



DOCUMENT

**SEMINAR ON OVERCOMING
BORDER CROSSING OBSTACLES
5-6 March 2009, Paris**

*International Union of Railways Input
(UIC)*

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Preparatory work for the next International Transport Forum (Leipzig, 26-29 May)

UIC assists its members in facing the challenge of border crossings

The International Union of Railways is a cooperative association bringing together companies in the rail sector from around the world. As well as making systematic recourse to “benchmarking”, its activities generally focus on studying and implementing measures to facilitate **border crossing by trains, by providing solutions to break down all kinds of barriers, generally technological, commercial, legal and administrative**. The aim is to provide UIC members with ways of improving their performance in a context of worldwide competition.

Working bodies / structures suited to carry out this task

In order to meet these strategic objectives, **UIC has in place and runs its “working bodies”**. These are Forums and Platforms which enable professionals in the rail sector to meet and decide which issues they wish to cooperate on, with participants’ shared competences as a basis. There are thus three Forums reflecting the usual segmentation of rail companies – Infrastructure, Passenger and Freight – as well as several platforms whose lines of work cut across these three fields. These include Technology and Research, Safety, Security, Environment, Energy and Sustainable Development, etc.

Interoperability and standardisation

Since it was founded, **UIC has always worked to develop interoperability, in particular by means of UIC leaflets**, which are prescriptive documents that ensure a certain level of interoperability for rail traffic between countries in Europe and beyond. Part of this work is now carried out by ERA, the European Railway Agency created in 2005, a new player in charge of developing Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI). Nonetheless, these do not render UIC leaflets void, and UIC is currently working to transform the body of leaflets into European standards (CEN, CENELEC and ETSI).

Development of procedures, tools and operational systems to promote interoperability

Beyond this context, UIC brings its expertise to bear in developing procedures, tools and operational systems

- **Procedures:** in the legal field, the development of a General Contract for Use of wagons on international routes (GCU), which is currently used by over 600 companies, totalling over 712,000 wagons;

- **Tools:** in the freight sector, the development of an IT tool which will enable European Infrastructure Managers' and Railway Undertakings' IT systems to be connected, in order to allow real time preparation and tracking of shipments in this sector (implementation of TAF TSI); also in the freight sector, it is developing a single European product for wagon load transport, in order to halt the ongoing decline of this area of business;
- **Operational systems:** through the work of the ERTMS Platform, UIC is supporting the implementation of a single control-command system throughout Europe.

Moreover, in cooperation with national and European authorities, in 2004 UIC launched the **“SchengenRail process”**, which aims to develop a joint method for analysing and managing restrictions at European border points as part of the Schengen Agreement, which enables free movement of persons within the Schengen Area.

This process was validated by the European Commission in June 2006 and has been developed at all external border points in cooperation with the FRONTEX Agency, which has included UIC as one of its official professional partners.

UIC is willing to provide detailed presentations of some of its projects and activities as a demonstration of its work to further border crossings by rail.