway ambitions.

FIRST MEETINGS AT OTIF'S RENOVATED HEADQUARTERS

At the beginning of August 2025, the OTIF Secretariat moved back into the Organisation's headquarters building in Berne after two years of renovation work. This building now has the "Minergie Eco" label, which means, among other things, that it is environmentally friendly and energy efficient.

The major new feature of the renovation work was the construction of an extension to the ground floor, which has provided a larger, modern conference room equipped with interpreting booths to meet the Organisation's needs. The conference room is designed to hold up to 70 people.

The Secretariat can now host and organise, among other things, trilingual sessions of OTIF bodies, such as the Administrative Committee, the RID Committee of Experts, the Committee of Technical Experts and the ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation.

Delegations from Member States and stakeholders have already had the opportunity to meet for the 56th session of WG Tech, the 141st session of the Administrative Committee and the 8th session of the ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation. Sessions can take different formats, in person or

hybrid, with or without interpretation, and the voting system is electronic.

There is great enthusiasm within the OTIF Secretariat; the headquarters building is now more open and welcoming, and Member States benefit from closer ties with the Organisation.



INAUGURATION AT OTIF

On 5 November 2025, the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) inaugurated its renovated headquarters building at Gryphenhübeliweg 30 in Berne. The event brought together around 125 people, including numerous ambassadors from Member States and delegations from partner organisations and the Swiss authorities.

The invitation to this ceremony was issued jointly by Mr Aleksandr Kuzmenko, Secretary General of OTIF, and Ms Karin Guggenberger, Chair of OTIF's Administrative Committee.

The Secretary General of OTIF had the honour of welcoming Mr Ignazio Cassis, Swiss Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), as well as His Excellency Mr Darius Semaška, Lithuania's Ambassador to Switzerland, and His Excellency Mr Robert Lauer, Luxembourg's Ambassador to Switzerland, who each gave an opening address.

Federal Councillor Cassis welcomed OTIF's long-standing presence in Berne and reiterated the importance of technical and legal multilateralism in addressing the challenges of

sustainable international mobility. He emphasised that Switzerland, as host country, attaches great importance to the presence of international organisations in Berne, where tradition and innovation combine to promote cooperation.

The Secretary General of OTIF expressed his sincere gratitude to the Swiss Confederation, the Canton and City of Berne, and to local businesses and Member States that contributed to the renovation of the headquarters. He recalled that the Organisation, which has been based in this building since 1966, has chosen to remain in Berne, its home for over 130 years, thus affirming its confidence in its host state.

The Secretary General emphasised that the modernised building combined efficiency, sustainable development and heritage preservation, enabling OTIF to better meet the needs of its Member States. He also presented the new names for the meeting rooms – Berne, Vilnius and Luxembourg – symbolising the past, present and future of the Organisation respectively.

Following the speeches, guests enjoyed a pleasant and convivial cocktail reception accompanied by a musical performance by Bernese singer Shanga.

The Secretary General of OTIF warmly thanks the Swiss Confederation, the institutional partners and all the diplomatic representatives present for their support and participation in this celebration, which marks a new stage in the history of the Organisation.



DEPOSITARY NOTIFICATIONS

Since September 2025 ([Bulletin 3/2025](#))

NOT-25018	20.8.2025	Corrections to the edition of RID in force since 1 January 2025 (Annex to Appendix C to the Convention) Corrections taking effect
NOT-25020	26.9.2025	Belgium Nomination of a new Permanent Representative to OTIF
NOT-TECH-25022	27.11.2025	Entry into force of the provisions adopted by the Committee of Technical Experts at its 17 th session held on 17 and 18 June 2025

OTIF ROUNDTABLES: POSITIVE INITIAL ASSESSMENT AND OUTLOOK

The OTIF Roundtables are a new series of online or hybrid meetings, held in English only, designed to boost cooperation between Member States, the railway sector and the Secretariat. These informal meetings are characterised by their flexible, inclusive and accessible format. They offer a structured space for discussion outside the formal framework of statutory bodies or working groups, allowing for more agile exploration, explanation, questioning and joint working.

The OTIF Roundtables are not intended to adopt official decisions, but serve as an open forum for discussions, with no formal registration requirements, making them particularly attractive and easily accessible. These meetings involve actors who do not usually participate in formal meetings, strengthen the involvement of geographically remote states, and improve transparency and equal access to information among all Member States.

The first roundtable in September 2025 focused on the amendments

adopted by the General Assembly at its 12th and 13th sessions (in 2015 and 2018), which have generally not yet been transposed at national level. It brought together numerous Member States that responded positively, demonstrating immediate interest in a flexible and interactive format.

Following the meeting, several Member States requested further information on the amendments in question and on the procedures to be followed at national level. Like a catalyst, the roundtable sparked internal initiatives in several countries.

In conclusion, OTIF Roundtables strengthen both the commitment of Member States and the openness and effectiveness of the Organisation's work. The concept is therefore intended to extend to all areas of OTIF's work: legal issues, technical interoperability, transport of dangerous goods, and more. The aim is to organise several roundtables each year, each devoted to a specific subject, depending on the needs and developments of the sector.

- OTIF Roundtables = PROGRESS:**
- Promote engagement
 - Reflect
 - Open dialogue
 - Gather knowledge
 - Raise questions
 - Enrich understanding
 - Shape solutions
 - Strengthen international railway law



OTIF PARTICIPATION IN THE SILK ROAD FORUM IN TBILISI

Mr Jochen Conrad, Head of the Dangerous Goods Department in the OTIF Secretariat, participated in the 5th Silk Road Forum in Tbilisi, held in the Georgian capital on 22 and 23 October 2025, under the patronage of the Prime Minister of Georgia, Mr Irakli Kobakhidze.

This high-level event brought together around 2,000 people from 60 countries. It is one of the main platforms for strategic dialogue dedicated to the development of Euro-Asian corridors.

The forum opened with a panel discussion bringing together the Prime Ministers of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, during which the recent peace agreement between Armenia and

Azerbaijan was welcomed on several occasions. The speakers emphasised that regional stability was an essential prerequisite for the reliable development of rail logistics chains, including for the safe transport of dangerous goods.

The discussions also highlighted Georgia's strategic investments in its transport infrastructure:

- the increase in capacity of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars line, which is expected to reach 15 million tonnes and significantly reduce transit times (freight transport on this line is carried out under the CIM UR regime);
- the modernisation of the railway network and the

complete renewal of the locomotive fleet;

- the construction of the deep-water port of Anaklia, which is expected to be operational in 2029 and will be a strategic hub for multimodal transport.

This type of meeting provides OTIF with a valuable opportunity to maintain direct dialogue with regional actors and to monitor developments in infrastructure and policies that influence the international rail transport framework.

The OTIF Secretariat warmly thanks the organisers for the invitation.

2026-2027 WORK PROGRAMME: MODERN, HARMONISED RAILWAY LEGISLATION IN LINE WITH DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SECTOR

At its 141st session, the Administrative Committee of the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) adopted the OTIF 2026-2027 Work Programme, Part A of which addresses railway law. The notion of railway law is a broad concept in the OTIF legal system, which covers three main areas: railway contracts, the transport of dangerous goods and technical interoperability and safety.

This document constitutes the Organisation's strategic roadmap for the next two years in the area that lies at the very heart of its mandate, as defined in Article 2 of the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF).

This new programme is of particular importance. At a time when the railway sector is undergoing profound changes – digital transformation, decarbonisation, evolving logistics flows, etc. – COTIF and its system of uniform rules must remain a reliable, stable, harmonised and resolutely forward-looking legal framework.

The programme for 2026–2027 is part of this dynamic: it aims to maintain the relevance of international railway law, support its uniform application, broaden its scope, and ensure its consistent and coordinated development within a rapidly changing international environment.

Ensure the effective, consistent and uniform application of OTIF law

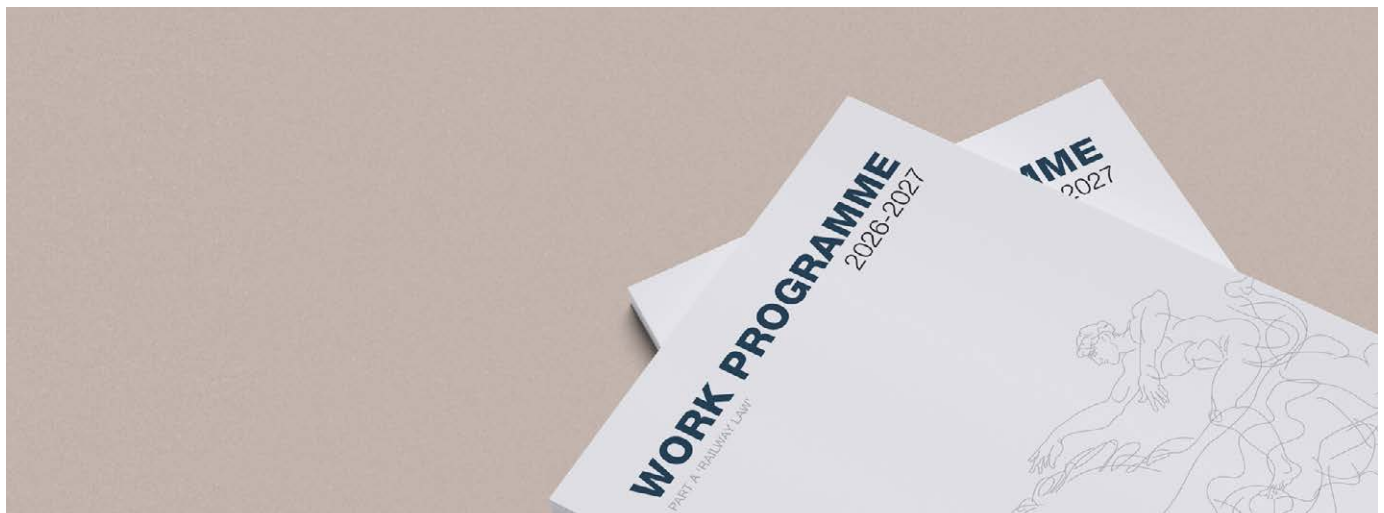
The first objective of the programme reiterates that the scope of international railway law depends primarily on its implementation by Member States.

For the period 2026-2027, the Secretariat will intensify the efforts already undertaken, in particular through systematic monitoring and evaluation of the application of COTIF and its appendices, by organising national and regional workshops to support national administrations and authorities, by producing consolidated reports and guidelines, and by promoting existing legal tools that are still little known or underused.

The objective is clear: to ensure that COTIF and its uniform rules – whether relating to contract law (CIV UR, CIM UR, CUV UR, CUI UR), the transport of dangerous goods (RID) or technical interoperability rules (APTU UR and ATMF UR) – are applied in a harmonised manner, which is essential for the efficiency of international traffic.

Expand the application of COTIF international railway law over a wide geographical area

The second objective concerns the geographical expansion of the OTIF system. The effectiveness of an international legal framework depends on broad application. With this in mind, the 2026-2027 period will be used to focus on intensifying the promotion of COTIF among states wishing to join the Organisation, encouraging the participation of observers in the meetings of OTIF organs, concluding, where appropriate, memoranda of understanding establishing roadmaps towards accession or cooperation, and



supporting the application of OTIF law to national transport, where this can reduce costs and simplify practice, as is already the case for the national application of RID.

This gradual opening up, supported by the current Member States, responds to a reality: the international rail network is evolving rapidly, and new players wish to integrate the COTIF regulatory framework in order to facilitate trade.

Geographical expansion contributes to inclusive, consistent international railway law that can be adapted to regional characteristics.

Railway law evolving in step with changes in the sector

One of the main components of the programme concerns the modernisation and continuous development of international railway law. In a context of rapid change – digital transition, automation, artificial intelligence, paperless contracts, new safety requirements – the law must not only adapt, but also anticipate change in some way.

The 2026-2027 Work Programme thus provides for the modernisation of certain institutional provisions arising from the Vilnius Protocol, the targeted revision of several appendices relating to railway contract law to take account of current practices, the regular updating of technical interoperability rules, which are essential in particular for the operation of international corridors, the preparation of the new edition of RID 2027 and the start of work on RID 2029.

The work programme also emphasises the need for more “connected” railway legislation, i.e. connected to technological

innovations (electronic ticketing, digital consignment notes, automated checks, interoperable data systems), connected to new contractual practices, connected to safety requirements, particularly in the transport of dangerous goods, and lastly, connected to regulatory developments in other international organisations, in order to harmonise standards at a multimodal level.

The objective is to maintain flexible, relevant, secure and consistent international railway law that meets the operational needs of railway undertakings while ensuring legal certainty for Member States.

Strengthening international cooperation and harmonisation of legal regimes

The fourth objective of the work programme aims to consolidate OTIF's role as the central forum for international railway law.

The fragmentation of legal frameworks due to the diversity of institutional mandates, regional structures and specific technical features, remains a challenge. The aim is not to eliminate fragmentation, but to manage it intelligently, promoting transparency and synergies.

OTIF will therefore continue to work closely with its long-standing partners, such as the UNECE and other United Nations regional commissions, OSJD, UIC and CIT, as well as with sectoral and logistics organisations (TRACECA, FIATA, etc.). In addition, OTIF Roundtables, thematic workshops and regular communication will promote mutual understanding and avoid regulatory duplication.

Strengthening these synergies will contribute to greater awareness of OTIF's role in the international rail transport architecture.

Ensure transparent and rigorous performance of depositary and secretariat functions

Lastly, the work programme reaffirms the importance of the Secretary General's role as depositary of COTIF.

The accuracy of depositary notifications, accessions, reservations, lists of lines or formal instruments is an essential pillar of the legal certainty of the system, just as the Secretariat's support for the Organisation's “legislative” organs – General Assembly, Revision Committee, Committee of Technical Experts, RID Committee of Experts – ensures consistent, transparent and reliable procedures.

A programme that reflects a clear vision of the future of railway law

By adopting this work programme for 2026-2027, Member States have reaffirmed that OTIF remains an important, even central, player in international railway law.

The law that OTIF develops and updates is not merely a set of rules: it constitutes a legal infrastructure that is essential to the functioning of international rail traffic and a stabilising factor in a changing environment.

Modern, harmonised, evolving, connected and cooperative railway law: this is the idea behind this new programme, which will guide the Organisation's actions over the next two years.

FREE CIRCULATION FOR PASSENGER COACHES

For years, the flexibility once offered by the technical provisions of the “Regolamento Internazionale delle Carrozze” (the International Coach Regulations or RIC) was lost as a consequence of new safety rules in Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSIs) and Uniform Technical Prescriptions (UTPs). This is now being resolved by the 2026 Uniform Technical Prescription for Locomotives and Passenger Rolling Stock (UTP LOC&PAS), which introduces a framework for “free circulation” and “interchangeability”, thus restoring flexibility, simplifying operations, and boosting the value of international rolling stock. This is a major step forward for the future of rail passenger transport.

Loss of flexibility, the trade-off for increased safety

1. From 1922, the international use of passenger coaches was governed by the RIC, an international agreement between railway companies that allowed for the seamless exchange and operation of passenger coaches across borders. The RIC included technical, safety, maintenance, commercial and operational provisions.
2. RIC still exists today as a multilateral agreement between railway companies, and is administered by the International Union of Railways (UIC). It sets out operational and commercial provisions and some harmonised technical requirements that facilitate the use of coaches, e.g. regarding power supply voltages and markings.
3. COTIF 1999 introduced the APTU and ATMF UR, shifting the responsibility for setting technical and safety rules for rail vehicles at international level from railway undertakings to the Contracting States. The APTU and ATMF UR entered into force in 2006. However, at that time the detailed technical and safety requirements for vehicles, in the form of Uniform Technical Prescriptions (UTPs), still had to be developed.

4. During the first decade of the 21st century, the European Union (EU) also started developing its railway law on interoperability and safety. In 2004, it established the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA). One of ERA's tasks was to draft TSIs laying down minimum requirements for subsystems, including for rolling stock. Subsequently, OTIF developed its UTPs based on the EU's TSIs, so that EU and OTIF provisions are aligned and equivalent for the purpose of international traffic.
5. While this transition from the RIC to UTPs/TSIs introduced modern and robust legal provisions, it also created a gap. The original UTP/TSI LOC&PAS did not include provisions that could grant a new passenger coach the same broad, international acceptance that RIC coaches once enjoyed. The reason was that the UTP/TSI set out additional safety requirements for which no harmonised standards existed. In addition, electric devices on board modern coaches, such as air conditioning systems, required additional checks for electromagnetic compatibility with trackside equipment.
6. This meant that a coach receiving its initial admission in one country could not be simultaneously approved for

use in others. This is about to change. With the entry into force of the 2026 version of the UTP LOC&PAS, a comprehensive legal framework is in place to enable the admission of passenger coaches suitable for **free circulation** and **interchangeability**, offering flexibility and efficiency for international passenger rail.

Understanding the concepts of free circulation vs. interchangeability

7. The system is designed on layers of interoperability, from state-by-state admission to mutual acceptance in a wide area of use and operational compatibility.

Admission to international traffic

8. The basic layer is **state-by-state vehicle admission** to the networks of individual Contracting States by compliance with all applicable UTPs, or by compliance with all equivalent EU TSIs. Admission is mandatory for each new vehicle intended for use in international traffic. Admission concerns not only coaches but all types of vehicles, including locomotives and trainsets. It ensures that minimum

requirements regarding interoperability and safety are met for use on the networks of Contracting States by which the vehicle is admitted. Admission does not mean that the vehicle can run anywhere. The aggregate of networks to which a vehicle is admitted is referred to as its *area of use*.

Suitability for free circulation

9. In addition to being admitted to individual networks, a vehicle can optionally be designed and approved to be “suitable for free circulation”. This means initial **admission to international traffic is valid across multiple, or even all, Contracting States** without the need for separate, supplementary admission procedures in each state. Free circulation means an area of use that covers many or all networks. In addition to the general UTP compliance required for admission to international traffic, to be suitable for free circulation passenger coaches must comply with specific optional UTP requirements. Furthermore, the vehicle must not be subject to any “specific cases” or “open points” within the UTPs that would affect its technical compatibility with the networks of any state. The optional UTP requirements for free circulation ensure that the coach is compatible with different train detection systems and infrastructure parameters. These coaches are therefore highly standardised and may bear a “TEN” marking. Free circulation does not mean that a vehicle can run on every single line of each network; the railway undertaking operating the vehicle remains responsible for route compatibility checks in accordance with the Uniform Technical Prescription

for Train Composition and Route Compatibility Checks (UTP TCRC). These checks are performed at operational level and do not involve further compliance checks of the vehicle by authorities.

Interchangeability

10. Interchangeability takes harmonisation a step further than free circulation alone. An “interchangeable vehicle” is one that is suitable for free circulation and is equipped with standardised inter-vehicle interfaces. This addresses the practical, operational side of international traffic. It ensures that coaches from different origins can be coupled together into a train because they share common solutions for inter-vehicle interfaces, such as couplers, brake systems, and data and power connectors. This is particularly relevant for Contracting States where the exchange of coaches at border stations remains a primary mode of international passenger traffic. Interchangeability is optional, but if a vehicle is designated as being interchangeable, all the related UTP requirements must be met.

What’s new in the 2026 UTP LOC&PAS?

11. Recognising the need to restore a harmonised system for passenger coaches, the Committee of Technical Experts addressed the topic in 2014 and brought it to the attention of ERA and the European Commission. The subsequent collaborative effort resulted first in optional requirements for the technical harmonisation of coaches being added to the EU’s LOC&PAS TSI in 2019, a step which was

mirrored by adopting a revised UTP LOC&PAS in 2021.

12. The latest version of the UTP LOC&PAS, adopted by the Committee of Technical Experts in June 2025 and entering into force on 1 January 2026, includes the following new subjects:

- **Free circulation for coaches:** provisions in points **7.1.1.5** and **7.1.1.5.1** now define the specific technical requirements that a passenger coach must meet to be deemed suitable for free circulation. Coaches that comply with these optional provisions can receive an admission valid for a wide area of use from the outset and may bear the “TEN” marking.
- **Interchangeability for coaches:** building on this free circulation, point **7.1.1.5.2** sets out requirements for inter-vehicle interfaces, allowing a coach that is suitable for free circulation also to be designated as “interchangeable”.

13. This layered approach, combining mandatory basic parameters with optional specifications for free circulation and interchangeability, mirrors the successful concept established in the Uniform Technical Prescription for Rolling Stock – Freight Wagons (UTP WAG).

A more flexible and valuable fleet

14. The practical benefits of these new provisions are substantial. For railway operators, they simplify operational planning and restore the flexibility of being able to assemble

international trains with coaches from various origins. It is also particularly helpful for sleeping cars, the operation of which often involves recombining coaches from different origins during operations.

15. Furthermore, these changes create new perspectives for the financing, leasing and resale of rolling stock. A passenger coach with an admission valid across a wide geographical

area is a more versatile and attractive asset, which will likely result in a higher resale value and greater investment security.

16. This development represents a major milestone in the harmonisation of international rail traffic. It aligns with the Committee of Technical Experts' clear strategy to give more prominence to provisions that facilitate the general operation of

vehicles across OTIF Member States. By providing a legal framework for building the next generation of truly international passenger coaches, the new UTP LOC&PAS delivers on the core task of OTIF: to facilitate international rail transport by making it simpler, more efficient, and more competitive.

Bas Leermakers

66th SESSION OF THE UN SUB-COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS

Geneva, 30 June to 4 July 2025

The 66th session of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts was the first session in the 2025/2026 biennium. The decisions of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts are incorporated into the 25th revised edition of the UN Model Regulations and form the common basis for all the mode-specific dangerous goods regulations. In the context of harmonising RID/ADR/ADN with the UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, these decisions will later be carried over into the 2029 editions of RID, ADR and ADN.

The 66th session of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts was held from 30 June to 4 July 2025. It was chaired by Mr Duane Pfund (United States of America) and 23 states, 7 governmental organisations and 24 non-governmental organisations were represented at it. As all the decisions of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts have repercussions for the dangerous goods provisions of the various modes, the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) was represented as a modal organisation.

Status of publications

The UN Sub-Committee of

Experts was informed that the English and French versions of the 24th revised edition of the UN Model Regulations and the English, French and Spanish versions of the 11th revised edition of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) had recently been published. It was pointed out that the English, French and Spanish versions of Amendment 1 to the 8th revised edition of the Manual of Tests and Criteria and the Spanish version of the 24th revised edition of the UN Model Regulations are expected to be published before the end of 2025. The Russian, Chinese and Arabic versions of these publications still have to

be produced, with publication dependent on the budget remaining at the end of 2025.

Classification

New UN entry for toxic liquids with corrosive and flammable subsidiary hazards

At least two toxic liquids, which present both the subsidiary hazards of corrosivity and flammability, are known to be carried in large quantities within the European Economic Area. These are propargyl alcohol, which is used, for example, as a corrosion inhibitor for steel, and 2-methoxyethyl acrylate. Both

substances are currently carried under the n.o.s. entries UN 2927 and UN 2929 respectively, although the proper shipping names of these n.o.s. entries only contain either the subsidiary hazard of corrosivity or the subsidiary hazard of flammability.

As the UN Recommendations already contain various collective entries for toxic liquids with corrosive and flammable properties, the UN Sub-Committee of Experts decided to include a new general n.o.s. entry for toxic liquids with the subsidiary hazards of corrosivity and flammability. The conditions of carriage were based on the existing entries for UN numbers 2742, 2743, 2744, 2927, 2929, 3073 and 3362. The special provisions for carriage in portable tanks have provisionally been left in square brackets and will still need to be confirmed at the next session.

It was also noted that further discussions are needed on general provisions for combinations of hazards, particularly for substances with three hazards.

Insecticide-treated mosquito nets

Insecticide-treated mosquito nets are one of the most effective means of malaria prevention recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). Such nets offer both chemical and mechanical protection against mosquitoes. More than 200 million mosquito nets are manufactured worldwide every year.

Insecticide-treated mosquito nets are made of netted materials (primarily polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and polyethylene (PE)) that are factory-treated with an insecticide. The insecticide is incorporated into the plastic yarn during the extrusion process, or the surface of a prefabricated net is coated with the insecticide. The nets are designed to release the active ingredients very slowly and remain effective for

at least three years and after up to 20 washes.

Mosquito nets treated with insecticides are often packed in single-use plastic bags and combined in bales for shipment. The individual packagings are creating an estimated 30,000 tons of plastic waste each year in communities often lacking adequate waste treatment. Global health partners are therefore committed to reducing the plastic waste resulting from such nets. This could be achieved by shifting from the use of individual plastic bags to larger packagings of mosquito nets treated with insecticides.

Mosquito nets are currently carried under the entry UN 3077 ENVIRONMENTALLY HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE, SOLID, N.O.S., although special provision 375 exempts individual packagings or combination packagings with a net mass of no more than 5 kg of solid substances per individual or inner packaging from the provisions of RID/ADR/ADN. This means that individually packed mosquito nets are exempt from the provisions, whereas larger bales would be subject to the provisions of RID/ADR/ADN.

Bearing in mind the fact that special provision 375 refers only to the mass and not to the concentration of the active component of the environmentally hazardous substance, the UN Sub-Committee of Experts decided to include in 1.1.3 a general exemption provision for nets treated with insecticides.

Articles containing gas in cryogenic receptacles

The expert from the Netherlands drew the attention of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts to a practical case of transport in which an article containing 1800 litres (approx. 255 kg) of helium, refrigerated and liquefied, was

handed over for carriage in an open cryogenic receptacle under the entry UN 3538 ARTICLES CONTAINING NON-FLAMMABLE, NON-TOXIC GAS, N.O.S. The applicable packing instruction P 006 requires an equivalent level of protection for the receptacles contained in the articles as in packing instruction P 200 (compressed, liquefied and dissolved gases) or P 208 (adsorbed gases). However, there is no reference to packing instruction P 203, which applies to refrigerated liquefied gases.

The UN Sub-Committee of Experts decided to refer to packing instruction P 203 in packing instruction P 006 with regard to the receptacles contained in the articles. It also adopted a new special provision, assigned to UN number 3538, which requires the application of 5.5.3 in order to exclude the risk of asphyxiation when opening transport units containing such articles.

Special provision 360

Special provision 360 is assigned to UN numbers 3091 (Lithium metal batteries contained in equipment), 3481 (Lithium ion batteries contained in equipment) and 3552 (Sodium ion batteries contained in equipment). This special provision merely specifies which UN numbers are to be assigned to vehicles powered by lithium metal, lithium ion or sodium ion batteries and which UN numbers are to be assigned to cargo transport units in which such batteries are installed.

The majority of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts supported a proposal from the United Kingdom to remove information from the special provision that is already contained elsewhere in the regulations, thereby shortening the special provision. This decision has implications for other special provisions, which will be discussed at the next session.

Carriage of plastic pellets by sea

Last year, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted recommendations for the carriage of plastic pellets by sea in freight containers in order to reduce the environmental risks associated with the carriage of plastic pellets. IMO is currently discussing the introduction of mandatory measures. One of the options being considered is to use the IMDG Code to regulate the carriage of plastic pellets by sea.

Plastic pellets are used as a raw material to manufacture plastic products. In recent years, there have been several incidents involving container ships, in which large quantities of plastic pellets have ended up in the sea and on beaches. In January 2019, the MSC Zoe lost at least 342 containers during a severe storm in the North Sea, with 22.5 tonnes of polymer plastic pellets escaping from a single container. In May 2021, the MV X-Press Pearl sank and 1,680 tonnes of plastic pellets were released into the sea off the coast of Colombo, Sri Lanka. The MS Trans Carrier, which was en route from the Netherlands to Norway in February 2020, was hit by a storm, releasing a total of 13.2 tonnes of plastic pellets and polluting the coasts of Norway, Sweden and Denmark. An estimated 445 tonnes of plastic pellets are lost in the transport chain every year.

Plastic pellets may contain various substances that are classified as hazardous (toxic), such as phthalates, flame retardants, organochlorines, benzotriazole UV stabilisers and substances with endocrine-disrupting properties. Plastic pellets therefore pose a threat to the environment and human health if they enter the (marine) environment and ultimately the food chain. Plastic pellets degrade only slightly or not at all in the environment and ultimately lead to the release of microplastics.

The IMO discussed the following options for introducing mandatory measures for the carriage of plastic pellets:

- amend the appendix to MARPOL Annex III that would recognise plastic pellets as a “harmful substance”;
- include a new regulation in MARPOL Annex III that would prescribe requirements for the transport of plastic pellets in freight containers without classifying the cargo as a harmful substance/dangerous goods; and
- assign an individual UN number (Class 9) for plastic pellets carried at sea in freight containers.

Plastic pellets do not currently meet the criteria for classification as an “environmentally hazardous substance”. However, the UN Model Regulations already include several dangerous goods in Class 9 that do not correspond to the definitions of a hazard class. These include, for example, substances that can pose a health risk when inhaled as fine dust (e.g. asbestos) or substances and articles that can form dioxins in the event of a fire (e.g. polychlorinated biphenyls).

The representatives of Germany and the Netherlands asked the UN Sub-Committee of Experts to examine whether introducing a new UN number might be a suitable means of regulating the transport of plastic pellets by sea in a binding manner.

Most experts who spoke considered that introducing a new UN number was an inappropriate measure, as plastic pellets are not inherently dangerous goods and do not meet any of the existing classification criteria. In addition, there was no evidence to suggest that classification as dangerous

goods would prevent release in the event of incidents at sea. The UN Sub-Committee of Experts did not reach a decision on this issue and decided to await the IMO discussions on the remaining options.

Marking

Special provision 405

Together with the introduction of the new entries for UN numbers 3556, 3557 and 3558 for vehicles powered by batteries, special provision 405 was included in the UN Model Regulations, which exempts vehicles from the marking and labelling requirements of Chapter 5.2 when they are not fully enclosed by packagings, crates or other means that prevent ready identification. In RID/ADR/ADN 2025, this exemption is included in the new paragraph (e) of special provision 666.

Following the entry into force of the new provisions in RID/ADR/ADN, it has become apparent that the wording of special provisions 405 and 666 (e) is not sufficiently clear and is therefore causing problems in application. In order to understand these two special provisions, the representatives of Germany and Sweden asked the following questions:

- To what extent does the vehicle need to be identified? Is it sufficient that a vehicle or equipment can be identified as such despite the enclosure? Or is it necessary to determine to which UN number the vehicle is to be assigned, i.e. what type of drivetrain the vehicle has (combustion engine or battery operation) and the battery type in case of battery operation?
- How can ready identification be achieved if an enclosure is used? By means of a transparent enclosure, a

conspicuous form or also by marking/illustration on the enclosure?

- Are containers containing larger types of battery-powered vehicles, such as cars, golf carts and motorbikes, considered as “other means that prevent ready identification”, or should the container be considered as a cargo transport unit to which the phrase “other means that prevent ready identification” is not applicable?

After a lengthy discussion, the UN Sub-Committee of Experts agreed to exempt only unpackaged vehicles from the labelling and marking provisions of Chapter 5.2. Given that special provision 405 has been implemented differently in the various mode-specific regulations, the UN Sub-Committee of Experts called on the organisations responsible for these regulations to align their provisions with the amended version of special provision 405.

Marking of refillable UN pressure receptacles

New marking requirements for closures of refillable UN pressure receptacles were introduced in 6.2.2.11 of the 2023 editions of RID, ADR and ADN. In the meantime, the application of these new marking requirements has shown that clarification of the marking requirements for valves and correction of a minor error in the marking requirements for UN pressure receptacle shells in 6.2.2.7 are necessary.

The marking requirements for the closures of refillable UN pressure receptacles in 6.2.2.11 do not require the closure inlet thread (connection to the pressure receptacle shell thread) to be marked, because it was assumed at the time that all relevant standards for pressure receptacle closures

already required this marking. In the provisions for refillable UN pressure receptacles, 6.2.2.7.4 (m) only requires identification of the cylinder thread. This provision does not currently cover pressure drums, tubes and salvage pressure receptacles.

In addition, the last sentence of 6.2.2.11 requires that the valve test pressure must be marked when it is less than the test pressure which is indicated by the rating of the valve filling connection. This indication refers to the valve test pressure and not to the test pressure of the pressure receptacle. Manufacturers interpret this sentence differently, because it is not clear what valve test pressure means, since it could either refer to the test pressure used for the hydraulic pressure test or for the leakproofness test.

The UN Sub-Committee of Experts made the necessary clarifications to the provisions of 6.2.2.7.4 and 6.2.2.11 and adopted a new transitional measure based on the model of the existing transitional measure in 1.6.2.20, which allows the continued use of closures constructed before 1 January 2031. The amendments to 6.2.2.11 still need to be confirmed at the next session because, according to an international association, there is not enough space on the valves for this additional mark.

Packagings

Punched holes in fibreboard boxes

1.2.1 defines a box as a packaging with complete rectangular or polygonal faces, made of metal, wood, plywood, reconstituted wood, fibreboard, plastics or other suitable material. Small holes for purposes of ease of handling or opening or to meet classification requirements are permitted, as long as they do not compromise the integrity of the packaging during carriage.

In practice, fibreboard boxes with handle holes or carrying straps are used. However, the performance requirements for fibreboard boxes in 6.1.4.12 do not clearly indicate whether a box in which the pre-cut handle holes have already been punched out must fulfil the necessary performance tests.

The UN Sub-Committee of Experts had already held an extensive discussion on this issue at its last session and was generally of the view that holes in packagings are acceptable, provided that they were included in the design type that had undergone type testing.

The UN Sub-Committee of Experts decided to include a note in the definition of box in 1.2.1 pointing out the need for successful design type testing.

Packagings that may not be used for substances which are liable to become liquid during carriage

4.1.3.4 lists the packagings that may not be used for substances that are liable to become liquid during carriage. At its last session, the UN Sub-Committee of Experts decided to align this subsection with packing instructions P 002 and P 410, which list additional packagings that may not be used. These are, for example, drums or jerricans made of steel, aluminium or another metal with removable lids and plastics drums or jerricans with removable lids which may not be used for substances of packing group I that are liable to become liquid during carriage (see Bulletin 2/2025, p. 14). These amendments are intended for inclusion in the 2027 editions of RID, ADR and ADN.

While the revised 4.1.3.4 now covers most types of packagings, inner packagings of combination packagings are not yet covered.

The UN Sub-Committee of Experts decided in 4.1.3.4 also to refer to inner packagings, which may not be used if the substances to be carried are liable to become liquid during carriage. In return, the corresponding footnotes in packing instructions P 002, P 410 and LP 02 were deleted.

An alternative proposal from the United Kingdom to simplify further the provisions in 4.1.3.4 could not be supported in its existing form. This stipulated that, with regard to solids that are liable to become liquid during carriage, a melting point not exceeding 45°C should be used as a basis. Single packagings and intermediate bulk containers (IBCs) approved for solids could be used for these substances if they had also undergone leakproofness

testing as part of the design type approval or were equipped with a leakproof lining. The UN Sub-Committee of Experts will again look at the possibility of simplification at its next session.

Any other business

Units of measurement

1.2.2.1 sets out the units of measurement applicable in RID/ADR/ADN. A footnote to 1.2.2.1 provides rounded values for converting units previously in use to units of the International System of Units (SI).

The UN Sub-Committee of Experts noted that 1.2.2.1 already contains the necessary information on the

exact SI units, the additionally permitted units and the correlations between the units, and that the footnote does not provide any additional information. It decided to delete the footnote.

Next session

The 67th session of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts, which continued work on the 25th revised edition of the UN Model Regulations, was held in Geneva from 24 November to 3 December 2025.

Jochen Conrad

CALENDAR OF OTIF'S MEETINGS IN 2025/2026

DATE	EVENT	ORG	LOCATION
24 - 27 March	RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting	UNECE	Berne - Switzerland
14 April	3 rd Session of the Supervisory Authority		Berne - Switzerland
19 - 20 May	142 nd Session of the Administrative Committee		Berne - Switzerland
27 - 28 May	20 th Session of the RID Committee of Experts' standing working group		Berne - Switzerland
28 May	59 th Session of the RID Committee of Experts		Berne - Switzerland
9 June	18 th Session of the Committee of Technical Experts		Berne - Switzerland (HYBRID MEETING)
10 - 11 June	Working Group WG TECH. 58 th Session		Berne - Switzerland (HYBRID MEETING)

EVENTS WITH OTIF PARTICIPATION IN 2025/2026

DATE	EVENT	ORG	LOCATION
15 - 17 December	Working Group VI: Negotiable Cargo Documents	UNCITRAL	Vienna - Austria
18 - 19 February	CIV Working Group	CIT	Berne - Switzerland (HYBRID MEETING)
23 - 24 February	International Dangerous Goods Days	Storck Publishers Hamburg	Hamburg - Germany
24 - 25 February	Railway Interoperability and Safety Committee (RISC)	European Commission	Brussels - Belgium
24 - 27 February	Working Group on Annex 2 to SMGS "Provisions for the Carriage of Dangerous Goods"	OSJD	Warsaw - Poland
3 - 4 March	UIC Group of Experts on the Carriage of Dangerous Goods	UIC	Munich - Germany
5 - 8 May	119 th Session of the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, WP.15	UNECE	Geneva - Switzerland
6 - 8 May	International Transport Forum – Summit 2026	ITF – OECD	Leipzig - Germany
19 - 22 May	Working Group on Annex 2 to SMGS "Provisions for the Carriage of Dangerous Goods"	OSJD	Warsaw - Poland
20 - 21 May	CIV Working Group	CIT	Berne - Switzerland (HYBRID MEETING)
24 - 25 June	Railway Interoperability and Safety Committee (RISC)	European Commission	Brussels - Belgium



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The Bulletin editor

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