


Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Rail Transport
Group of Experts on Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock
Second session

Geneva, 14–15 December 2020

**Report of the second 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 second session from 14 to 15 December 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 the Russian Federation.
3. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations were present: the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF), 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) and Rail Working Group (RWG).
5. Representatives of the following organizations, private industry groups and academia attended the session: Hupac Intermodal SA, Managing Company “NefteTransService”, Oxera Consulting LLP and RAILTRANS LLC.

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

Document: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/7

6. The Group of Experts adopted the revised agenda as contained in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/7.

III. Background to the Group of Experts (agenda item 2)**

7. Following an introduction by the secretariat summarising the main outcomes of the first session of the Group of Experts, the RWG presented further background information on the Luxembourg Rail Protocol to the Cape Town Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment with particular focus on the workings of the international registry. The presentation covered:

- The key principles of the Luxembourg Rail Protocol.
- The Cape Town Convention on International Interest in Mobile Equipment.
- The Roles and tasks of the registry.
- Basics of the registry.
- How the registry operates.
- The Unique Vehicle Identification System (URVIS).
- Who will be the users of the registry.
- Allocating the URVIS number.
- Registration with the registry and searching the registry.

8. Following the presentation, the Group discussed a number of the issues raised in the presentation with a particular focus on progress with entry into force of the Protocol, the role of electronic signatures, the process for setting up the registry and whether there would a monitoring process for the affixing of the URVIS number on rolling stock.

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

** Presentations from the workshop are available at <https://unece.org/transport/events/sc2pirrs-group-experts-permanent-identification-railway-rolling-stock-2nd-session>.

9. The Group of Experts noted the information provided as an update on the Background of the Group of Experts in relation to the Luxembourg Protocol to the Cape Town Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment.

IV. Development of the Unique Rail Vehicle Identification System (agenda item 3)

Document: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/2, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/9, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/10, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/11

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

10. Following a brief introduction by the secretariat, the RWG presented document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/11, a questionnaire for delegates to complete to assist in the further development of the work of the Group. The secretariat noted that it had received responses before the session from CER and Finland and the Russian Federation provided its responses during the session. It was noted that, for question 1 on the most efficient way to mark the asset, respondents had favoured option c – a separate number plate mounted on the asset. For question 2 on how the URVIS number should be shown, delegates identified the use of Arabic numbers visible on the asset or the use of a QR code. For question 3 on the duplication of the number some delegates stated that it was necessary, others that it wasn't. For question 4 on the use of the check digit, some delegates highlighted the need of having only one check digit.

11. The Group noted that the questionnaire was very useful and asked that other respondents, when providing their answers to the questionnaire, also address the issue of whether multiple solutions to the affixing of the number should be adopted and whether there should be a time limit for the application of the URVIS number of rolling stock. The secretariat explained that it would prepare a summary document with all the responses received to the questionnaire.

12. The Group of Experts thanked delegates for their responses to the questionnaire included in document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/11. It asked other member States and delegates to provide their responses to the questionnaire by 15 January 2021. In providing their answers, respondents are also asked to provide information on whether to include multiple options and flexibility. Respondents should also state whether there should be a recommended maximum time period between the issuing of the URVIS number and the affixing of the URVIS number to the rolling stock.

13. During session discussions experts agreed that a series of questions relating to the implementation of URVIS numbers could be reflected in the creation of model rules on the technical aspects of implementation, to provide guidance in respect of different affixing requirements included in leasing and loan agreement options which may be adopted, by reference, by all parties to the contract and other stakeholders.

B. Technological component

14. The secretariat introduced document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/9 on the International Registry of Aircraft. The secretariat explained that it had organised a meeting with the International Registry of Aircraft to understand their ways of working and how they use technology. In particular, discussions focused on how they affix numbers to aircraft, their extensive expenditure on technology, primarily on cybersecurity and their decision not to pursue blockchain options for the moment. More details are included in the official document.

15. The Group of Experts took note of the information provided by the secretariat as set out in document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/9 on the International Registry of Aircraft.

C. Identification of possible solutions

16. The Group summarised the contributions that had been agreed to be prepared at the previous session as set out in document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/2 including:

- Experiences from member States and other delegates on best practice and national requirements for rolling stock marking.
- Delegate views on the technological component.
- Experiences in relation to maritime vessel registration.
- The RWG and the secretariat to prepare an initial list of possible solutions for the affixing of the URVIS number.
- The Russian Federation to prepare a document on possible approaches to potential model rules relating to the permanent affixing of the URVIS.

17. The Group reiterated the importance of the preparation of the documents identified in paragraphs 19, 23, 24 and 28 of the report of the first session of the Group of Experts (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/PIRRS/2020/2) and reminded drafters to submit these documents to the secretariat by 31 January 2021 to ensure that they are available in three languages before the third session of the Group.

18. The Group Experts agreed that due to limited time it would postpone discussions to the next session on agenda items:

- 3D: Identification of possible solutions.
- 3E: Evaluation of possible solutions.
- 3F: Section of solution(s).
- 3G: Development of recommendations and standards.

V. Other business (agenda item 4)

19. The Group of Experts regretted that its current session suffered from a reduction in the allocation of the conference services by the United Nations Office in Geneva versus the previously accepted service level. The Group stressed the importance of official intergovernmental deliberations on technical matters such as those discussed by the Group. To this end, the Group expressed dissatisfaction that the cuts impacted its deliberations. It expressed a hope that such situation would not be repeated in the future.

20. The Group of Experts encouraged member States 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.

VI. Date of next session (agenda item 5)

21. The Group of Experts agreed to tentatively schedule its third session from 5 to 7 May 2021 in Geneva.

VII. Adoption of decisions (agenda item 6)

Document: Informal document SC.2/PIRRS No. 7 (2020)

22. The Group of Experts adopted its list of decisions as set out in the Informal document SC.2/PIRRS No. 7 (2020) which, as per recent EXCOM decision, would be subject to a 72-hour silence procedure in the event of technical connection difficulties of member State representatives.

23. Following the special procedures to take decisions in formal meetings with remote participation adopted by EXCOM on 5 October 2020, the decisions made at the session were circulated through all Geneva Permanent Representations for approval by silence procedure of 72 hours by the participating delegations of the session. The silence procedure closed on Thursday, 24 December 2020 at 18:00 (CET) and concluded without objections. The decisions of the above meeting are thus considered adopted. Related information is available on the UNECE website under <https://unece.org/silence-procedure>.

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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