

Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF)

Key features

Type of organisation: Inter-governmental organisation

Charter/Constitution: Convention concerning International Carriage (COTIF), http://otif.org/en/?page_id=53

Membership:

- Nature: Representatives from governments
- Number: 49 members

Year of establishment: 1985

Headquarters: Berne, Switzerland

Secretariat staff: 19 (2017)

Total budget: CHF 3.65 million (EUR 3.4 million) (2017)

Type of activity: Data collection, information exchange, development of legal instruments

Sectors of activity: Carriage by rail (International carriage of passengers and goods, carriage of dangerous goods, carriage vehicles, railway infrastructure, railway material, international rail traffic)

Webpage: www.otif.org

Members

Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

The OTIF has one Associate Member: Jordan; and one adhering Regional economic integration organisation: the European Union.

Observers

OTIF has no permanent observers. Stakeholders in the rail sector, international associations of transporters, customers and non OTIF Member States are regularly invited to participate in the meetings of OTIF bodies and working groups.

Mandate

The aim of OTIF is to promote, improve and facilitate international rail traffic, in particular by establishing and developing systems of uniform law in the contract of international carriage of passengers and goods in international rail traffic, in the contract of use of wagons as means of transport in international rail traffic, in the contract of use of infrastructure in international rail traffic, and the carriage of dangerous goods in international rail traffic; by contributing to the removal of certain obstacles to the crossing of frontiers in international rail traffic; by contributing to interoperability and technical harmonisation in the rail sector; by establishing a uniform procedure for the technical admission of railway material intended for use in international traffic; by monitoring the application of all the rules and recommendations established by the organisation.

IRC processes taking place within the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail



Categories of legal and policy instruments

	Is it taking place within the IO?	Approximate number
Treaties for ratification by States (excluding the funding one)		
Legally binding decisions	√	15
Recommendations	√	5
Political declarations		
Model treaties or law		
Production of technical standards		
Non-binding guidance/best practices document	√	22

Interactions with other international organisations active in the field

Mechanisms of interaction		Approximate number of IOs involved	Examples
Develop joint instruments	√		
MoU or other agreements	√	7	WCO, OSJD, ECO, GCC
Participate in co-ordinating institution	√		
Joint meetings that provide forum for co-ordination	√	6	UNECE, OSJD, EU, UPU
Observe relevant actions of other bodies	√	6	EU, UN, OSJD, WCO
Exchange information	√	10	EU, UN, OSJD, ECO, GCC, OECD

OTIF history

The OTIF was set up on 1 May 1985, pursuant to the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF) which was concluded in 1980. The predecessor of OTIF was the Central Office for International Carriage by Rail, which was set up in 1893. Until the signature of the Protocol of 3 June 1999 (Vilnius Protocol) for the modification of COTIF, the objective of OTIF was principally to develop the uniform systems of law which apply to the carriage of passengers and freight in international through traffic by rail.

Source: Updated from OECD (2016), *International Regulatory Co-operation: The Role of International Organisations in Fostering Better Rules of Globalisation*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264244047-en>