



Bulletin

OTIF

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

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EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

This second edition of the Bulletin for 2026 is concerned with a simple but essential question: how can international railway law remain practical in a sector that is changing quickly? The answer lies in the patient and timely work of keeping rules fit for purpose and in listening to the sector.

Several contributions in this issue show that cooperation is most useful when it becomes tangible, such as the meeting between OTIF and UIC, which addressed matters that are very familiar to railway undertakings and infrastructure managers: interoperability, standardisation, safety, terminology, training, freight corridors, load security and digital transport documents, and the visit to the European Union Agency for Railways in Valenciennes, which pursued a similar objective from another angle, with discussions on technical interoperability, the position of non-EU OTIF Member States, 1,520 mm gauge networks and possible rail links between Europe and the Gulf region. These subjects concern the day-to-day possibility of making different systems work better together.

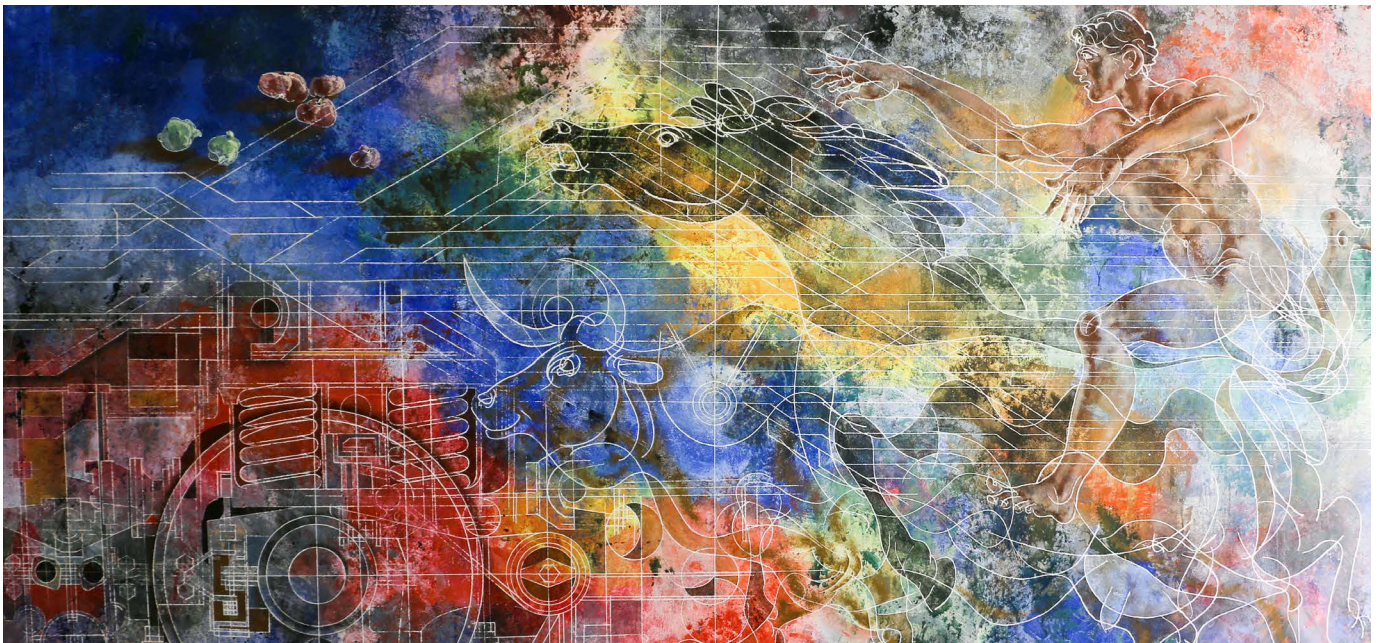
This issue also reflects renewed attention to the practical application of OTIF law. The Roundtable on liability for damage caused by a railway vehicle dealt with Article 7 of the CUV Uniform Rules, a provision whose importance becomes particularly clear when legal responsibility, maintenance, operation and contractual practice meet in a real incident. Such exchanges are useful precisely because they do not begin with a predetermined conclusion. They allow the Secretariat, Member States and the sector to test whether the existing rules are sufficiently clear and whether further work is needed.

The article on dangerous goods underlines how much safety depends on detailed, regular technical work. Questions on classification, tanks, packaging, batteries and transitional measures are highly specialised and are essential in terms of keeping the carriage of dangerous goods by rail safe and the rules aligned with other modes of transport.

The common thread of this Bulletin is therefore not simply activity, but adjustment of legal instruments to practice, of technical rules to operational needs, and of international cooperation to new realities.

Aleksandr Kuzmenko

Secretary General



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

OTIF–UIC COOPERATION: PRIORITIES AND OUTLOOK

On 11 March 2026, the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) and the International Union of Railways (UIC) held a bilateral meeting at the UIC headquarters in Paris. The meeting was organised jointly on the basis of an agreed agenda, and provided an opportunity to discuss a wide range of topics of mutual interest.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary General of OTIF, Mr Aleksandr Kuzmenko, and the Director General of UIC, Mr François

Davenne, accompanied by their respective teams.

The discussions started with some general presentations. The Secretary General of OTIF emphasised the importance of the sector and railway companies being involved in the Organisation's work, whilst the Director General of UIC highlighted efforts to strengthen ties with its members and satisfy their technical requirements. The respective strategies, work programmes and priorities were reviewed, along with developments in standardisation,

in particular the transition from UIC leaflets to "International Railway Solutions" (IRS).

The discussion then turned to rail systems, with a particular focus on interoperability and standardisation. The importance of cooperation with international standardisation bodies was emphasised, as was the need to develop solutions tailored to the global context. Participants also discussed issues such as safety, terminology, training and the challenges involved in integrating different railway systems, including in non-European contexts.

Advocacy issues also featured prominently in the discussions. OTIF outlined its priorities regarding geographical expansion and implementation of the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF), whilst UIC presented its advocacy roadmap, particularly in relation to climate finance and resilience in the face of climate change.

Lastly, operational issues relating particularly to freight were dealt with. The discussions focused on load security, the digitalisation of transport documents, the development of international rail corridors, and challenges relating to infrastructure capacity. The need to strengthen international coordination to facilitate cross-border rail transport remains a key priority.

The meeting provided an opportunity for open and constructive discussions on a wide range of topics. It helped strengthen cooperation between OTIF and UIC, whilst consolidating existing relationships and fostering new contacts. Both organisations expressed an interest in holding this type of meeting on a regular basis.



COURTESY VISIT: POLAND

On 30 March 2026, His Excellency Mr Marek Prawda, Minister Plenipotentiary and chargé d'affaires ad interim at the Polish Embassy, paid a visit to Mr Aleksandr Kuzmenko, Secretary General of OTIF.

As he has only recently been appointed, Mr Prawda wished to introduce himself.

Mr Prawda and Mr Kuzmenko discussed, in particular, current challenges, prospects for the development of international rail transport, implementation of the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF), and the role of OTIF.

The Secretary General welcomed this visit and thanks Mr Prawda for the discussion.



COURTESY VISIT: SPAIN

On Thursday 2 April 2026, His Excellency Mr Enrique Mora Benavente, the Spanish Ambassador to Switzerland, visited the headquarters of the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) in Berne to introduce himself.

Mr Mora Benavente, who was recently appointed Spain's Permanent Representative to OTIF to succeed Ms Nuño, came to meet Mr Kuzmenko, the Organisation's Secretary General.

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

The Secretary General of OTIF renews to Mr Mora Benavente

the assurances of his highest consideration.



SUPERVISORY AUTHORITY

The Supervisory Authority, a body established by the Luxembourg Protocol, held its third session at the OTIF headquarters in Berne on 14 April 2026.

OTIF acts as the secretariat of the Supervisory Authority, which supervises the implementation of the Protocol, i.e. it supervises the establishment, running and operation of the International Registry of railway rolling stock.

On 14 April 2026, OTIF was represented by its Secretary General, Mr Aleksandr Kuzmenko. The Supervisory Authority was chaired by Spain, represented by

Ms Teresa Rodríguez de las Heras Ballell; it took some important decisions regarding its operation. In particular, it adopted its new rules of procedure.

The Luxembourg Rail Protocol

The Luxembourg Rail Protocol of 26 February 2007 is the result of numerous meetings sponsored by the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (Unidroit). Its raison d'être is the success of the Cape Town Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment, and more specifically its Aircraft Protocol. The Luxembourg Rail

Protocol establishes a new legal regime for the recognition and enforcement of securities of lenders, creditors and conditional sellers when these securities are in railway rolling stock. In the face of increasing private financing of rolling stock and the absence of international rules, issues surrounding ownership rights for railway rolling stock are crucial. The Luxembourg Protocol offers a solution: it is the first comprehensive legal framework for the protection of owners and financiers of rolling stock operating across jurisdictional boundaries.



OTIF ROUNDTABLE: DISCUSSIONS ON LIABILITY FOR DAMAGE CAUSED BY A RAILWAY VEHICLE

On 15 April 2026, the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) organised an online roundtable discussion on liability for damage caused by a railway vehicle, as governed by Article 7 of the Uniform Rules concerning Contracts of Use of Vehicles in International Rail Traffic (CUV).

More than 60 participants from the Organisation's Member States, the rail sector and other stakeholders took part in this interactive meeting.

The meeting was part of a new series of OTIF Roundtables designed to be informal, accessible and dynamic forums for discussion. The aim of the roundtables is to promote dialogue, gather practical insights and enhance understanding of international railway law, with a view to developing solutions that are adapted to current challenges.

The main aim of the roundtable on 15 April was to gain a better understanding of how Article 7 of the CUV Uniform Rules is applied in practice. The OTIF Secretariat wishes to obtain feedback in order to inform Member States, with a view to possible amendments to this provision.

In order to stimulate discussion, the OTIF Secretariat's Legal and External Affairs Department presented several hypothetical scenarios to the participants. These case studies covered various accident scenarios involving freight trains operating between OTIF Member States. In particular, they highlighted cases of operational

errors (such as failure to observe a stop signal), hidden material defects, combinations of causes, and issues relating to maintenance and the technical development of equipment.

Based on these scenarios, discussions focused on key issues: the allocation of liability between the contracting parties, the distribution of the burden of proof, the role of contractual relationships, and the relationship between international legal and contractual frameworks (notably the CUV and the General Contract for the Use of Wagons, or "GCU").

Participants were also asked to compare these situations with those relating to national services governed solely by internal law, in order to gain a better understanding of the specific features of the international framework.

The wide-ranging and varied discussions highlighted the complexity of the situations encountered in practice, as well as the need for a shared understanding of the applicable rules. This roundtable thus enhanced the collective discussion and lay the foundations for future work on the development of Article 7 of the CUV Uniform Rules.

The Secretariat would like to thank everyone who took part for making this roundtable discussion such a success.

Roundtable



- P** *Promote engagement*
[Promouvoir l'engagement]
- R** *Reflect*
[Réfléchir]
- O** *Open dialogue*
[Ouvrir le dialogue]
- G** *Gather knowledge*
[Recueillir des connaissances]
- R** *Raise questions*
[Soulever des questions]
- E** *Enrich understanding*
[Enrichir la compréhension]
- S** *Shape solutions*
[Élaborer des solutions]
- S** *Strengthen international railway law*
[Renforcer le droit ferroviaire international]

ITF 2026 SUMMIT: “FUNDING RESILIENT TRANSPORT”

The 2026 International Transport Forum (ITF) Summit was held in Leipzig, Germany, from 6 to 8 May. The theme of this year's summit was “funding resilient transport”, and it focused on the mechanisms for mobilising investment and implementing funding strategies to strengthen the resilience of transport systems in a sustainable manner. The aim is to support long-term connectivity, whilst improving the efficiency and reliability of transport infrastructure and operations.

As every year, the summit brought together transport ministers from ITF Member States, as well as delegations from international organisations, legislators and private sector leaders. These high-level meetings offer a unique opportunity to discuss major mobility issues and encourage intergovernmental and public-private cooperation.

OTIF was represented by its Secretary General, Mr Aleksandr Kuzmenko, who spoke at the public ministerial session on Thursday 7 May, entitled “Pillars of Progress: Governance, Innovation and Co-operation”.

The talks during this session highlighted that establishing resilient transport systems requires more than just financial resources. Strong governance, closer cooperation between the various actors and institutional innovations, particularly in the areas of digitalisation and modernisation, are essential for increasing the effectiveness of investments and improving the resilience of transport networks. The discussions focused in particular on ways of aligning public and private funding to address the complex and evolving risks facing transport systems.

In his speech, the Secretary General of OTIF emphasised that the resilience of transport depends above all on good governance based on clear and predictable legal frameworks. He emphasised that international rail transport depends on both legal and technical interoperability. By means of the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF) and its uniform rules, OTIF helps provide a stable legal environment that reduces risks, boosts investor confidence and promotes the long-term development of international rail transport.

The Secretary General also highlighted the modernisation efforts undertaken by OTIF in recent years. These are intended not only to improve the Organisation's internal processes, but also to enhance its openness and interaction with a wider community of stakeholders in the rail sector.

He also pointed out that cooperation has been a cornerstone of OTIF since its inception. Given the complexity of the risks currently facing the transport sector, no single player, whether public or private, can act alone. International cooperation therefore remains essential in order to strengthen the resilience of transport systems.

In conclusion, the Secretary General emphasised that developing resilient transport systems requires investment not only in sustainable and environmentally friendly mobility solutions, but also in robust institutions and reliable legal frameworks. Resilience depends above all on trust and legal certainty.

MEETING IN VALENCIENNES BETWEEN OTIF AND THE EU AGENCY FOR RAILWAYS

On 11 May 2026, the Secretary General of OTIF was welcomed to Valenciennes by Ms Oana Gherghinescu, Executive Director of the European Union Agency for Railways. This visit took place against the background of the close cooperation between OTIF, the Agency and the European Commission, which is based on the tripartite administrative arrangement, with the shared aim of improving interoperability and international rail transport.

Teams from OTIF and the Agency discussed a number of strategic issues. In particular, they examined the possibility of “two-tier” technical

interoperability in order better to address the difficulties encountered by certain OTIF Member States that are not members of the European Union in implementing the current rules. A more prescriptive approach could facilitate their participation in the international exchange of freight wagons, whilst ensuring a high level of safety.

The prospects for rail links between Europe and the Gulf region were also discussed. In the context of ongoing logistics projects, the discussions highlighted OTIF's potential role in developing a legal and technical framework to bring different railway systems

closer together and promote their interconnection.

Lastly, the integration of 1,520 mm gauge networks was discussed, with the aim of improving the application of OTIF law and proposing appropriate technical solutions.

This working meeting provided an opportunity to identify future areas of collaboration, particularly in the implementation of joint projects, and confirmed the shared commitment of OTIF and the Agency to continue their cooperation towards a more harmonised international rail system.

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

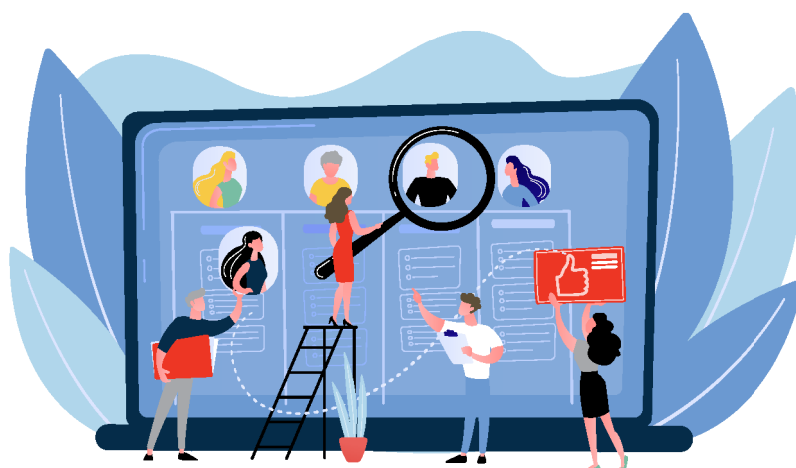
The Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) has started a secondment programme and is inviting applications from experts in its Member States.

These secondments, which are for limited periods, will enable experts to contribute to the Organisation's activities within an international and collaborative framework, whilst maintaining their links with their home administration. This initiative offers the opportunity to play an active role in the Organisation's work and in the development of international railway law, within a dynamic multilateral environment. The successful candidates will work closely with the Secretariat on key issues such as legal matters, dangerous goods or technical interoperability,

depending on their area of expertise.

With the support of national authorities, the secondment programme will, in particular, help strengthen cooperation between

OTIF and its Member States, whilst making the most of the skills available in the rail sector. View the call for applications and apply here: [Call for applications – Call for Seconded National Experts](#).



67th SESSION OF THE UN SUB-COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS

The 67th session of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts was the second session in the 2025/2026 biennium. The decisions of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts will be 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 67th session of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts was held from 24 November to 3 December 2025. It was chaired by Mr Remko Dardenne (Belgium) and 23 states, six governmental organisations and 21 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.

Cost savings

Following the opening speech, which highlighted the further 15% budget cuts at the United Nations and the associated job cuts in the Sustainable Transport Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), a discussion took place within the UN Sub-Committee of Experts on how cost savings could be achieved. Several delegations strongly emphasised the importance of the work carried out by the UN Sub-Committee of Experts, highlighting that its recommendations were essential for the safe transport of dangerous goods, the assessment of risks and benefits, the prevention of catastrophic accidents, and the establishment of harmonised regulations that facilitate global trade. It was also pointed out that this regulatory work has

considerable economic value.

Firstly, the following measures to improve efficiency were agreed for 2026:

- Before submitting proposals, delegations should be proactive in contacting key stakeholders in order to identify issues at an early stage, avoid misunderstandings and minimise the number of document revisions required during the meetings.
- The working documents should focus on the key information, whilst background material and detailed justifications could be included in accompanying informal documents. This practice, which had already been implemented to some extent recently, had proved successful and had led to a reduction in translation costs.
- The authors of working documents should be given substantial feedback prior to meetings so that, if necessary, they can revise their proposals in an informal document.
- Where possible, proposals should include information on the economic impact and cost-benefit considerations.

The following proposals, amongst others, were put forward for the period after 2026:

- Development of an online platform on which working documents can be published and discussed prior to sessions, as was the case during the COVID-19 pandemic. This would make face-to-face sessions more efficient, as problems and misunderstandings could be clarified in advance. However, concerns were also raised regarding access management, cybersecurity and the need to ensure that discussions on the documents remain accessible to all delegations and that no parallel processes are allowed to develop.
- As in other UN bodies, a two-week session could be divided into one week of preparatory informal sessions and one week of plenary sessions.

The UN Sub-Committee of Experts decided to shorten the meetings in 2026 by one day each. At this stage, it did not take any decisions regarding the period after 2026, in order to assess the success of the above-mentioned measures and await clearer information on the United Nations' financial situation. All delegations emphasised their determination to continue the important work of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts and to support the Secretariat during this period of uncertainty and transition, in order to maintain the high standards and culture of

international cooperation that have made the UN Recommendations and the dangerous goods regulations one of the most effective and valuable international regulatory instruments.

Explosives

Energetic samples

Energetic samples may be carried under the entry UN 3223 Self-reactive liquid, Type C, or UN 3224 Self-reactive solid, Type C, provided they are packed in accordance with special packing provision PP 95 of packing instruction P 520. One of the underlying principles in special packing provision PP 95 is the use of a clearly defined packaging, in which the individual samples are isolated from each other in a foam matrix. The distances between the individual samples, as well as between the samples and the outer wall of the packaging, are well defined. Under these conditions, a critical decomposition of one sample would neither initiate decomposition of the other samples inside the package, nor would it lead to hazardous effects outside of the packaging. However, one disadvantage is the outer dimensions of the outer packagings, which are designed for the carriage of approximately 56 samples, but which are less suitable for the carriage of only a few samples.

Given that special packing provision PP 95 also stipulates further conditions, such as the minimum distance between inner packagings, minimum distance from the wall of the outer packaging, maximum contents of the inner packagings and minimum wall thickness of the outer packaging, and following positive tests carried out by the German Federal Institute for Materials Research and Testing (BAM) on smaller packagings, the UN Sub-Committee of Experts adopted a proposal from the

chemical industry to dispense with the requirement to specify the external dimensions of the outer packagings.

Classification

Nitrocellulose membrane filters

Nitrocellulose membrane filters are used in a wide range of testing and analytical procedures. These include rapid tests for pregnancy, COVID, influenza, and hepatitis, assessing bacterial loads in water, food, and beverages, as well as in medical diagnostics for identifying and isolating proteins in human blood serum. Consequently, the diversity of their applications corresponds to a wide variety of product shapes, dimensions, and weights of nitrocellulose membrane filters being carried globally. Typical examples include large rolls produced at a multi-kilogram scale, sheets, strips and discs of varying lengths and widths, and specialised forms such as syringe filters, funnels and cartridges.

As a rule, nitrocellulose membrane filters are carried under UN number 3270 (Nitrocellulose membrane filters, with not more than 12.6% nitrogen by dry mass) of Division 4.1, whereby, in accordance with special provision 237, it must be demonstrated by means of test series 1 a) of the Manual of Tests and Criteria that the membrane filters are not liable to propagate a detonation. Test series 1 a) is generally passed if the nitrocellulose membrane layers are separated from one another by sheets of inert paper or plastic. However, if there are no such interlayers, this will result in a fail. In this case, the membrane filters would have to be assigned to UN number 0340 (Nitrocellulose, dry or wetted with less than 25 per cent water (or alcohol), by mass) and carried in accordance with the rules for Class 1.

As the current wording of special provision 237 does not permit reclassification out of Class 1 using test procedure 6 of the Manual of Tests and Criteria, the chemical industry considers that this results in an overly conservative classification of these products.

As the working group on energetic substances had already considered this issue at its last session, the UN Sub-Committee of Experts decided to amend special provision 237 and, taking into account the test results of test series 6 of the Manual of Tests and Criteria, to give the competent authority the option of excluding the substance from Class 1 and assigning it to UN number 3270.

Seed cake

The UN Model Regulations currently contain two entries relating to seed cake. The difference between them is that UN number 1386 applies to seed cake with more than 1.5% oil and not more than 11% moisture, whereas UN number 2217 is used for seed cake with not more than 1.5% oil and not more than 11% moisture. Both entries are classified as substances liable to spontaneous combustion of Class 4.2. Special provision 142 is assigned to UN number 2217, and stipulates that solvent extracted soya bean meal containing not more than 1.5% oil and 11% moisture, which is substantially free of flammable solvent, is not subject to the requirements.

Over 350 million tons of seed cake are produced globally each year. Seed cake is a manufactured product that results from the extraction of oil from soya beans, rapeseed, cotton seed and sunflower seeds using mechanical or solvent-based processes. It has a high protein content and forms the basis of most animal feed. The vegetable oils produced, such as

soya oil, rapeseed oil, cotton seed oil and sunflower oil, are valuable raw materials that are used in foodstuffs and, increasingly, in fuel production. Given the value of these oils, manufacturers have an incentive to extract as much oil as possible from the seeds during processing, with the result that the by-product, seed cake, has only a low oil content.

Following oil extraction, the press cake contains pulp, moisture, and residual oil. The buyers of seed cake demand that the product meet certain moisture and oil content limits to maximise the usefulness and minimise transport costs. Limiting the moisture content eliminates microbial activity, which directly reduces the ability of the product to initiate self-heating. By reducing the ability to self-heat, any residual oil will not oxidise and therefore the risk of self-ignition is eliminated. Consequently, the moisture and oil content of seed cake is monitored through strict quality controls during production. When these two factors are controlled, the resulting seed cake mixture no longer meets the definition of Class 4.2 and is no longer classified as dangerous goods.

On the basis of test method N.4 for self-heating substances set out in the Manual of Tests and Criteria, it has been demonstrated that seed cake with a limited oil content cannot self-ignite. The UN Sub-Committee of Experts agreed that by controlling the moisture content of the seed cake, the risk of self-heating can be eliminated, so products with a lower moisture content can be exempted from the provisions by means of a special provision. It therefore decided not to limit special provision 142 to soya bean meal alone, but also to exempt seed cake of soya bean, rapeseed, sunflower seed and

cotton seed from the provisions, provided it contains not more than 4% oil and not more than 13% moisture. This special provision will also be assigned to UN numbers 1386 and 3088, packing group III.

Calcium hypochlorite

Calcium hypochlorite is used as a disinfectant and bleaching agent, and is available in powder, granular, or tablet forms. Commercial calcium hypochlorite mainly includes dry calcium hypochlorite and hydrated calcium hypochlorite, with moisture content and available chlorine content varying, depending on the production process. The global annual transport demand is about 400,000 tonnes. Calcium hypochlorite is chemically active and prone to exothermic decomposition at high temperatures, which can lead to fires or explosions, posing significant safety risks during transport.

The UN Model Regulations contain a total of five UN numbers for calcium hypochlorite (UN numbers 1748, 2880, 3485, 3486 and 3487), which differ in terms of their active chlorine, active oxygen and water content. All entries, with the exception of UN number 1748, packing group III, are assigned special provision 314, which states that calcium hypochlorite is liable to exothermic decomposition at elevated temperatures. Consequently, calcium hypochlorite must be shaded from direct sunlight and all sources of heat and be placed in adequately ventilated areas. Special packing provision PP 85 in the UN Recommendations, or special provision CW 35/CV 35 in RID/ADR, which applies to all entries for calcium hypochlorite, also requires that bags used as single packagings must be

adequately separated to allow for the dissipation of heat.

The UN Sub-Committee of Experts decided also to assign special provision 314 to UN number 1748, packing group III. This harmonised the provisions with the IMDG Code, which requires stowage categories SW 1 (protect from heat sources) and SW 11 (protect the cargo transport unit from direct sunlight) for all entries.

Chromium oxychloride

Chromium oxychloride is used as an oxidising agent, as a tanning agent in tanneries, and as an indicator for chlorine. It has an oxidising effect and decomposes strongly in water, producing hydrochloric acid vapours or chlorine vapours, as well as chromic acid. At present, UN 1758 Chromium oxychloride is classified in Class 8, packing group I. However, the oxidising properties of the substance – which mean that it also meets the criteria for Class 5.1, which are also mentioned in the CLP Regulation¹, among others – are not reflected in the current classification.

At its last meeting, the UN Sub-Committee of Experts rejected a proposal to classify chromium oxychloride as Class 5.1 on the basis of the table of precedence of hazards, on the grounds that insufficient data were available. Although the criteria for oxidising substances are harmonised between the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) and the UN Model Regulations, and chromium oxychloride is assigned hazard statement H271 (“May cause fire or explosion; strong oxidizer”), the UN Sub-Committee of Experts decided at this meeting to assign this substance the subsidiary hazard of

¹ Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures.

Class 5.1 in order to reflect all the hazards posed by the substance during transport. For RID/ADR, this decision also results in an amendment to the classification code and the hazard identification number.

Special provision 388

Special provision 388 is currently assigned to UN numbers 3166, 3171, 3556, 3557 and 3558, which cover the various types of battery-powered vehicles. It contains information on the UN numbers to which specific types of vehicles are to be assigned. It also explains what is meant by the term “vehicle” and distinguishes it from battery-powered devices.

The UN Sub-Committee of Experts decided to transfer the fifth paragraph of special provision 388, which concerns UN number 3171 and explains that this UN number covers only vehicles and equipment powered by wet batteries, metallic sodium batteries or sodium alloy batteries, into a separate special provision, as it is not related to the other paragraphs of this special provision. It also decided to shorten the eighth paragraph of special provision 388, which deals with battery-powered equipment and cargo transport units with batteries installed in them, as it is considered unlikely that a user wishing to consign such equipment or cargo transport units would first select an entry for a vehicle.

Transport of gases

Flammable gases in non-refillable pressure receptacles

Refrigerants are used in a wide range of applications, such as refrigerators, heat pumps and air conditioning systems. Originally, chlorofluorocarbons and hydrochlorofluorocarbons

were used because they are non-flammable and have low toxicity. It was later established that these substances can damage the ozone layer. This led to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, which came into force on 1 January 1989. It was the first treaty in the history of the United Nations to be ratified worldwide.

The ban on ozone-depleting substances led to the use of alternative refrigerants such as hydrofluorocarbons. However, these substances have a high global warming potential, which can be between 1,000 and 10,000 times higher than that of CO₂. This led to the adoption of the Kigali Amendment of the Montreal Protocol, with the aim of achieving an 85% reduction in the global warming potential of these refrigerants by 2036.

As part of the gradual phase-out of hydrofluorocarbons with a high global warming potential, hydrofluorocarbons with a lower global warming potential, hydrofluoroolefins and hydrocarbons are now being used. However, these have the disadvantage that, unlike earlier generations of refrigerants, they are flammable.

In most cases, heating and cooling systems are pre-charged with refrigerant at the production facilities. However, depending on the application, additional refrigerant may need to be topped up on site. This may also be necessary following repairs or leaks. Non-flammable refrigerants are usually carried in non-refillable pressure receptacles with a capacity of 11.3 kg or 13.6 kg. Due to the transition to refrigerants with a low global warming potential, it is now necessary to explore options for the carriage of flammable refrigerants.

The UN Sub-Committee of Experts

decided to introduce a new n.o.s. entry for flammable refrigerant gases that may be carried in non-refillable pressure receptacles with a maximum capacity of 25 litres. In so doing, it was guided by positive experiences in the United States, Japan and China, and with special provision 291, which is assigned to entry UN 3358 for refrigerating machines containing flammable, non-toxic, liquefied gas. This derogates from the provision in 4.1.6.9 (b), which stipulates a water capacity less than or equal to 1.25 litres for non-refillable pressure receptacles filled with a flammable gas. Limiting the pressure-volume product to 1,000 bar litres, which was raised verbally during the meeting, will have to be reviewed again at the next meeting.

Carriage of radioactive materials

Cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

The UN Sub-Committee of Experts noted a detailed list of changes from the 2018 to the 2025 edition of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material (SSR-6). The IAEA, in conjunction with the Secretariat, will prepare an official document containing a list of amendments to be considered at the session of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts in June 2026. These amendments will subsequently be incorporated into the 2029 editions of RID, ADR and ADN as part of the normal harmonisation process.

Marking and labelling

Marking of refillable UN pressure receptacles

At the last meeting of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts, an amendment to 6.2.2.7.4 (m) was

adopted to require the identification of the thread on pressure drums, large cylinders and salvage pressure receptacles as well (see Bulletin 4/2025, p. 17).

The UN Sub-Committee of Experts decided to introduce a transitional measure for pressure drums, large cylinders and salvage pressure receptacles that do not comply with the provisions on markings to identify threads that will come into force on 1 January 2029, thereby allowing these pressure receptacles to continue to be used.

E-Labeling for dangerous goods

Electronic labelling (e-labelling) refers, for example, to a QR code or RFID (Radio Frequency Identification), which can be used to convey product information easily. When carrying dangerous goods, e-labelling could be used on packages or in transport documents to provide quick access to basic hazard descriptions, test reports, certificates of approval, emergency information and other safety information. A number of countries around the world have introduced universal e-labelling standards or are considering doing so in order to improve control over the supply chain.

An international association highlighted the potential of e-labelling to at least complement existing methods of hazard communication. The possibility of real-time translation of information on dangerous goods was also highlighted. It suggested that the following points be examined in more detail in future:

- Substitute for the transport document and other documents and information (e.g. competent authority approvals and certificates, safety data sheets, emergency information), subject to any

restrictions on access to the information,

- Substitute for hazard labels and other marks on the package,
- Substitute for the packing mark.

Whilst delegates expressed their support for e-labelling in principle, they raised some concerns about the potential replacement of the current hazard communication systems, as safety information that is immediately visible or accessible during transport could be lost. However, there was broad support for voluntary e-labelling as a supplement to the current labelling provisions. Delegates agreed that the development of formal guidelines could encourage wider use of this practice or provide incentives for it. The UN Sub-Committee of Experts agreed to continue the discussions in an informal working group.

Limited quantities

Chapter 3.4 contains provisions for dangerous goods packed in limited quantities. This chapter sets out two marks, the first of which (a square set at an angle of 45° with black top and bottom portions) applies to land and sea transport, whilst the second mark, featuring the additional letter “Y”, may be used for all modes of transport, provided that the more stringent requirements of the ICAO Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air are complied with. In some cases, these stricter requirements include lower limit values for the outer packaging and the affixing of hazard labels, indication of the UN number and the proper shipping name, indication of the net quantity, and the affixing of the packing mark.

However, if the limit values for land and sea transport on the one hand

and air transport on the other are identical, the mark may also be used in air transport without the letter “Y”, provided that the danger labels and the additional information referred to above appear on the package. The advantage of this is that packagings bearing the required information can be produced in advance and used for all modes of transport.

The UN Sub-Committee of Experts made various amendments to the wording of Chapter 3.4 to clarify that packages bearing the limited quantity mark without the letter “Y”, which also display the marks and danger labels specified in the ICAO Technical Instructions, may be carried by land, sea and air.

Farewell to Mr Romain Hubert (Secretariat)

The UN Sub-Committee of Experts was informed that Mr Romain Hubert would retire at the end of January 2026, and expressed its deep appreciation and gratitude for his work, his dedication and his 24 years of service to the United Nations on matters relating to motor vehicle regulations and the transport of dangerous goods, as well as for his role as Secretary of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts since 2019. It wished him a happy and long retirement.

Next session

The 68th session of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts, which will continue work on the 25th revised edition of the UN Model Regulations, will be held in Geneva from Tuesday, 30 June to Wednesday, 8 July 2026.

Jochen Conrad

RID/ADR/ADN JOINT MEETING

Berne, 24 to 27 March 2026

The RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting in March 2026 was the last meeting at which decisions could still be taken, albeit on a limited basis, for the 2027 editions of RID, ADR and ADN, and at the same time the first meeting of the 2026/2027 biennium, at which the 2029 editions of the regulations for the three land transport modes were prepared.

Delegates from 20 states that apply RID, ADR and/or ADN, the European Union and 18 non-governmental organisations took part in the discussions. In addition, the United States of America was represented as an observer state. At the start of the meeting, it was pointed out that the post of Head of the UNECE's Transport of Dangerous Goods Division was currently vacant and that the secretariat of the Joint Meeting was understaffed due to a number of staff members being absent as a result of illness.

Tanks

Abolition of dual approval of tanks in accordance with chapters 6.7 and 6.8 of RID/ADR

Following lengthy discussions, the last Joint Meeting decided to include a provision in RID/ADR 2027 stipulating that tanks constructed and approved in accordance with Chapter 6.7 from 1 January 2030 onwards may no longer also be approved in accordance with Chapter 6.8. Conversely, tanks constructed and approved in accordance with Chapter 6.8 may no longer also be approved in accordance with Chapter 6.7 from the same date. The period until 1 January 2030 should be used to develop measures to mitigate the impact on industry (see Bulletin 1/2026, p. 11).

As the abolition of dual approval for tanks will have a negative impact on the current use of

tanks, the International Tank Container Organisation (ITCO) submitted several proposals aimed at mitigating the effects of this abolition. In order not to disrupt inland transport involving portable tanks, which will no longer be approved as tank-containers in future, it was proposed that portable tanks should be permitted for use under the same conditions as tank-containers.

One proposal concerned the bottom openings for discharge and filling. It was found that, for 107 substances, the tank code for RID/ADR tank-containers permits bottom openings, whereas the portable tank instruction does not provide for this. 96 substances that may be carried in RID/ADR tank-containers may not be carried in portable tanks.

To resolve this issue, ITCO proposed adding an alternative portable tank instruction to column (10) of Table A for the substances referred to above, specifying that portable tanks may only be used in land transport.

The working group on tanks approved this proposal in principle for the 2029 editions of RID and ADR, although further work will be necessary on the list of substances to which this relaxation is to apply.

Another proposal from ITCO concerned the permitted maximum degree of filling, which differs for portable tanks and RID/ADR tank-containers. Whilst dual-approved tanks may currently be operated at the maximum degree of filling specified for liquids in 4.2.1.9 and

4.3.2.2, this would no longer be possible in future.

For the 2029 editions of RID and ADR, the working group on tanks decided that for portable tanks used solely in inland transport, the degrees of filling specified in 4.3.2.1 (a) and (b) may also be applied to the substances listed therein.

The working group on tanks decided to adopt the Notes in chapters 6.7 and 6.8 provisionally adopted at the last Joint Meeting, which rule out dual approval of tanks from 1 January 2030.

With regard to the transitional measures provisionally adopted at the last Joint Meeting, it decided to consolidate them into a single transitional measure in order better to reflect the option available to economic operators to continue using a tank either as an RID/ADR tank-container or as a portable tank.

Replacement of service equipment of battery-wagons/battery-vehicles or MEGCs

In March 2025, the Joint Meeting decided that the service equipment of tanks may be replaced by equipment not specified in the type approval, provided that the tank subsequently undergoes an extraordinary inspection. The new procedure may only be applied to service equipment that has been approved in accordance with the standards referred to in 6.8.2.6. In addition, there are installation restrictions in place to prevent

the tank from being exposed to the effects of heat. The service equipment must correspond to the technical specifications of the tank. The main dimensions of the replacement valve must also be equivalent in order to ensure protection against being wrenched off or being damaged by foreign objects (see Bulletin 2/2025, pp. 16–17).

The Joint Meeting now decided to include similar wording in 6.8.3.4.16 for the replacement of pieces of equipment on battery-wagons/ battery-vehicles and MEGCs.

Revision of RID/ADR 6.8.3.2 concerning the equipment of tanks for the carriage of gases

At the last Joint Meeting, it was decided to reorganise the provisions of 6.8.3.2 in order to clarify which provisions apply to liquefied, compressed and dissolved gases on the one hand, and refrigerated, liquefied gases on the other. However, final adoption of the texts was postponed until the Joint Meeting in March 2026 (see Bulletin 1/2026, pp. 10–11).

The working group on tanks decided to replace the term “try cocks”, introduced in the new 6.8.3.2.1.1 and 6.8.3.2.1.2, with “level detection valves”. With regard to the closures of filling and discharge openings situated in the upper part of tanks, the new 6.8.3.2.1.5 was aligned with the existing wording in 6.8.3.2.7. This is intended to prevent any misunderstanding as to whether two or three consecutive closure devices are required. New transitional measures were proposed for existing tanks that are fitted with only two shut-off devices mounted in series.

The working group on tanks also decided not to incorporate special provision TE 26 into the text of 6.8.3.2 for the time being, which applies to tanks for the carriage of

refrigerated, liquefied flammable gases and which requires that all connections for filling and emptying, including connections in the vapour phase, must be equipped with an instant-closing automatic shut-off valve as close as possible to the tank. However, the texts were drafted in such a way that this can be done at a later date.

Expired transitional measures

The working group on tanks also considered the transitional measures for tanks that expire at the end of 2026 and do not therefore need to be included in RID/ADR 2027. It decided to delete the transitional measures in 1.6.3.41, 1.6.3.47, 1.6.3.48, 1.6.4.42, 1.6.4.47, 1.6.4.49, 1.6.4.50 and 1.6.4.64 in both sets of regulations, the transitional measures in RID 1.6.3.45 and 1.6.4.55, and the transitional measure in ADR 1.6.3.60.

Interpretation of RID/ADR/ADN

Exemption in 1.8.3.2 (b)

1.8.3.2 governs cases in which the competent authorities may grant certain undertakings exemptions with regard to the appointment of a dangerous goods safety adviser. Paragraph (b) refers to undertakings that only carry small quantities of dangerous goods.

The representative of the International Association of Safety Advisers (IASA) had noted a discrepancy between the English version on the one hand and the German and French versions on the other. Whilst the English text refers simply to “quantities”, the German and French texts use the term “limited quantities”. He pointed out that the term “limited quantities” refers to the packing method set out in Chapter 3.4 and that Chapters

3.3 and 3.5, which are referred to in 1.8.3.2 (b), are not covered by this term.

The Joint Meeting saw no problem with the use of the expression “limited quantities”, as it was clear from the context that this did not mean the technical term. However, it adopted a proposal for the 2027 editions of RID, ADR and ADN, which aligns the German and French versions with the English text.

Acetylene cylinder marking

Transitional measure 1.6.2.19, which comes into force on 1 January 2027, provides that acetylene cylinders manufactured before 1 July 2023 and not marked in accordance with the requirements of 6.2.2.7.3 (k) (ii) and (iii) or (l) (ii) and (iii), which apply from 1 January 2023, may continue to be used, provided that the markings cannot be affixed either to the cylinder shoulder or to a neck ring. It replaces the previous transitional measure, which allowed acetylene cylinders to continue to be used until the next periodic inspection due to take place after 1 July 2023.

As it will not be possible to re-mark all existing acetylene cylinders on which marking can be applied to the cylinder shoulder or neck ring by 31 December 2026, the European Industrial Gases Association (EIGA) raised the question of interpretation as to whether the markings may be applied to these cylinders during the next periodic inspection.

Following the Joint Meeting’s endorsement of this interpretation, EIGA submitted an informal document proposing text for an interpretation to be published on the OTIF and UNECE websites. The Joint Meeting agreed this interpretation and requested that the text be submitted to Working Party WP.15 and the RID Committee of Experts for final approval.

If WP.15 and the RID Committee of Experts also agreed with this interpretation, it would no longer be necessary to extend the existing multilateral special agreements RID 2/2024 and M359.

Indication of the name and address of the manufacturer in the type approval certificate

The European Cylinder Makers Association (ECMA) proposed publishing an interpretation on the OTIF and UNECE websites to clarify that the type approval certificate and the initial tests and inspection certificate of pressure receptacles must state the actual name and address of the pressure receptacle manufacturer, and not simply a code.

On the basis of 1.8.7.2.2.1 (c) and 1.8.7.4.3 (b), which stipulate that the type approval certificate and the initial tests and inspection certificate must include the name and address of the manufacturer, the Joint Meeting agreed that the wording of the provision was sufficiently clear and did not require an interpretation.

ECMA, EIGA and Liquid Gas Europe (LGE) announced that they would examine whether it might be appropriate to include the address of manufacture in addition to the manufacturer's address.

Proposals to amend RID/ADR/ADN

Exclusion criteria in 2.2.1.1.8.2

2.2.1.1.1 specifies which substances and articles fall within Class 1. These include, amongst other things, articles containing one or more explosives or pyrotechnic substances. However, according to the Note to 2.2.1.1.1 (b), such articles are not subject to the requirements of Class 1 if inadvertent or accidental ignition would not cause any manifestation

external to the device by projection, fire, smoke, heat or loud noise.

Sweden proposed to include a reference to 2.2.1.1.8.2 in the Note to 2.2.1.1.1 (b), which allows the competent authority to approve the exclusion of an article from Class 1.

During the discussion on the proposal, the representative of Austria pointed out that the provisions of 2.2.1.1.1 and 2.2.1.1.8.2 contain different rules. Whilst 2.2.1.1.1 stipulates that an article is not subject to the requirements of Class 1 if the effects it refers to, such as projection, fire, smoke, heat or loud noise, do not manifest outside the device, 2.2.1.1.8.2 provides for the competent authority's approval of an exemption where such effects only manifest outside the device to a limited extent.

The Joint Meeting finally approved Sweden's proposal to include a reference to the whole of 2.2.1.1.8 in the 2027 editions of RID, ADR and ADN. This achieved harmonisation with the UN Model Regulations. Austria and Sweden agreed to refer the matter once again to the UN Sub-Committee of Experts in order to resolve the discrepancy described by Austria.

Degree of filling of packagings

In a document, Belgium reported on interpretation issues regarding the application of 4.1.1.4, which stipulates that the capacity must be used to determine the degree of filling of packagings, including intermediate bulk containers (IBC) and large packagings. It was not clear whether this refers to the maximum capacity defined in 1.2.1 or the nominal capacity specified by the manufacturer.

The Joint Meeting supported clarifying in 4.1.1.4 of the 2027 editions of RID, ADR and ADN,

that the degree of filling is to be determined on the basis of the packaging's maximum capacity. Belgium will continue to raise this issue within the UN Sub-Committee of Experts, including in relation to those provisions of the UN Model Regulations that apply to all modes of transport.

Special provision 666

Special provision 666 sets out the conditions for the exemption of vehicles and battery-powered devices when they are carried as a load. It is assigned to UN numbers 3166 (vehicle powered by flammable gas or flammable liquid) and 3171 (battery-powered vehicle or device), as well as to UN numbers 3556, 3557 and 3558 (vehicles powered by lithium ion, lithium metal or sodium ion batteries).

At the last Joint Meeting, it was decided to align paragraph (e) of special provision 666 with an amendment to special provision 405, which will appear in the 25th revised edition of the UN Model Regulations. This amendment should resolve any issues of interpretation and require the marking and labelling of packaged vehicles, regardless of how easily they can be identified. The wording adopted was placed in square brackets so that it can be reviewed again at the next Joint Meeting.

Germany had once again submitted a document to this Joint Meeting setting out several options. Germany itself was in favour of deleting paragraph (e) entirely and not requiring any marking or labelling. This would resolve the problems faced by the logistics sector arising from the fact that packages are marked as dangerous goods but, owing to the exemption, no transport document is required.

Following a vote on the various options, the Joint Meeting decided

to retain the wording adopted at the last Joint Meeting for the 2027 editions of RID, ADR and ADN (marking and labelling obligation for packaged vehicles), but to apply it only to UN numbers 3556, 3557 and 3558, as is the case with special provision 405 of the UN Model Regulations.

Fuels of UN number 1202

For transport, flammable liquids are classified according to their flash-point. Only substances with a flash-point of 60 °C are generally classified as Class 3. In the past, a Note was included in the Class 3 classification provisions (Note 2 to 2.2.3.1.1), which stipulates that diesel fuel, gasoil or heating oil (light), including synthetically manufactured products having a flash-point above 60 °C and not more than 100 °C shall be deemed substances of Class 3, UN number 1202. This ensured that diesel fuel, gasoil and heating oil (light) were all classified under UN number 1202 in Class 3. Table A in Chapter 3.2 now contains three entries for UN number 1202: one for flash-points not more than 60 °C, one for flash-points more than 60 °C and not more than 100 °C and one for flash-points as specified in standard EN 590. The latter entry means that it is not necessary to determine the exact flash-point before every consignment.

In order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, an increasing number of fuels containing higher proportions of components derived from renewable sources (biological or synthetic) are being used, such as paraffinic diesel fuel produced entirely from vegetable oil (HVO100) or renewable electricity (power-to-liquid). As these fuels are no longer covered by standard EN 590 but are regulated by other standards, they cannot be assigned to UN number 1202, which is based on the flash-point as defined by standard EN 590.

At its last meeting, the Joint Meeting had already provisionally adopted a proposal from the European Confederation of Fuel Distributors (ECFD) to allow the assignment of diesel fuels in accordance with standard EN 16709:2024 or EN 16734:2023, as well as paraffinic diesel fuels or heating oils in accordance with standard EN 15940:2023, to UN number 1202 by means of a new special provision.

This decision was confirmed at this Joint Meeting for the 2027 editions of RID, ADR and ADN, with all references to standard EN 590 also being updated to reflect the latest edition of the standard.

Orange-coloured plates on cargo transport units with batteries installed

As part of the harmonisation of RID/ADR/ADN with the 24th edition of the UN Model Regulations, it was decided at the last Joint Meeting to provide three different UN numbers for cargo transport units with batteries permanently installed, indicating whether the cargo transport unit contains lithium metal, lithium ion or sodium ion batteries (UN 3536, UN 3563 and UN 3564). This is intended to make it easier for the emergency services to choose the appropriate course of action in the event of an incident.

In this context, the Joint Meeting decided at its last session to harmonise the provisions of RID and ADR/ADN and to provide, in ADR and ADN as well, for plates bearing the hazard identification number and the UN number instead of simple, orange-coloured plates, in order to display the information required by the emergency services. This amendment led to the decision, at the last session of WP.15, to apply ADR 5.3.2.1.4 to UN numbers 3536, 3563 and 3564 as well.

Special provision 389, which is assigned to entries under UN numbers 3536, 3563 and 3564, only refers to 5.3.2.2, which describes the orange-coloured plates. It also stipulates that the orange-coloured plates must be displayed on two opposite sides of the cargo transport unit. As a result of this wording, the relaxation in ADR 5.3.2.1.6 cannot be applied; this provision allows transport units carrying a dangerous substance assigned to a single UN number with a single hazard identification number to have the orange-coloured plates displayed only on the front and rear of the transport unit.

The Joint Meeting adopted a proposal from Switzerland for the 2027 editions of RID, ADR and ADN to refer in special provision 389 to 5.3.2 regarding the orange-coloured plates and to omit the requirement that the orange-coloured plates must be affixed to two opposite sides of the cargo transport unit.

Tributes

Mr Romain Hubert, former Head of the Dangerous Goods Division within the Sustainable Transport Department and Co-Secretary of the RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting, bid farewell to the Joint Meeting. The Joint Meeting expressed its appreciation for his leadership and his contributions to safety in the transport of dangerous goods. It wished him all the best for a long, healthy and fulfilling retirement surrounded by his family and friends.

Next meeting

The next Joint Meeting will be held in Geneva from 14 to 18 September 2026. At this second session of the 2026/2027 biennium, work will continue on the 2029 editions of RID, ADR and ADN.

Jochen Conrad

CALENDAR OF OTIF'S MEETINGS IN 2026

DATE	EVENT	ORG	LOCATION
9 September	Working Group WG TECH. 59 th Session		Berne - Switzerland (HYBRID MEETING)
3 - 4 November	10 th session of the ad hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation		Berne - Switzerland
10 November	Working Group WG TECH. 60 th Session		To be decided
17 - 20 November	21 st session of the RID Committee of Experts' standing working group		Berlin - Germany
2 - 3 December	143 rd Session of the Administrative Committee		Berne - Switzerland

EVENTS WITH OTIF PARTICIPATION IN 2026

DATE	EVENT	ORG	LOCATION
29 - 30 June	EU Transport and Railway Affairs	ETCR*	Bruges - Belgium
30 June - 8 July	68 th session of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods	UNECE	Geneva - Switzerland
25 - 28 August	Temporary Working Group on Annex 2 to SMGS "Provisions for the Carriage of Dangerous Goods"	OSJD	Warsaw - Poland
September	12 th Annual Meeting of International Organisations	OECD	Paris - France
6 - 7 October	FIATA Anniversary – World Congress	FIATA	Milan - Italy
7 October	Freight and Wagon Law Conference	UIC and CIT	Berne - Switzerland
27 - 30 October	Group of Experts on Annex 2 to SMGS "Provisions for the Carriage of Dangerous Goods"	OSJD	Warsaw - Poland
3 - 6 November	Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, WP.15 (120 th session)	UNECE	Geneva - Switzerland
24 November - 1 December	69 th session of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods	UNECE	Geneva - Switzerland

* College of Europe and the European Union Agency for Railways



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The Bulletin editor

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