


Economic Commission for Europe
Inland Transport Committee
Working Party on Rail Transport
Group of Experts on Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock
First session

Geneva, 2–4 September 2020

**Report of the Group of Experts on Permanent Identification
of Railway Rolling Stock on its first session**
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I. Attendance

1. The Group of Experts on Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock (PIRRS or the Group) held its first session from 2 to 4 September 2020 as a hybrid meeting, taking place simultaneously online and in-person in Geneva.
2. The session of the Group of Experts was attended by representatives of the following countries: Albania, Croatia, Finland, France, Italy, Romania and Russian Federation.
3. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations were present: the African Union, the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) and European Union Agency for Railways (ERA).
4. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), Rail Working Group (RWG) and the International Union of Wagon Keepers (UIP).
5. Representatives of the following organizations, private industry groups and academia attended the session: Hupac Intermodal SA (Intermodal Transportation), Managing Company NefteTransService, Oxera Consulting LLP and Ulusoy Railway Systems.

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)*

Document: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/1

6. The Group of Experts adopted the agenda for the meeting.

III. Election of officers (agenda item 2)

7. The Group of Experts elected Mr. Konstantin Grigoriev as Chair of the Group. Countries were encouraged to nominate candidates for the position of Vice-Chair to be elected at the next session of the Group of Experts. These nominations are to be forwarded to the secretariat by 31 January 2021.

IV. Background to the Group (agenda item 3)**

Document: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/3

8. The RWG presented the background to the Luxembourg Rail Protocol to the Cape Town Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment, as well as the wider Convention itself, setting out its key provisions, to what it applies and its progress towards entry into force. The presentation also explained the Unique Rail Vehicle Identification System (URVIS) that the Protocol establishes.
9. The Russian Federation presented its position on URVIS and highlighted the following (the complete text is set out in annex I):
 - The Group should adhere to the provisions of the Cape Town Convention and the Luxembourg Protocol without departing from them. The Group should develop international “model rules” to protect the interests of creditors.
 - The documentation for the implementation of the URVIS should be developed in relation to rolling stock purchased on credit if stated in the terms of the agreement.
 - The numbering system for railway rolling stock for the operation of railway transport is to be carried out in accordance with the national legislation of the countries that have ratified the Cape Town Convention and the Luxembourg Protocol.

* Information on the session is available at www.unece.org/trans/main/sc2/ge_pirrs_tor.html.

** Presentations from the workshop are available at www.unece.org/trans/main/sc2/ge_pirrs_01.html.

- URVIS should not replace current running numbers on rolling stock used by the states for purposes of operation of railway transport.
- URVIS should be managed by the international registry in accordance with the provisions of the supervisory authority and the supervisory authority has the right to appoint experts such as OTIF, Organization for Cooperation of Railways (OSJD), ERA, the Council for Railway Transport of the Commonwealth Member States and the International Rail Transport Committee (CIT), as well as other specialized international expert groups, organizations or institutions to act as an ad hoc Committee of Experts to advise on the marking of URVIS numbers and the management of URVIS databases.
- The marking system should be simple, compatible with best sectoral practices, have limited costs, and be easily integrated with vehicle registration regarding new rolling stock, if it is stipulated by the credit (leasing) agreement.

10. Based on this input, the RWG proposed some alternative text in relation to these points as included in annex II.

11. The Group discussed the 16-digit numbering system to be introduced with the Luxembourg Protocol. The introduction of the 16-digit numbering system is voluntary but may be required by creditors, if it is included in the contract. The goal of the 16-digit system would be to increase security, primarily the security of the financier, and not interfere with current running numbering systems in different national and international contexts. It was confirmed by the Group that the URVIS number was not to replace existing running numbers on rolling stock that are specific to national or regional requirements.

12. The Group discussed the role of the registry and its supervisory authority. The secretariat highlighted that the management of the registry and the URVIS numbering is outside the scope of the mandate of the Group as something that is enshrined in the Protocol or the regulations issued in connection therewith.

13. The Group welcomed the background information provided by the RWG and the Russian Federation. It agreed to include the suggestions of the Russian Federation on the six principles, as well as the suggestions of the Rail Working Group on the matter in the report (see annexes I and II). The Group agreed to reflect further on these two proposals.

V. Programme of work for the Group (agenda item 4)

Document: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/6

14. The Group discussed the draft programme of work and how it links with the various objectives set out in the Terms of Reference for the Group.

15. The Group adopted the draft programme of work as amended to reflect the addition requested by OTIF to look at use-cases and the placing of the URVIS number on rolling stock.

VI. Development of the Unique Rail Vehicle Identification System (agenda item 5)

Documents: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/4, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/5, Informal document SC.2/PIRRS No. 1 (2020), Informal document SC.2/PIRRS No. 2 (2020), Informal document SC.2/PIRRS No. 3 (2020), Informal document SC.2/PIRRS No. 4 (2020)

A. Best practice in, and national requirements for, rolling stock marking

16. The RWG gave a detailed presentation on URVIS, describing the practical issues and guiding principles related to its implementation including that because the URVIS number was deliberately unconstructed (i.e. random) it would be possible to request customised numbers such that national and regional numbering of rolling stock could be incorporated into the 16-digit URVIS number if this could further facilitate an identification system. The ERA presented the European Vehicle Register (EVR) and EU vehicle authorisation process. The presentation covered the background, legal basis and information contained in the EVR, the structure of the European Vehicle Number (EVN) and how vehicle authorisation works in the European Union.

17. The Group repeated, under this agenda item, that the URVIS would not replace exiting national or regional rolling stock numbering.

18. The Group thanked the RWG and the ERA for their presentations on best practice and national requirements for rolling stock marking and asked that other member States share their experiences at future meetings to provide further input into the analysis.

19. Any input documents to this analysis should be provided to the secretariat by 31 January 2021.

B. Technological component

20. The ERA gave a presentation on blockchain, describing what it is and what benefits it could bring to registering the URVIS number.

21. The Group thanked ERA for its presentation and asked that other member States share their views on the technological component at future meetings to provide further input into the analysis.

22. The Experts discussed the various technological systems currently in place in support of other registries for the permanent marking of mobile machinery. A comparison of other systems and technology would be useful for further discussions on this matter at future meetings.

23. The Group asked the secretariat to contact the International Registry for Aircraft pursuant to the Aircraft Protocol to the Cape Town Convention in order to prepare an input document for this agenda item for the following session. The Rail Working Group agreed to provide the Group of Experts with a document on the numbering and registration of containers.

24. The Group asked member States to provide the next meeting with presentations on national or supranational examples in relation to maritime vessel registries.

25. Any input documents to this analysis should be provided to the secretariat by 31 January 2021.

C. Identification of possible solutions

26. Some initial thoughts on possible solutions were raised by the Group. The Group noted that the aspects needed to be considered included, among others, the positioning, durability, visibility and access to the unique identifier. In addition, what information should be conveyed by the unique identifier was discussed. The options mentioned regarding how to attach the identifier on the rolling stock could include plates, radio-frequency identification (RFID) and paint. When discussing durability, the Group also considered to what extent redundancy would need to be allowed within the system such as using two different types of permanently affixed numbers on different parts of the wagon. The Group agreed that further preparatory work was needed to facilitate discussions and as such it was necessary to prepare a background document on this topic for the next session of the Group.

27. The Group thanked delegates for their contributions during the discussion on possible solutions and asked the secretariat, in collaboration with the RWG, to prepare an initial list of possible solutions for discussion at the next session. The Group also encouraged delegates to submit their proposals on possible solutions.

28. The RWG explained that the URVIS number would be available for all railway rolling stock, but the definition in the Luxembourg Rail Protocol was broad. It was agreed that the RWG would submit to the Group a brief working paper on the precise definition of railway rolling stock and which equipment the definition covered.

D. Testing of possible solutions

29. The Group discussed the testing of possible solutions and what this activity would mean in practice. It was clarified that the purpose was not to run any physical tests on the proposed solutions, but rather conduct a desktop assessment and evaluate the feasibility of the proposals.

30. The Group agreed to change the title of this agenda item to “Evaluation of possible solutions”.

E. Selection of solutions

31. Discussion on the selection of possible solutions was postponed to future sessions.

F. Development of recommendations and standards

32. The Group discussed model rules and what they could be as proposed by the Russian Federation. Experts agreed that this was an important area for further discussion and agreed that the discussion should continue at future sessions.

33. The Russian Federation agreed to prepare a formal document on possible approaches to potential model rules relating to the permanent marking of unique identification of railway rolling stock. The Group requested that other member States also provide information and possible solutions to the development of model rules.

VII. Other business (agenda item 6)

34. The Group regretted that its current meeting suffered from a considerable reduction in allocation of the conference service by the United Nations Office at Geneva versus the previously accepted service level. The Group emphasized that any such reduction in the future will undermine the timely implementation of its terms of reference. It requested the Chair and the secretariat to share this concern with its parent bodies.

35. Moreover, the Group stressed the importance that official intergovernmental deliberations in three languages ensure the success of the intergovernmental processes. To this end, the Group denounced the cuts to services supporting these intergovernmental deliberations.

VIII. Date of next session (agenda item 7)

36. The Group noted, with disappointment, that due to the restrictions imposed on the secretariat it may not be possible to have a formal meeting with interpretation as originally scheduled for 14–15 December 2020.

37. The Group noted that the subsequent meeting would be on 5–7 May 2021. Any documentation to be discussed at this session will need to be submitted to the secretariat by 31 January 2021 to ensure it is translated in time.

38. Participants would be contacted in due course in relation to the meeting on 14–15 December 2020 and therefore the Group asked that participants keep the dates blocked in their diaries.

IX. Adoption of decisions (agenda item 8)

Document: Informal document SC.2/PIRRS No. 5 (2020)

39. The Group of Experts adopted the draft list of decisions as amended. The Chair, together with the secretariat, will prepare the report of the session and circulate it to participants for comments. The Group requested that delegates provide their comments within 10 days of receiving the draft report in order to allow enough time for its finalisation and submission for translation.

Annex I

Suggestions for principles to guide the work of the Group of Experts from the Government of the Russian Federation

Transmitted by the Government of the Russian Federation

1. In its work the Group of Experts is guided by the decisions taken to ensure the rights of credit institutions, when signing the credit (leasing) contracts for the purchase and use of railway rolling stock.
2. The Group of Experts develops international “model rules” to protect the interests of creditors by implementation of a system for identifying railway rolling stock purchased on credit (leasing), which can be applied if this is specified in the credit (leasing) agreement.
3. Documentation for the implementation of a Unique Rail Vehicle Identification System for (URVIS) is developed and applied to new railway rolling stock purchased at the expense of credit (leasing) funds from a credit (leasing) organization, if this is specified in the terms of the agreement of the parties.
4. The Numbering System for railway rolling stock is implemented in accordance with the law of countries that have ratified the Cape Town Convention and the Luxembourg Rail Protocol. URVIS does not replace the currently existing information systems used for the operation of railway rolling stock.
5. Whereas, in compliance with the Luxembourg Rail Protocol, URVIS should be managed by the Registrar of the international registry in accordance with the provisions of the Supervisory authority and that the Supervisory authority has the right to appoint experts (article XII (5) of the Luxembourg Rail Protocol), the Supervisory authority should invite OTIF, OSJD, ERA, the Council for Railway Transport of the Commonwealth Member States and CIT, as well as other specialized international expert groups, organizations or institutions to act as an ad hoc Committee of Experts to advise on the marking of URVIS numbers and the management of URVIS information databases (other than those necessary for the proper operation of the Luxembourg Rail Protocol).
6. Solutions for marking URVIS numbers should be simple, compatible with best sectoral practices, have limited costs, and be easily integrated with vehicle registration.

Annex II

Suggestions for principles to guide the work of the Group of Experts from the Rail Working Group

Transmitted by the Rail Working Group after consultation with OTIF and UNIDROIT

1. Working on documents, the group of experts should be guided by the decisions taken to ensure the rights of credit organizations when signing credit agreements for the purchase and use of railway rolling stock.
 2. The group of experts should develop international “model rules” to protect the interests of creditors by introducing a system for permanent marking of unique identification of railway rolling stock purchased on credit (leasing) and applying them if this is referred to in the loan (leasing) agreement.
 3. The documentation setting out standard protocols for the marking of the Unique Identification System for Rail Vehicles (URVIS) should be developed and applied in relation to railway rolling stock purchased with credit from a credit company if stated in the terms of the agreement. This rule does not apply to rolling stock sold, financed or otherwise leased before the approval of the relevant documentation.
 4. The numbering system for railway rolling stock for the operation of railway transport is carried out in accordance with the national legislation of the countries that have ratified the Cape Town Convention and the Luxembourg Rail Protocol (the Protocol).
 5. The system of unique identification of rail vehicles (URVIS) should not replace the currently existing information and identification systems used for the operation of railway rolling stock but should be supplemental thereto and where possible the systems should be mutually supportive.
 6. Taking into account that, under the Protocol URVIS is to be operated by the registrar of the international registry pursuant to regulations issued by the Supervisory Authority and that the Supervisory Authority is entitled to appoint experts (article XII (5)) we suggest that the Supervisory Authority invites OTIF, OSJD, ERA and the International Rail Transport Committee (CIT), and such other specialized international expert groups, organizations or agencies as it considers appropriate, to serve as a specialist committee of experts to advise on the marking of URVIS numbers and management of URVIS informational databases (other than those required for the proper operation of the Protocol).
 7. Solutions for the marking of URVIS numbers should be simple, have limited cost, compatible with best industry practice and easy to integrate with vehicle immatriculation/registration.
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