


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

Geneva, 13-14 September 2021

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

1. The Group of Experts on Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock (PIRRS or the Group) held its fourth session from 13 to 14 September 2021 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 ECE countries: Albania, Finland, Poland and Russian Federation.
3. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations were present: Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF), International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT), Organization for Co-Operation Between Railways (OSJD) and European Union Agency for Railways (ERA).
4. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), Rail Working Group (RWG) and International Union of Wagon Keepers (UIP).
5. Representatives of the following organizations, private industry groups and academia attended the session: African Union commission, International Union of Railways (UIC), Managing Company “NefteTransService”, Self-regulating Organization Union of Railway Operators Market and Trans-European Railway (TER) Project.

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

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2021/6

6. The Group of Experts adopted the amended agenda as set out in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2021/6.

III. Development of the Unique Rail Vehicle Identification System (agenda item 2)

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

7. The Group recalled the previous presentations that had been made under this agenda item by the Rail Working Group, the Russian Federation, CER, and the European Union Agency for Railways. No other presentations were made on this topic during the session.
8. The Group of Experts invited experts to provide their experiences on permanent marking at future meetings.

B. Use cases and the placing of the URVIS number on rolling stock

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2021/4

9. The Group recalled the previous presentations that had been made under this agenda item, including document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2021/4 on use cases for the placing of URVIS numbers. No other presentations were made on this topic during the session.
10. The Group of invited experts to consider possible additional use cases at future meetings.

¹ Information on the session is available at:
<https://unece.org/transport/documents/2020/12/agendas/annotated-provisional-agenda-second-session>.

C. Development of solutions

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2021/8, Informal document SC.2/PIRRS No. 4 (2021), ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/11

11. The secretariat recalled discussions at previous session on the options for the placing of the URVIS number on rolling stock. The secretariat recalled the results of the questionnaire as included in document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/11. Following this introduction, the Rail Working Group presented the appendix to the annex of document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2021/8 providing various options on the manner in which the URVIS number should be placed on a plate. The Russian Federation presented the marking related aspects of their comments in document Informal document SC.2/PIRRS No. 4 (2021). The Group of Experts discussed the form and type of the permanent identification of railway rolling stock. Experts discussed a number of different options relating to how the word URVIS should be shown and whether it should be written in different languages. The Group noted that other language versions, potentially as transliterations rather than translations, could be added optionally. The Group discussed that the URVIS number itself should appear separated on a separate line and noted that any additional information related to specific national requirements, international legal framework, agreements between parties amongst others could be included in as options.

12. Delegates discussed the possibility of adding the letters “UN” to the plate in some form. On this point, the secretariat highlighted that the legal framework for the URVIS number is the Luxembourg Protocol of the Cape Town Convention which is not a Convention administered by the UN and, as such, a designation of this type may not be appropriate.

13. Experts therefore noted that the marking should contain some mandatory components and that additional information should be left open for stakeholders to decide.

14. The Group agreed that the plate used for the identification of the URVIS number should have as its first line the acronym “URVIS” and as its second line the 16 digit URVIS number itself with the following format “XXXXXX XXXXXX XXXXXX X”. The Group noted that additional information relating to the international legal frameworks, national laws, agreements between parties, additional language information, etc. could be added under these two mandatory lines.

15. The Group reiterated the importance of the URVIS number being placed on a plate and continued discussions on the form, size, formatting and location of the plate reiterating the importance of having minimum requirements for some of these parameters to ensure that it is legible and locatable.

16. The Group asked the secretariat to prepare a document for the next session summarising these options to allow delegates to make a decision on a way forward at the next session of the Group of Experts in May 2022.

D. Development of the framework

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2021/8, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2021/9, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2021/10, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2021/11, Informal document SC.2/PIRRS No. 4 (2021), Informal document SC.2/PIRRS No. 6 (2021)

17. Discussions in this agenda sub-item were divided into two parts: a first part on the development of model rules for the permanent affixing of URVIS numbers and a second part providing an update on the Draft Regulations for the International Registry.

18. In the discussion on the development of model rules, the Russian Federation presented document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2021/10 setting out an initial proposal for model rules for the permanent marking of railway rolling stock. Following this introduction, document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2021/9 was presented by OTIF setting out their comments on the Russian Federation proposal. Subsequently, the Rail Working Group presented its proposal in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2021/8, modifying document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/

2021/10. Finally, the Russian Federation presented Informal document SC.2/PIRRS No. 4 (2021) responding to the modified document provided by the Rail Working Group.

19. The Group welcomed the introduction of the four documents as a strong basis for discussion and noted the importance of developing these model rules. The Group highlighted that alternative names to “Model Rules” could create different meanings and obligations, as a result, Experts noted that the best names for this would be “Model Rules”. Following this, Experts discussed at length what should be included as rolling stock that needed such marking in line with the Luxembourg Protocol. Additionally, discussions addressed: approach to dispute resolution; the role of manufacturers and other parties in the registering of rolling stock; and the unilateral application and registration of rolling stock.

20. Finally, in relation to the proposed revisions committee proposed within ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2021/8 and commented on within Informal document SC.2/PIRRS No. 4 (2021), the secretariat noted that there are a number of areas that need further extensive review within UNECE to reflect UN rules. The same is true about the manner in which the so called revision committee would carry out its activities and that the secretariat is not currently in a position to provide comments or changes to this text before a thorough internal review has taken place. The secretariat commits to discussing this internally in the coming months and to provide a proposal for the fifth meeting of the Group in May 2022.

21. The Group of Experts welcomed discussions on the model rules and:

- Agreed that the creation of a set of model rules was the best way forward and that they should be called “Model Rules”.
- Noted the comment by the secretariat on the further investigation needed in relation to the role of UNECE and the membership of the proposed revisions committee before more detailed discussions at the fifth meeting of the Group.
- Agreed to develop a list of railway rolling stock as set out in Informal Document No.6 (2021). This list would be included as a starting point for inclusion in the model rules which would also need to explain that this list is not exhaustive.
- Agreed to include provisions in the model rules to reflect the role of the manufacturers of railway rolling stock and other parties to unilaterally adopt the Model Rules.
- Noted that further work needs to be done on the need for, and operation of, dispute resolution in the model rules and the applicable law.
- Noted that further work was required in relation to the issue of unilateral application / registration and that proposals would be made on this.
- Agreed that the model rules, following the entry into force of the Luxembourg Protocol, could in any case be used by countries who have yet to ratify the Protocol for the issuing of URVIS numbers thus allowing them to be bound by their provisions.

22. The Group agreed that the work on the model rules should continue between the sessions and that an updated version of document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2021/8 should be prepared following the session. This updated version should be circulated to experts before the end of October 2021 to allow Experts to provide comments on it by the end of December 2021. The Group asked the secretariat to prepare a document for the fifth session of the Group in the form of a comparative table setting out the revised text of document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2021/8 in its left column; the proposed changes of experts in a second column; and comments and explanations, where necessary, in a third column.

23. The second part of the discussion under this agenda sub-item the Group received an update on progress with the development of the Draft Regulations for the International Registry by the Rail Working Group as set out in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2021/11. The Group noted that although the Regulations are not part of the mandate of the Group, their development and their content are relevant for the elaboration for the model rules mentioned previously. The Rail Working Group noted that as the Regulations are still in draft form, it would be pleased to receive any comments on the future development of the Regulations.

24. The Group of Experts welcomed discussions on the Draft Regulations for the International Registry and asked the Rail Working Group to keep participants informed of developments at future meetings.

IV. Other business (agenda item 3)

25. Under this agenda item, experts noted the importance of in-person meetings as an essential component in facilitating discussions of the experts, especially on such a technical subject matter and given the experienced technical problems.

26. The Group requested that the next meeting be fully in person to avoid technical difficulties.

V. Date of next session (agenda item 4)

27. The Group of Experts noted that the next session of the Group will be 4-6 May 2022.

VI. Summary of decisions (agenda item 5)

Documentation: Informal document SC.2/PIRRS No. 5 (2021)

28. The Group adopted the draft list of decisions as amended during the session.
