

RESULTS OF THE 15th COMMITTEE OF TECHNICAL EXPERTS AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee of Technical Experts (CTE) held its 15th session on 13 and 14 June 2023 in Bern, Switzerland. The meeting was held in a hybrid format. This article summarises the results of the session, its decisions and its work programme.

31 OTIF Member States (MSs) were present or represented at the session. The European Union was represented by the European Commission. There were also delegates from the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA), the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), the Organisation for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD) and the International Union of Railways (UIC). In line with the invitation, Israel attended as an observer in the framework of ERA's EUMedRail project. The Committee elected the United Kingdom, in the shape of Mr Vaibhav Puri, to chair the session.

Adoption of binding provisions

Revision of the UTP GEN-E concerning the qualifications and independence of assessing entities

The CTE adopted a fully revised version of the Uniform Technical Prescription (UTP) GEN-E. The requirements of UTP GEN-E apply to assessing entities that perform assessments for technical admissions in the scope of the ATMF UR. The changes will improve the clarity and structure of the provisions, specify the scope, particularly in relation to EU law, and align the provisions with the latest provisions applicable in the EU. The revised UTP will replace UTP GEN-E of 1 December 2011 from the moment it enters into force.

Revision of the UTP GEN-G concerning a Common

Safety Method on risk evaluation and assessment

The CTE also adopted a revised version of the UTP GEN-G. The changes will widen the scope to include risk assessments relating to safety management systems in the scope of the EST UR. The revised UTP will apply immediately upon entry into force for the purposes of the APTU and ATMF UR, while for the EST UR, the UTP will only apply once the EST UR have entered into force. The revised UTP will replace UTP GEN-G of 1 January 2014, as last amended on 1 December 2016, from the moment it enters into force.

Revision of the list of technical documents set out in Appendix I to the UTP TAF concerning telematics applications for freight services

Appendix I to the UTP TAF contains references and introduces changes to technical documents which include software coding necessary for the exchange of information and the harmonised implementation of the TAF provisions. Appendix I is regularly updated following an agreed process between ERA and the OTIF Secretariat.

Notification of adopted binding provisions

Following their adoption by the CTE, the Secretary General notified the parties to COTIF of all modifications to the UTPs in depository notification NOT-23015

of 13 July 2023. The depository notification and the adopted documents are available on OTIF's website under: [Activities > Technical Interoperability > Notifications > 2023](#). Subject to the conditions mentioned in the depository notification, the revised UTPs will enter into force on 1 January 2024.

Items concerning approval of non-binding guidance and recommendations

Progress report on drafting and updating the UTP application guides

The CTE reviewed a progress report on updating the application guides. The CTE also approved revised application guides for two UTPs:

- UTP concerning freight wagons, which entered into force on 1 January 2022 (UTP WAG)
- UTP concerning rolling stock noise, which entered into force on 1 April 2021 (UTP Noise)

The application guides are based on the TSI application guides issued by ERA. Additional texts relevant to the application of UTPs is written in blue rectangles and they explain the differences between the UTP and the TSI.

All UTP application guides are published on OTIF's website: [Reference Texts > Technical Interoperability > Prescriptions and Other Rules](#) (in the right-hand column).

Items for discussion

Progress report on development of the annexes to the EST UR (Appendix H to COTIF)

In 2018, the 13th General Assembly adopted the new Appendix H to COTIF, the EST UR. They set out general principles and safety responsibilities for the operation of trains in international traffic. In accordance with Article 34 § 2 of COTIF, two-thirds of the Member States must approve the General Assembly's decision before the EST UR can enter into force.

The General Assembly recommended that the Committee of Technical Experts prepare proposals for annexes to the EST UR before the EST UR enter into force. The proposals could then be adopted by the Committee of Technical Experts without delay after the EST UR enter into force.

The CTE discussed progress on the development of annexes to the future EST UR (Appendix H to COTIF).

The Committee considered the draft proposal for Annex C concerning the Safety Certification procedure. The aim of this annex is to harmonise the procedure for issuing safety certificates, and their content, in order to facilitate the mutual acceptance of conformity assessment results between safety certification authorities in the meaning of Article 5 § 3 of the EST UR. The CTE can only adopt the annexes once the EST UR are in force.

Giving more prominence to provisions dedicated to vehicles suitable for free circulation and general operation in international traffic

WG TECH analysed the feasibility of

developing specific UTPs, or parts thereof, dedicated to vehicles that can be used freely in international traffic.

CTE 15 welcomed the analyses and requested WG TECH to take into account the findings of the analyses when drafting amendments to the UTP WAG and the UTP LOC&PAS.

Next steps in monitoring and assessing implementation of the APTU and ATMF UR

The first step in monitoring and assessing implementation of the APTU and ATMF UR focused on the tasks of the Contracting States. The results of this first step were reviewed by the CTE in 2022. The second step should provide an understanding of how, in practice, the sector, assessing entities and competent authorities apply the rules and procedures within the scope of COTIF. It should also give a better view on whether compliance with the UTP is relevant with regard to authorisation for national use in the CSs. For this purpose, four questionnaires were discussed and agreed. The Secretariat will send the questionnaires to the respective addressees and may follow them up with bilateral discussions, where necessary.

Update on the future railway mobile communication system (FRMCS) and its relevance to OTIF

The CTE took note of developments in the FRMCS specifications and acknowledged the rapid developments in technology and future compatibility with existing signalling systems.

Work programme of the Committee for 2023/2024

The CTE discussed its work

programme for the coming period, which has to be considered in the context of OTIF's 2022/2023 Work Programme. The CTE also made suggestions for the development of OTIF's 2024/2025 Work Programme.

In coordination with WG TECH, the Secretariat was requested to prepare the following for the 16th session of the Committee of Technical Experts:

- Proposals for the revision of UTPs, where UTPs relevant to the admission and use of freight wagons are given priority;
- Proposals to update the application guides to UTPs;
- If feasible, a progress report on the development of annexes to the EST UR, particularly with regard to a Common Safety Method on supervision to be applied by Supervision Authorities;
- A progress report on monitoring and assessing implementation of the APTU and ATMF UR.

Next session

In 2024, CTE 16 will be held in a hybrid format on 11 and 12 June in Bern.

All working documents for the session are published here: [Activities > Technical Interoperability > Committee of Technical Experts > Working Documents > 2023](#)

The list of all decisions taken by the Committee of Technical Experts at its 15th session is published on OTIF's website under: [Activities > Technical Interoperability > Committee of Technical Experts > Decisions](#).

Technical Interoperability Department