



Organisation intergouvernementale pour les transports internationaux ferroviaires

Zwischenstaatliche Organisation für den internationalen Eisenbahnverkehr

Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail

WG TECH

53rd Session

Minutes

Bern, Switzerland

Hybrid meeting, 17.09.2024

WG TECH 53 SUMMARY 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

The United Kingdom, in the shape of Mr Vaibhav Puri, was elected to chair the session.

- 1. The provisional agenda as submitted in Annex 1 to TECH-24031 of 19 July 2024 was approved.**
- 2. The minutes of WG Tech 52, including modifications submitted by Switzerland and CER before the session and an editorial correction proposed by ERA at the session, were approved.**
- 3. The Secretariat presented the latest developments relating to OTIF.**
- 4. For discussion**

WG Tech 53 reviewed and discussed the working documents that had been prepared for the session.

The following summary reflects the discussions on the various working documents:

4.1. Draft proposal for revision of the UTP LOC&PAS:

- WG Tech reviewed document TECH-24016 v2 dated 19 August 2024.
- Switzerland informed the meeting that it was still considering how to refer to Switzerland's specific cases in the UTPs. It wished to ensure alignment between the UTPs and its specific cases for the TSIs, which were outlined in the bilateral EU-CH Land Transport Agreement (LTA-Annex I). In addition, some existing specific cases could perhaps be removed because Switzerland had already notified OTIF's Secretary General of these provisions as National Technical Requirements (NTRs) (by means of a link to the FOT website).
- The Secretariat presented an overview of its views on the differences between NTRs and specific cases (SCs). WG Tech welcomed the overview presented by the Secretariat and, after making minor changes, agreed with the overview.
- Norway indicated that it would be able to provide a draft proposal concerning its SCs in early October, so that these could be included in the working documents for the next session of WG Tech. The SCs would then still be under discussion with the European Commission; however, it would be able to confirm the texts at the next WG Tech meeting.
- Switzerland and Norway would be in contact bilaterally and with the European Commission, with a view to harmonising their approaches to SCs and NTRs in relation to UTPs.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to update the document for review at the next session, with the aim of submitting it to CTE 17 for adoption.

4.2. Draft proposal for revision of the UTP PRM:

- WG Tech reviewed document TECH-24017 v2 dated 19 August 2024.
- WG Tech suggested some minor changes and clarifications.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to update the document for review at the next session, with the aim of submitting it to CTE 17 for adoption.

4.3. Draft proposal for revision of UTP Marking and for an explanatory document:

- WG Tech reviewed documents TECH-24024 v2 and TECH-24028 v2, both dated 19 August 2024.
- UIP and CER provided the Secretariat with some comments before the meeting. The modifications pertaining to these comments would be reviewed by WG Tech 54.
- The United Kingdom suggested clarifying in the explanatory document that the UTP Marking applied retroactively.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to update documents TECH-24024 and TECH-24028 for review at the next session, with the aim of submitting them to CTE 17 for adoption and approval respectively.

4.4. Draft proposal for revision of UTP INF:

- WG Tech reviewed document TECH-24018 v2 dated 19 August 2024.

- Switzerland indicated that in future, it might also have specific cases related to the INF TSI, as it had already notified these to the EU. Once these were integrated into the LTA-Annex I, the UTP INF should be updated with a reference to the LTA-Annex I. It was not yet clear when the LTA-Annex I would be updated in this regard.
- The United Kingdom would consider whether it agreed with removing the conversion between miles per hour and kilometres per hour in relation to traffic on the national network.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to update the document for review at the next session, with the aim of submitting it to CTE 17 for adoption.

4.5. Draft update to the guide for the application of the UTP WAG:

- WG Tech reviewed document TECH-24026 v2 dated 19 August 2024 and had no substantive comments.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to re-issue the document for review at the next session, with the aim of submitting it to CTE 17 for approval.

4.6. Draft update to the guide for the application of the UTP Noise:

- WG Tech reviewed document TECH-24025 v2 dated 19 August 2024.
- It asked the Secretariat to check the consistency between the UTP Noise and the application guide with regard to the notification and publication of quieter routes and to make modifications if necessary.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to update the document for review at the next session, with the aim of submitting it to CTE 17 for approval.

4.7. Draft update to the handbook for the implementation and application of the APTU and ATMF Uniform Rules:

- WG Tech reviewed document TECH-24034 dated 19 August 2024.
- It discussed how information could be retrieved from the vehicle registers. It suggested including a reference to the list of registering entities published on OTIF's website.
- The Secretariat informed the meeting that it would complement the draft handbook with a section on sharing information related to incidents and accidents.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to update the document for review at the next session, with the aim of submitting it to CTE 17 for approval.

4.8. Draft proposal for Annex D to the EST UR concerning Supervision:

- WG Tech reviewed document TECH-24033 v2 dated 19 August 2024 and had no substantive proposals.
- The meeting discussed whether provisions related to the protection of whistle-blowers should be included.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to update the document for review at the next session, with the aim of submitting it to CTE 17 for consideration.

4.9. Discussion paper concerning the integration of additional railway systems in the UTPs with a view to the potential accession of GCC Member States to COTIF:

- WG Tech reviewed document TECH-24036 dated 19 August 2024 and suggested minor changes to the document.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to ask GCC for the requirements applicable to GCC freight wagons and to analyse the functional and technical differences between the UTPs and the GCC system, including possible solutions to overcome them.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to update the document for review at the next session, with the aim of submitting it to CTE 17 for discussion.

5. **Developments in European Union regulations that are of relevance to COTIF (presented by the European Commission and the European Union Agency for Railways)**

The EC provided a status update concerning future TSI revisions, noting that these included the adoption of requirements for 1520 mm gauge systems. It explained the multiannual TSI revision

framework and priorities for the coming period. The EC invited the Secretariat to share the relevant documents that it received with the participants.

6. The cross reference table of EU and OTIF terminology was reviewed.

7. The EU – OTIF equivalence table was reviewed.

8. Any other business:

The Secretariat announced that it would submit a paper to the next WG Tech meeting addressing the extent of implementation of the ATMF UR by Contracting States.

9. Next session

19 November 2024, hybrid meeting, Belgrade, Serbia (hosted by Directorate for Railways).

DISCUSSION

Welcome by the OTIF Secretariat

Mr Bas Leermakers (Head of OTIF's Technical Interoperability Department) who, together with Ms Maria Price and Mr Dragan Nešić, represented the OTIF Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat"), welcomed all the participants and opened the 53rd session of WG Tech. The session took place in hybrid format. The Secretariat thanked Switzerland's Federal Office of Transport for kindly hosting the meeting for the second consecutive time. This was particularly helpful because OTIF was renovating its building, including its meeting room. Special thanks were extended to Ms Linda Ay for coordinating the preparations.

The list of participants is attached to these minutes as [Annex I](#).

The Secretariat informed the meeting that it had prepared slides to introduce each agenda item. After the meeting, these slides would be sent to all participants.

ELECTION OF CHAIR

The **Secretariat** proposed the United Kingdom (Mr Vaibhav Puri) to chair the session. There were no other proposals. Mr Puri accepted the nomination. WG Tech unanimously elected the UK, in the shape of Mr Vaibhav Puri, to chair the session.

The **Chair** thanked the participants for the trust they had placed in him to chair another session of WG Tech. He highlighted that there were many important items on the agenda and encouraged the participants to participate actively in the discussions. He then welcomed all participants, both in person and those taking part remotely, and said he was confident that this would be a successful meeting.

1 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The **Secretariat** reminded the meeting that the provisional agenda for the 53rd session of WG Tech had been submitted with the invitation letter TECH-24031 of 19 July 2024.

After the **Chair** ascertained that there were no comments or proposals for amendments, he concluded that the agenda was approved ([Annex II – Approved agenda](#)).

2 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS SESSION

Document: [WG Tech 52 draft minutes](#)

The **Secretariat** informed the meeting that the draft minutes had been sent on 23 July 2024 to participants who had attended the 52nd session of WG Tech. The draft minutes had been modified according to proposals from CH and uploaded for the attention of WG Tech 53. At the meeting, ERA asked for a minor correction to add a year (2025) to the date that the RISC committee meeting would take place. There were no further comments. The Chair therefore concluded that the minutes of the 52nd session of WG Tech were approved.

3 INFORMATION FROM THE OTIF SECRETARIAT

The **Secretariat** provided an update on relevant information since the 52nd session of WG Tech, as follows;

- Circular letter ([OTIF-24004-CTE16](#) of 21 June 2024)¹ concerning the list of decisions of CTE 16, sent to Member States of OTIF, Associate Members of OTIF, regional organisations which have acceded to COTIF and international associations that are invited to the CTE.

¹ [Activities](#) > [Technical Interoperability](#) > [Committee of Technical Experts](#) > [Decisions](#)

- Depository notification ([NOT-24009](#) of 12 July 2024)² concerning the revised UTP WAG, UTP Noise and UTP TCRC, and modified Appendix I to UTP TAF adopted by CTE 16. These modifications would enter into force on 1 January 2025, unless one quarter of the Member States submit an objection before the deadline of 12 November 2024.
- China's application to become an associate member of OTIF. As a consequence of objections raised against the application, the matter had to be referred to the General Assembly. The application would therefore be discussed at the 16th General Assembly of OTIF on 25-29 September 2024.
- Circular letter (NOT-24008 of 28 June 2024) concerning Moldova's application for accession to COTIF. Moldova's accession took effect on 1 September 2024 and it became the 51st Member State of OTIF. Moldova had declared that it would only apply Appendix B (CIM) and no other Appendices to the Convention.
- Depository notification (NOT-24018 of 7 August 2024) concerning Austria's approval of the modifications to COTIF adopted by the 13th General Assembly (2018), which included the adoption of Appendix H (EST) and modifications to Appendices E (CUI) and G (ATMF).
- Circular letter (TECH-24036-JCGE of 22 July 2024) concerning the cancellation of the 7th session of the Joint Coordinating Group of Experts (JCGE).
- A high-level meeting that took place between OTIF's Secretary General and Türkiye's Minister of Transport. The discussion focused on Türkiye's role in international rail transport, the integration of COTIF into Turkish law, its railway connections and infrastructure projects, and the Luxembourg Protocol.
- The agenda items of OTIF's 16th General Assembly included OTIF's long-term strategy, the election of the Secretary General for the period from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2027, the composition and chair of the Administrative Committee for the period from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2027, the Luxembourg Protocol and China's application to become an associate member of OTIF.

The Secretariat informed the meeting that the handbook for the implementation of the APTU and ATMF Uniform Rules, which had been approved by CTE 16, was now available online in French, German and English and that it could be accessed and downloaded from OTIF's website: [Activities](#) > [Technical Interoperability](#).

4 FOR DISCUSSION

WG Tech 53 reviewed the documents listed below. Participants were invited to provide further written comments by mid-October 2024. After that, the OTIF Secretariat would finalise the working documents and publish them on 21 October for review by WG Tech 54.

4.1 Draft proposal for revision of UTP LOC&PAS

Document: [TECH-24016 v2](#) Draft working document, version 2 of 19 August 2024

The **Secretariat** presented the second version of draft working document TECH-24016 of 19 August 2024. The changes in comparison to the first version were highlighted in yellow. It then summarised the main changes.

The **Chair** thanked the Secretariat for preparing the document and opened the floor for comments.

CH reminded the meeting that it had three specific cases (SCs) in the current UTP LOC&PAS: maximum pressure variations in tunnels (7.3.2.9), pantograph head geometry (7.3.2.13) and pantograph contact force and dynamic behaviour (7.3.2.14)³. CH had considered deleting the SC on maximum pressure variations in tunnels (7.3.2.9), as this was no longer relevant. Furthermore, the pantograph "specific cases" could perhaps be removed from the UTP as well, as these were not included as specific cases in the TSIs either and the provisions were included in the NTRs, which had been notified to OTIF's Secretary General. The Land

² [Activities](#) > [Technical Interoperability](#) > [Notifications](#) > [2024](#)

³ In TECH-24016 v2: Pantograph head geometry (7.3.2.12) and Pantograph contact force and dynamic behaviour (7.3.2.13)

Transport Agreement (LTA) between Switzerland and the EU (LTA-Annex I), contained four specific cases in relation to the LOC&PAS TSI, which had not yet been referenced in the UTP LOC&PAS. CH was still considering how best to refer to these specific cases in the new version of the UTP. One option was to refer directly to LTA-Annex I. This would avoid any discrepancy between the different international agreements. CH would coordinate its proposals with NO and with the European Commission (EC).

NO informed the meeting that it was currently formulating its specific cases, with a view to including them in the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement by 25 October 2024. This date fell just after the date on which the WG Tech 54 documents would be published. However, the final texts for the EEA Agreement could still affect the texts for the UTP. **NO** proposed that it would submit to the Secretariat a preliminary text proposal for the UTPs by early October. It was anticipated that the EEA text would be finalised by the time WG Tech 54 met. If necessary, **NO** could still propose adjustments to the UTP wording at the session.

The **Secretariat** supported the process proposed by **NO**.

CH supported **NO**'s proposed approach and informed the meeting that it would also submit text proposals concerning its specific cases in the UTPs to the OTIF Secretariat at the beginning of October.

In view of the proposals for specific cases by both **CH** and **NO**, the **Secretariat** presented an overview (see below) of its understanding of the commonalities and differences between specific cases (SCs) and national technical requirements (NTRs).

NO welcomed the Secretariat's overview and supported it.

The **EC** welcomed and supported the Secretariat's overview. It emphasised the need to harmonise the approach with regard to SCs. The EC agreed that parameters that were not covered by UTPs should not be treated as SCs, as they would not be deviations from UTP requirements. It noted that there were many SCs that referred to NTRs. It highlighted the importance of determining whether these references were due to rules being outside the scope of UTPs or whether they concerned requirements in addition to the UTPs. The EC was of the view that if NTRs were actually deviations from UTP requirements, they should be formulated as SCs and be subject to approval by the CTE. The EC supported the approach proposed by **CH** and **NO**. It suggested that instead of a detailed description of the specific case, the UTP could refer to bilateral agreements, with links provided on OTIF's website.

The **UK** welcomed and supported the Secretariat's overview. The UK requested clarification on the process for notifying and whether an NTR that was referred to in a specific case would be subject to scrutiny by the CTE. In the UK's view, many NTRs were established through domestic legal processes and served multiple purposes both internationally and domestically. Some NTRs had to be modified regularly. It was concerned that if a specific case referred to a document issued by a Member State, this document could no longer be modified without CTE approval. The UK saw the importance of transparency for NTRs, but also emphasised the need for pragmatism.

After the exchange of views, WG Tech agreed on the following guiding principles:

- An SC is more transparent than an NTR and is therefore preferable in principle.
- If the assessment method of an SC is too complex to describe in the UTP, it may refer to an NTR.
- An SC is primarily used to specify a deviation from a requirement in the UTP and NTRs are mainly used to define requirements in addition to the UTP. In other words, NTRs should not contradict UTPs, whereas in principle, SCs may do so.
- For elements that are linked to or covered by a TSI but not by a UTP (e.g. SRT, ENE, CCS), NTRs may be best suited.
- NTRs are notified to the Secretary General by Member States and published without being scrutinised by the CTE.
- SCs are subject to scrutiny by the CTE, as they are part of the UTP.
- Consequently, if an SC refers to a document issued by a Member State, it should refer to a specific version of this document.
- Solutions should take into account the users of the UTP/NTR and the ease of administration.

The **Secretariat** thanked the meeting for the useful discussion and for improving the overview. In reply to the UK, it recognised the necessity for legal certainty, whilst also allowing Contracting States to modify or adjust national requirements without undue burden.

CH emphasised the importance of harmonising the approaches of OTIF Contracting States in relation to SCs and NTRs. To this end, CH proposed to coordinate bilaterally with NO, which NO welcomed. The **EC** expressed interest in joining these bilateral discussions to understand the issues better and to contribute to reaching a collective, harmonised solution for both states.

HU highlighted the impact of national rules in CSs on international traffic and stressed that these rules must be publicly available. HU supported CH's efforts to find a solution to make these requirements accessible, either as SCs or as NTRs. In this context, HU asked NO to share the current SCs for LOC&PAS applicable to NO in the EEA⁴.

With regard to modifications to the text in TECH-24016, the **UK** suggested deleting the word “foreign” in Section 1, and correcting the word “hall” to “shall” in point 4.2.7.1.4.

The **EC** suggested an improvement to the last paragraph in Section 1 to reflect the outcome of the discussion on SCs.

All the amendments were shown on the screen and tacitly accepted.

The **UK** noted that the text in point 4.2.3.4.2 letter d), point 8, second paragraph should be editorially improved and better structured. It proposed to provide the Secretariat with some suggestions. The meeting welcomed the suggestion.

The **Chair** summarised the discussion and noted that the outcome of the discussion on specific cases would also apply to other UTPs. He then concluded as follows:

- WG Tech reviewed document TECH-24016 v2 dated 19 August 2024.
- Switzerland informed the meeting that it was still considering how to refer to Switzerland's specific cases in the UTPs. It wished to ensure alignment between the UTPs and its specific cases for the TSIs, which were outlined in the bilateral EU-CH Land Transport Agreement (LTA-Annex I). In addition, some existing specific cases could perhaps be removed because Switzerland had already notified OTIF's Secretary General of these provisions as National Technical Requirements (NTRs) (by means of a link to the FOT website).
- The Secretariat presented an overview of its views on the differences between NTRs and specific cases (SCs). WG Tech welcomed the overview presented by the Secretariat and, after making minor changes, agreed with the overview.
- Norway indicated that it would be able to provide a draft proposal concerning its SCs in early October, so that these could be included in the working documents for the next session of WG Tech. The SCs would then still be under discussion with the European Commission; however, it would be able to confirm the texts at the next WG Tech meeting.
- Switzerland and Norway would be in contact bilaterally and with the European Commission, with a view to harmonising their approaches to SCs and NTRs in relation to UTPs.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to update the document for review at the next session, with the aim of submitting it to CTE 17 for adoption.

4.2 Draft proposal for revision of UTP PRM

Document: [TECH-24017 v2](#) Draft working document, version 2

The **Secretariat** presented the second version of draft working document TECH-24017 dated 19 August 2024. The changes compared to the previous version were highlighted in yellow. There were clarifications with regard to the scope, and with regard to the application of the UTP. The list of SCs was modified and

⁴ At the meeting, Norway provided the following link: <https://www.efta.int/sites/default/files/documents/legal-texts/eea/other-legal-documents/adopted-joint-committee-decisions/2015%20-%20English/187-2015.pdf>

there were several editorial corrections. The Secretariat emphasised that the purpose of the UTP PRM was to set out minimum requirements for the acceptance of vehicles in international traffic, rather than to harmonise policies concerning accessibility for persons with reduced mobility (PRM). In this regard, vehicle requirements were mandatory, while accessibility to stations remained subject to the laws applicable in the state concerned and was therefore optional in the UTP. With regard to compatibility between vehicles and the infrastructure, the main parameter was the interface between the train and the platform. The platform geometry was defined in UTP INF and the vehicle entrance geometry in the UTP PRM.

CH suggested changing the new formulation in point 01 clause (2), which conflicted with the principle of NNTR CH-TSI-PRM-001 – “Independent access to vehicles” (also in the LTA-Annex I and notified as an NTR to OTIF’s SG). In line with NNTR CH-TSI-PRM-001, CH also pointed out its “wheelchair boarding” specific case, which was already included in the UTP PRM (7.3.2.1). Swiss law required that PRM, including wheelchair users, must be able to board vehicles independently from the platform. It noted that in Switzerland, the same rules applied to vehicles used in international traffic as for vehicles used in domestic traffic, as foreign trains were integrated into scheduled domestic services in CH. Swiss law did not therefore allow a general exception for foreign trains. When an exception was granted by the FOT, the railway undertaking’s staff were required to provide an alternative technical aid (e.g. wheelchair lift on the railway platform). CH therefore proposed a less restrictive formulation in point 01 clause (2).

The **Secretariat** explained the principle that vehicles complying with the UTP/TSI should be accepted in international traffic, unless there were relevant specific cases or notified NTRs (which there were for CH). It noted that the UTP PRM defined different platform heights and different train entrance heights to reflect the standards of different Contracting States. The UTP PRM therefore assumed that operational arrangements, such as boarding aids for wheelchair users, might be required for international traffic. The Secretariat agreed with CH that the text in Section 0 point (2) and Section 1 could be improved to make it clearer. Based on the discussion that followed, the Secretariat modified these texts and showed them on the screen. WG Tech tacitly agreed with the modifications.

The **UK** requested clarification of why the text in point 4.3.1 of Table 10 had been modified. The **Secretariat** noted the question and would provide feedback at the next session of WG Tech.

The **Chair** summarised the discussion and concluded as follows:

- WG Tech reviewed document TECH-24017 v2 dated 19 August 2024.
- WG Tech suggested some minor changes and clarifications.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to update the document for review at the next session, with the aim of submitting it to CTE 17 for adoption.

4.3 Draft proposal for revision of UTP Marking

Document:	TECH-24024 v2	Draft working document, version 2
	TECH-24028 v2	Explanatory document, version 2

The **Secretariat** presented the second version of draft working document **TECH-24024** dated 19 August 2024. The changes in comparison to the previous version were highlighted in yellow and included clarification on the scope and application, modification of the table footnotes in point 10 and editorial corrections. The Secretariat then presented the second version of draft explanatory document **TECH-24028** dated 19 August 2024 with the changes indicated in track changes. These included minor editorial modifications.

The Secretariat also informed the meeting that it had received comments from CER and UIP on both working documents shortly before the session, so these comments had not yet been processed in the working documents. The main comment from CER and UIP was that, according to Chapter 11 of the UTP Marking, the first digit 0, 1, 2, and 3 could only be used on wagons that complied with the requirements of point 7.1.2 of UTP WAG and **all** the conditions outlined in Appendix C, i.e. wagons eligible for the “GE” marking. To clarify this, some modifications to the explanatory document were required. The Secretariat would update the documents for review at the next session of WG Tech.

CER thanked the Secretariat for taking into account the comments from CER and UIP.

The **UK** suggested that the retroactive application of the UTP Marking to all vehicles, as mentioned in the last paragraph in point (3) of Section 0, should be addressed either in the UTP or in the explanatory document.

The **Secretariat** agreed with the UK and confirmed that the UTP Marking applied to all vehicles in international traffic, including those predating the UTP, and suggested that this be explained in the explanatory document.

The **Chair** thanked CER, UIP and the UK for their input and expressed WG Tech's appreciation for the explanatory document in particular. He summarised the discussion and concluded as follows:

- WG Tech reviewed documents TECH-24024 v2 and TECH-24028 v2, both dated 19 August 2024.
- UIP and CER provided the Secretariat with some comments before the meeting. The modifications pertaining to these comments would be reviewed by WG Tech 54.
- The United Kingdom suggested clarifying in the explanatory document that the UTP Marking applied retroactively.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to update documents TECH-24024 and TECH-24028 for review at the next session, with the aim of submitting them to CTE 17 for adoption and approval respectively.

4.4 Draft proposal for revision of UTP INF

Document: [TECH-24018 v2](#) Draft working document, version 2

The **Secretariat** presented the second version of the draft working document TECH-24018 dated 19 August 2024. The main changes were highlighted in yellow and included clarification of the geographical scope, refinement of the wording concerning interfaces with the UTP PRM, alignment of the presentation of specific cases with other UTPs, deletion of the UK specific cases related to domestic traffic only and editorial corrections.

CH reiterated its intention to align its specific cases in all UTPs with the specific cases for the TSIs, as defined in the LTA-Annex I, and that it would send text proposals to the Secretariat. However, at the time of the meeting, the LTA-Annex I did not yet contain INF specific cases (although these had already been notified to the EU). Therefore, at this stage, CH could not propose texts for its specific cases for the UTP INF.

The **UK** noted that in point 7.7.1.1, the reference to the speed conversion table (Appendix G) had been deleted. The UK still had to consider whether this change was useful, and whether keeping the text would be beneficial for international traffic.

The **Chair** summarised the discussion and concluded as follows:

- WG Tech reviewed document TECH-24018 v2 dated 19 August.
- Switzerland indicated that in future, it might also have specific cases related to the INF TSI, as it had already notified these to the EU. Once these were integrated into the LTA-Annex I, the UTP INF should be updated with a reference to the LTA-Annex I. It was not yet clear when the LTA-Annex I would be updated in this regard.
- The United Kingdom would consider whether it agreed with removing the conversion between miles per hour and kilometres per hour in relation to traffic on the national network.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to update the document for review at the next session, with the aim of submitting it to CTE 17 for adoption.

4.5 Draft update to the guide for the application of the UTP WAG

Document: [TECH-24026 v2](#) Draft document, version 2

The **Secretariat** presented the second version of the draft working document TECH-24026 dated 19 August 2024. This version contained amendments to the previous version, which were shown in track changes mode. In the updated version, the term “vehicle for general operation” had been replaced by the term “interchangeable vehicle”. Furthermore, use of the terms “vehicle” and “freight wagons” had been harmonised throughout the text.

The **Chair** noted that there were no other comments. He concluded as follows:

- WG Tech reviewed document TECH-24026 v2 dated 19 August 2024 and had no substantive comments.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to re-issue the document for review at the next session, with the aim of submitting it to CTE 17 for approval.

4.6 Draft update to the guide for the application of the UTP Noise

Document: [TECH-24025 v2](#) Draft document, version 2

The **Secretariat** presented the second version of the draft document TECH-24025 dated 19 August 2024. This version contained amendments to the previous version made in track changes.

CH thanked the Secretariat for including the clarification concerning the notification of quieter routes. It also noted that the link concerning the assessment of the acoustic performance of a brake block was not accessible. DE provided an updated link⁵.

The **UK** asked whether the updates to quieter routes, which might occur more frequently than updates to the UTPs, were reflected on OTIF’s website. It suggested that the Secretariat review the consistency between the UTP Noise and the application guide regarding the notification and publication of quieter routes.

The **EC** highlighted the importance of publishing quieter routes on OTIF’s website and suggested adding a link to the website in the guide. It also commented on the blue rectangle on page 14, concerning point 7.4 of the UTP Noise. It suggested that quieter routes for non-EU CSs should be listed as a permanent or temporary case in point 7.3. Specific cases, instead of in point 7.4. Particular implementing rules.

The **Secretariat** informed the meeting that only Switzerland had notified the Secretariat of its quieter routes and that its entire railway network was designated as such. This information was already included in the UTP Noise and it therefore seemed superfluous to publish additional information on OTIF’s website. In view of the comments, the Secretariat suggested that it would cross-check the texts of the application guide and the UTP requirements and update the application guide as necessary.

The **Chair** noted that there were no other comments and concluded as follows:

- WG Tech reviewed document TECH-24025 v2 dated 19 August 2024.
- It asked the Secretariat to check the consistency between the UTP Noise and the application guide with regard to the notification and publication of quieter routes and to make modifications if necessary.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to update the document for review at the next session, with the aim of submitting it to CTE 17 for approval.

⁵ https://www.dzsf.bund.de/SharedDocs/Textbausteine/DZSF/Forschungsberichte/Forschungsbericht_2022-17.html?nn=2208196

4.7 Draft update to the handbook for the implementation and application of the APTU and ATMF Uniform Rules

Document: [TECH-24034](#)

Draft document

The **Secretariat** reminded the meeting that the first version of the handbook had been reviewed and approved by CTE 16, published on OTIF's website⁶ and distributed to interested parties. In addition, CTE 16 mandated the Secretariat and WG Tech to prepare necessary modifications to the handbook and to submit any substantive modifications to a future session of CTE for approval; editorial corrections and non-substantive modifications could be made directly by the Secretariat. The Secretariat presented all the amendments, which were shown in track changes mode and summarised in an amendment table. The draft document would be submitted to CTE 17, which could approve it as version 2 of the handbook.

The **EC** requested clarification of the amendment on page 28, which suggested that registration entities should ensure that all relevant vehicle data were accessible to authorities and railway actors. The EC did not have any objections to the amendment, but suggested that drafting a separate explanatory document to OTIF's specifications to vehicle registers or including further details in the handbook might be helpful. The EC noted the importance of having developed digital tools for mutual access to vehicle data between the EU and non-EU CSs, as this work remained incomplete. It expressed interest in exploring and following up on the decisions taken by CTE 13 and CTE 14 concerning the facilitation of access to vehicle data for vehicles used in international traffic.⁷

The **Chair** thanked the EC for its observation and recalled the past discussions concerning access to vehicle registers. He noted that work on that subject had been paused to allow the EC and ERA to make progress on the design of the EVR and agreed that it would be a good time to revisit the issue.

The **Secretariat** welcomed the EC's observation and confirmed that the discussion about vehicle registers had been challenging in the past. It highlighted the importance of focusing on the practical needs for vehicle registration and access to vehicle data. For example, when an EU vehicle entered the UK, the IM, RU and competent authority in the UK should have access to the vehicle data, preferably through the EVR. If it were not possible to access the data, the vehicle might have to be (additionally) registered in the UK's vehicle register so that the IM, RU and competent authority could access the data. Conversely, the OTIF specifications for vehicle registers required that a UK vehicle that entered the EU would have to be (additionally) registered in the EVR. For this purpose, requests for registration in the EVR had to be made to the registration entity in the first EU country it entered (FR in this example). This current situation, where the data on one vehicle potentially had to be recorded in more than one register, was not ideal.

HU noted that the UK had a narrower infrastructure gauge than most EU networks.

The **UK** acknowledged the specific GB gauge and explained that route compatibility checks had to be carried out before using any vehicle.

The **EC** asked non-EU CSs whether they could easily access the relevant vehicle data. It considered that the EC and ERA might need to clarify procedures for accessing the EVR. It also requested feedback from interested CSs as to whether the current system was effective or needed improvement.

The **Secretariat** agreed to clarify access to vehicle data in the handbook by including explanations to help users more easily find specifications for vehicle registers and the list of registering entities, which was available on OTIF's website. In addition, it would propose guidelines on sharing information related to incidents and accidents in a new version of the draft handbook, which would be reviewed at the next session of WG Tech.

⁶ Handbook for the implementation and application of the APTU UR and ATMF UR, https://otif.org/fileadmin/docs/LegalTexts/COTIF/TechnicalInteroperability/Handbook_for_APTU_and_ATMF-v1-e-12.6.2024.pdf

⁷ Point 8.2 of CTE 13 and point 6.4 of CTE 14; [Activities](#) > [Technical Interoperability](#) > [Committee of Technical Experts](#) > [Reports](#)

The **Chair** encouraged CSs to discuss potential improvements to the EVR with the EC. He noted that there were no other comments and concluded as follows:

- WG Tech reviewed document TECH-24034 dated 19 August 2024.
- It discussed how information could be retrieved from the vehicle registers. It suggested including a reference to the list of registering entities published on OTIF’s website.
- The Secretariat informed the meeting that it would complement the draft handbook with a section on sharing information related to incidents and accidents.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to update the document for review at the next session, with the aim of submitting it to CTE 17 for approval.

4.8 Draft proposal for Annex D to the EST UR concerning Supervision

Document: [TECH-24033 v2](#) Draft document, version 2

The **Secretariat** reminded the meeting that the previous version of the document had been reviewed by CTE 16 and that WG Tech had been asked to prepare a revised draft. The main modifications to the draft included the addition of a rule clarifying that documented evidence compliant with EU law is considered equivalent to that required by COTIF if the underlying EU rules and COTIF are equivalent. Other changes involved clarifying the obligation for supervising authorities to cooperate and coordinate their activities, as well as minor text modifications for clarity. All changes were shown in track changes mode.

ERA thanked the Secretariat for including the amendments proposed by the EC and suggested an editorial amendment to Article 4 on page 4, which should refer to the latest version of the CSM for Supervision, as last amended by Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/782 of June 12, 2020. ERA also noted the importance of collecting data from various sources, as set out in Annex 1, and noted that EU law, which includes the Whistleblower Directive (EU 2019/1937), has a broader scope than COTIF. It noted that it was necessary to protect data and ensure confidentiality.

The **EC** agreed with ERA and clarified that the EU Whistleblower Directive applied in general, including for railway purposes. It was not therefore necessary for the EU to have specific rules for the protection of whistle-blowers in the CSM for Supervision. Nevertheless, the subject was relevant and important in terms of supervision.

The **UK** was not in favour of harmonising the requirements for whistleblowing in the CSM for Supervision. It noted the importance of establishing clear application boundaries on the subject, and wondered whether this was a key element of supervision.

The **Secretariat** recognised the importance of the subject for supervision, but found it challenging to include whistleblowing requirements in the draft document. It noted that the aim of COTIF was to facilitate international traffic and did not think that the harmonisation of whistleblowing policies among its Member States came under the scope of COTIF. In the Secretariat’s view, the protection of whistle-blowers should be included in company policy or in national law, and should therefore fall under the responsibility of each CS.

The **UK** requested clarification of Article 4 § 5, in particular whether documentary evidence compliant with COTIF would also be recognised as equivalent under EU law, in the same way as documentary evidence compliant with EU law was deemed equivalent under COTIF.

The **Secretariat** was of the view that documentary evidence established according to COTIF had to be accepted by all CSs for the purpose of COTIF. This included acceptance in the EU, as far as the documentary evidence was used in the scope of COTIF (international traffic by rail). This did not have to be mentioned specifically, as it was obvious. For purposes outside the scope of COTIF (e.g. for domestic traffic, or for marked access), the EU (or any CS) had no obligation to accept documentary evidence established in accordance with COTIF.

The **Chair** noted that there were no comments and concluded as follows:

- WG Tech reviewed document TECH-24033 v2 dated 19 August 2024 and had no substantive proposals.

- The meeting discussed whether provisions related to the protection of whistle-blowers should be included.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to update the document for review at the next session, with the aim of submitting it to CTE 17 for consideration.

4.9 Discussion paper concerning the integration of additional railway systems in the UTPs with a view to the potential accession of GCC Member States to COTIF

Document: [TECH-24036](#)

Draft discussion paper

The **Secretariat** reminded participants that the GCC and OTIF had signed an MoU about a decade ago with a view to the possible accession of GCC MSs to COTIF. The application of COTIF technical interoperability rules in the GCC area would have several benefits. Firstly, this would lead to alignment with the EU and OTIF vehicle requirements and with the procedures and responsibilities for vehicle approvals. Secondly, responsibilities for vehicle maintenance and responsibilities for the use of vehicles would be harmonised. Thirdly, it would promote the creation of possible future railway connections between Europe and the GCC area and all the states along these connections. Lastly, it would facilitate the removal of technical obstacles to trade in terms of railway material, as the same technical standards would be used in all participating states. It would therefore give the railway industry the opportunity to design and construct vehicle types for an area of use that includes both the European and the GCC networks. It was therefore important that WG Tech reflect on the possible integration of GCC vehicle requirements into UTPs.

The **UK** welcomed the paper and expressed its overall support. It noted that the initiative was practical, in line with ongoing discussions within WG Tech, and it would facilitate international traffic in other regions. The UK pointed out that many countries, for example in South America, faced similar challenges in balancing American standards with a legal framework for railways that resembled that of the EU. In its view, addressing these disparities at an early stage would be of benefit both to the GCC and to other regions. In addition, the UK highlighted the significant trade potential between CSs and the GCC and noted that point 13 of the paper effectively encapsulated the benefits of harmonisation and underscored the importance of such an initiative.

ERA welcomed the paper and suggested the following additions to the text:

- point 8 should mention that new technologies were being developed in Europe, such as the Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC) system, which would improve efficiency;
- point 14 should indicate that the different customs regimes lead to fragmentation and challenges to be overcome, even with proposed rail connections from the Persian Gulf to Europe;
- in point 16, the term “admission of rolling stock” should be used instead of “approval of rolling stock”.

The **Secretariat** welcomed the feedback. It explained that with regard to point 8, the purpose was to clarify the choices made by the GCC when it decided to apply American standards and not to criticise the European system.

HU welcomed the paper and suggested including a reference to the gauges used in the GCC so that the technical differences could be explored.

The **EC** appreciated the paper as a positive step toward enhancing collaboration through COTIF with the GCC and its stakeholders. It suggested addressing performance in point 8 without directly comparing the EU and the GCC railway systems. The EU noted that interoperable wagons were limited to an axle load of 22.5 tonnes and stressed that it would not be feasible to change this standard. It suggested that the Secretariat should consider the specific requirements for international traffic between CSs and the GCC or within the GCC.

With regard to the proposed course of action, the **EU** supported the first two points, but suggested that the remaining points be included in the analysis. The objective of the analysis should be to identify the UTP requirements that would need to be adapted or added, particularly for international traffic between the GCC and non-EU CSs, such as Türkiye, Iraq and Syria. It was also suggested that responsibilities should be clarified and that the next steps should be outlined.

The **Secretariat** clarified that the aim of the initiative was not to adapt or harmonise European or American standards, but to determine whether American and European standards could both be recognised for the purpose of complying with the UTP essential requirements. It cited as an example the fact that the American and European standards concerning vehicle strength might be different, but that application of any of the standards resulted in a vehicle that was strong enough to meet the related essential requirement. It clarified that it would request the GCC requirements on behalf of WG Tech. Following that, WG Tech could discuss and analyse the differences between the two systems and consider possible solutions for the integration of requirements. The Secretariat then modified the text accordingly, which was shown on the screen and tacitly approved.

The **Chair** noted that there were no other comments and concluded as follows:

- WG Tech reviewed document TECH-24036 dated 19 August 2024 and suggested minor changes to the document.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to ask GCC for the requirements applicable to GCC freight wagons and to analyse the functional and technical differences between the UTPs and the GCC system, including possible solutions to overcome them.
- WG Tech requested the Secretariat to update the document for review at the next session, with the aim of submitting it to CTE 17 for discussion.

5 DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPEAN UNION REGULATIONS THAT ARE OF RELEVANCE TO COTIF (PRESENTED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR RAILWAYS)

The **EC** informed the meeting that it had asked ERA to revise several TSIs, including the development of TSI requirements for wide track gauge systems (1524 mm). It then explained the multiannual TSI revision framework and priorities for the coming period and noted that the non-EU Member States, such as Moldova, which had recently joined OTIF, could also benefit from these developments. The EC also noted the relevance of revising TSIs to reflect the UTPs and suggested that the OTIF Secretariat could share the proposed request for the TSI Revision⁸ with the participants of WG Tech. In addition, the EC invited participants to visit its stand at the forthcoming InnoTrans 2024 in Berlin to discuss any topics of interest⁹.

ERA confirmed that it had received the request for TSI Revision from the EC and informed the meeting that, although it had been active over the summer, there was nothing substantial to report compared to the previous session of WG Tech.

The **Chair** thanked the EC and ERA for providing the update.

6 CROSS REFERENCE TABLE OF EU AND OTIF TERMINOLOGY

Document: [TECH-17049](#)

Working document for review by WG Tech 53
(published on 19 August 2024)

The **Secretariat** presented the document. Compared with the version submitted to WG Tech 52, the amendments included the updated text concerning vehicle authorisation for placing on the market and type authorisation under EU law (pp. 21-23) and references to EU law in force. The amendments also included minor editorial improvements. All these amendments were indicated in track changes mode.

WG Tech took note of the document without comment.

⁸ The relevant documents concerned: Multi-annual TSI revision framework; Explanatory note outlining the priorities guiding the EC request and List and description of actions related to the Multi-annual TSI revision framework.

⁹ At the meeting, the EC provided the following link: <https://www.era.europa.eu/content/innotrans-2024-europe-rail>

7 EU – OTIF EQUIVALENCE TABLE

Document: [TECH-18024](#)

Working document for review by WG Tech 53
(published on 19 August 2024)

The **Secretariat** presented the document. Compared with the version submitted to WG Tech 52, there were minor editorial corrections, an update concerning the status of documents following the decisions of CTE 16, notifications by the Secretary General of OTIF, and ongoing work of WG Tech. All these amendments were indicated in track changes mode.

WG Tech took note of the document without comment.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The **Secretariat** announced that it would submit a paper to the next session of WG Tech addressing the extent of implementation of the ATMF UR by Contracting States. It explained the background and context that had led to the initiative and expressed concern regarding the lack of implementation of the ATMF UR in certain countries. The purpose of the paper would be to address these concerns in practical terms, to propose a structured approach for discussion and to seek feedback from participants at the next session of WG Tech.

ERA offered its support and expressed its willingness to assist the Secretariat with any specific country where contact might have been lost.

9 NEXT SESSIONS

The following sessions will be held in hybrid format:

- 54th session of WG Tech on 19 November 2024 in Belgrade
- 17th session of CTE on 17 and 18 June 2025 in Bern
- 55th session of WG Tech on 19 June 2025 in Bern.

CLOSING REMARKS

The **Chair** thanked all participants for their productive contributions and highlighted the valuable discussion on specific cases, national rules and quieter routes. On behalf of WG Tech, he thanked the host, the Federal Office of Transport of Switzerland. The Chair also thanked the OTIF Secretariat for its hard work and for preparing all the meeting documents.

On behalf of the delegates, the **Secretariat** thanked the Chair for his work in chairing the 53rd session of WG Tech. It extended special thanks to the host, especially to Ms Linda Ay, for coordinating and supporting the meeting logistics.

The **Chair** then closed WG Tech 53.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ANNEX I

I. Gouvernements / Regierungen / Governments**Albanie/Albanien/Albania**

M ^{me} /Fr./Ms remote	Eneida Elezi	Foreign Affairs responsible officer Albanian Railways/Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy
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Allemagne/Deutschland/Germany

M./Hr./Mr remote	Philipp Unger	Technischer Regierungsamtsrat Eisenbahn-Bundesamt
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Arménie/Armenien/Armenia

M ^{me} /Fr./Ms remote	Diana Ananyan	Expert, Chief Specialist Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure
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M ^{me} /Fr./Ms remote	Anahit Davtyan	“iGorts” Program Specialist Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure
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Autriche/Österreich/Austria

M./Hr./Mr remote	Thomas Helnwein	Dipl.-Ing., Amtssachverständiger Bundesministerium für Klimaschutz, Umwelt, Energie, Mobilität, Innovation und Technologie
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Bulgarie/Bulgarien/Bulgaria

M ^{me} /Fr./Ms In person	Tzanka Tzankova	Expert Ministry of Transport and Communications
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M ^{me} /Fr./Ms remote	Viktoriya Dzhermanska	Expert Ministry of Transport and Communications
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Croatie/Kroatien/Croatia

M./Hr./Mr remote	Darjan Konjić	Senior Advisor Ministry of Sea, Transport and Infrastructure
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M ^{me} /Fr./Ms remote	Matea Jakšić	Advisor Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure
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France/Frankreich/France

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M./Hr./Mr remote	Üzeyir Morgül	İSTATİSTİKÇİ, GELİR YÖNETİMİ TCDD TAŞIMACILIK A.Ş. YOLCU
M ^{me} /Fr./Ms remote	Cigdem Unuvar	Interpreter TCDD Tasimacilik A.S. (Turkish State Railways Transport Joint Stock Company) Strategy and Corporate Development Department Directorate General of TCDD

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**Commission européenne/
Europäische Kommission/
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European Commission - Directorate General for Mobility
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**European Union Agency for Railways
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M./Hr./Mr Christoph **Kaupat**
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Monitoring, Analysis, Research and Stakeholders Unit,
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**III. Organisations et associations internationales
Internationale Organisationen und Verbände
International Organisations and Associations**

CER

M./Hr./Mr Gilles **Quesnel**
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Directeur Interopérabilité, Normalisation et Recherche
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CER / SNCF

OSJD

S'est excusée.
Hat sich entschuldigt.
Sent apologies

UIC

M./Hr./Mr Jozef **Fázik**
in person

Senior advisor
Union internationale des chemins de fer (UIC)

**IV. Secrétariat
Sekretariat
Secretariat**

M./Hr./Mr Bas **Leermakers**
in person

Head of Technical Interoperability Department

M^{me}/Fr./Ms
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Maria **Price**

Expert in Technical Interoperability Department

M./Hr./Mr
in person

Dragan **Nešić**

Expert in Technical Interoperability Department

APPROVED AGENDA**ANNEX II**

1. Approval of the agenda
2. Approval of the minutes of the previous session
3. Information from the OTIF Secretariat
4. For discussion:
 - 4.1. Draft proposal for revision of the UTP LOC&PAS
 - 4.2. Draft proposal for revision of the UTP PRM
 - 4.3. Draft proposal for revision of the UTP Marking and for an explanatory document
 - 4.4. Draft proposal for revision of the UTP INF
 - 4.5. Draft update to the guide for the application of the UTP WAG
 - 4.6. Draft update to the guide for the application of the UTP Noise
 - 4.7. Draft update to the handbook for the implementation and application of the APTU and ATMF Uniform Rules
 - 4.8. Draft proposal for Annex D to the EST UR concerning Supervision
 - 4.9. Discussion paper concerning the integration of additional railway systems in the UTPs with a view to the potential accession of GCC Member States to COTIF
5. Developments in European Union regulations that are of relevance to COTIF (presented by the European Commission and the European Union Agency for Railways)
6. Cross reference table of EU and OTIF terminology
7. EU – OTIF equivalence table
8. Any other business
9. Next sessions