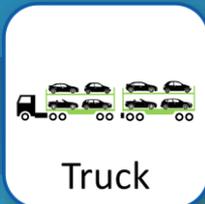




# e-CMR

## Guidance notes for operators

(ECG Digitalisation Working Group)



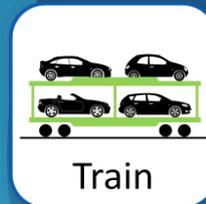
Truck



Ship



Compound



Train



Barge

February 2017



Established in 1997, ECG is the Association of European Vehicle Logistics and represents around 100 leading vehicle logistics companies from 28 countries across Europe, including the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Turkey. ECG Members provide transport, distribution, storage, preparation and post-production services to manufacturers, importers, car rental companies and vehicle leasing operators. ECG's Brussels based secretariat works daily to fulfil the core mission of the Association, i.e. Information & Awareness; Education; Networking & Integration; Lobbying & Representation; and Standardisation. For more information, please visit the ECG website: [www.ecgassociation.eu](http://www.ecgassociation.eu)

Larger companies may well already have their own systems and hardware which will allow them to produce and manage e-CMRs internally. The purpose of this document is to provide information and guidance for those carriers who do not have the internal systems necessary for this and therefore need to use a third party service provider to fulfil the requirements for e-CMR and to enable them to move towards paperless deliveries across Europe. This document focuses on one service provider, TransFollow, as at the time of publication they appear to be the most advanced and are known to ECG through the International Road Transport Union (IRU). In due course other providers may well come to market and provide viable alternatives.

#### Disclaimer

Please note that ECG does not promote or recommend TransFollow over other similar products. The purpose of these notes is simply to aid anyone wishing to use the TransFollow platform.

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## 1. Background

The first cross border transportation using a TransFollow e-CMR took place in January 2017 between Spain and France. It was organized by IRU (the International Road Transport Union) and under control of the French association FNTR (Fédération Nationale des Transports Routiers) and the Spanish association ASTIC (Asociación de Transporte Internacional por Carretera), for the first time technology such as this allows truly paperless deliveries.

## 2. TransFollow

Currently, TransFollow<sup>1</sup> is one of the first providers on the European market that offers a legally compliant electronic platform by means of which the e-CMR can be submitted, exchanged, tracked and signed. The platform gives shippers, carriers and receivers more control over the logistics process. TransFollow was created by Dutch associations, i.e. the Dutch Shippers' and Logistiek Organisation EVO<sup>2</sup> and the carriers' organisation Transport en Logistiek Nederland (TLN).<sup>3</sup> Now it is 100% owned by IRU.

The main intention of this document is to present TransFollow's electronic platform, briefly explaining how this system works, what is needed to run it, its benefits and entailed costs.

## 3. TransFollow platform

TransFollow's platform allows shipper, carrier and receiver to use a single, uniform, standardised and secure interface to create, exchange, sign and track an electronic consignment note across those countries where the e-CMR protocol has been fully adopted.

The platform allows information about the consignment of goods to be sent electronically and in real time. This means that paper documents no longer need to be created, processed and/or scanned. The information is also immediately available. Shipper, carrier and receiver can track the entire process at all times, while using the tool.

The TransFollow platform is fully secured and centralised. It provides storage, distribution and archiving of consignment notes. It allows governance, distribution and storage of transactions.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.transfollow.org](http://www.transfollow.org)

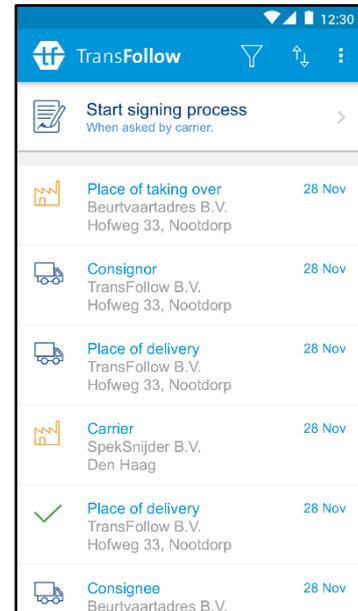
<sup>2</sup> [www.evo.nl](http://www.evo.nl)

<sup>3</sup> [www.tln.nl](http://www.tln.nl)

## 4. How to use the TransFollow platform

In order to use the TransFollow platform each party (shipper, carrier and receiver) needs to be connected to the TransFollow system. To do so, the parties need:

1. To download a free of charge TransFollow app (designed for both Android and IOS), or Android application package (APK) for PC/Mac/Windows 7,8,10, then install it and register, by creating an account.
2. A shipper prepares the e-CMR by filling in the fields in the app or TransFollow programme. For larger users that use multiple e-CMR documents to be produced daily, TransFollow provides a public application programming interface (API) key to the company's IT provider in order to integrate their existing system into the TransFollow platform (see the entailed costs below).<sup>4</sup> It allows them to use their own software system in order to create an e-CMR which is later transferred to the TransFollow platform.



*e-CMR on the App*

3. The system assigns a number to the created e-CMR (e.g. NL333609).
4. If a recipient has a TransFollow account he receives a notification from the TransFollow platform on his installed app (and via e-mail notification) that the shipment is ready for transport.
5. The carrier receives the consignment note information in his transportation management system (TMS) or TransFollow app and schedules the shipment.
6. When the carrier receives the consignment note and confirms it, the shipper receives the alert on his computer or mobile device that the carrier is ready to collect the shipment.
7. The carrier collects the shipment from the shipper.
8. After loading the carrier signs for receipt of the shipment using the standardised and secure TransFollow protocol with a unique code.
9. The shipper receives a digital copy.
10. The carrier transports the goods to the receiver.
11. The receiver obtains an alert on his app via the TransFollow platform, or management system that the shipment is under way.

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<sup>4</sup> For larger users in order to be able to send consignment notes via TransFollow, a connection (integration) between a company IT system (i.e. WMS/ERP) and TransFollow platform is necessary. There are a large number of (logistical) software vendors with their software already connected to TransFollow or who have the TransFollow connection scheduled, i.e. Connected TMS (transport management software) suppliers, Connected FMS (fleet management software) suppliers and other ICT suppliers.

12. The shipment is delivered to the receiver who signs for receipt and may add remarks and pictures about the condition of the goods. There are three ways for a receiver to sign for the delivery of goods (discussed below).
13. The shipper is informed about the delivery in real time. The carrier no longer needs to send the signed consignment note to the shipper in hard copy. Depending on the nature of any remarks, the sender can take follow-up actions with his customer.
14. The transaction is then completed and the authenticated digital copy of the consignment note can be viewed and downloaded.

Please see **Video 1** on YouTube prepared by TransFollow that explains how the TransFollow platform works. The link to this video can be found at the end of this document.

## 5. Administration process

The TransFollow system allows shippers to transfer a shipment to a carrier. It also allows a receiver to take care of the administration involved in delivering of a shipment by a carrier. Once the shipper indicates on his app that the shipment has been transferred to a carrier, a unique code (series of figures or QR code) is displayed on his app. By scanning this code in his on-board computer, the carrier agrees to take receipt of the shipment. When it is delivered to the receiver, the receiver in turn obtains a unique code on his app to 'sign' for receipt on the carrier's on-board computer. This completes the administrative process.



QR code

## 6. TransFollow Show and Sign Component (TSSC)

In order to simplify the presentation of the consignment notes on a mobile device, and ensure that they are signed in a legally binding manner, the TransFollow Show and Sign Component (TSSC) app has been developed. An electronic consignment note is created directly via TransFollow app or in your own company system that is integrated into the TransFollow platform. Then this consignment note is sent to the TransFollow platform. TSSC is then connected to the app or on board computer, allowing the newly created consignment note to be presented unambiguously and signed in a uniform manner.

Please see **Video 2** on YouTube prepared by TransFollow explaining TSSC. The link to this video can be found at the end of this document.

## 7. Signing e-CMR

In order to present and sign an electronic consignment note the carrier accesses the TSSC in the TransFollow app. However, internet access is not required in order to sign using the TSSC system. The other parties are informed about signing or status changes as soon as internet access is resumed.

*There are three ways available to sign for transfer of goods:*

### 1. QR code

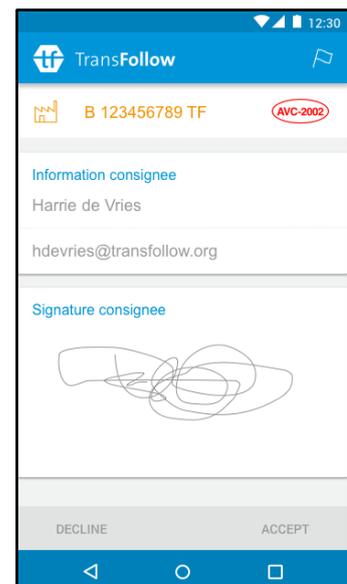
One option is when signing for collection and delivery of goods takes place using a uniquely generated QR code (two-dimensional barcode). The shipper or receiver checks the details on the transporter mobile device and scans the QR code, using the TransFollow app. The carrier then scans the unique QR code at the location of the shipper or receiver in order to determine immediately if it is correct. By means of this scan, the account information is checked and it is immediately determined whether the person signing for receipt is actually entitled to do so. TransFollow guarantees a safe and legally correct way of goods receipt.

### 2. Sign on Glass (SOG)

If the receiver is unknown in TransFollow platform or if they do not have the app, it is also possible to sign on glass (SOG) for delivery using the carrier's TransFollow app. The receiver then will be sent the copy of the consignment note by e-mail (alternatively the app can be downloaded and installed on the spot).

### 3. No signature

In some cases, delivery is not possible through exchange of the signature. The carrier can then indicate in the TSSC that he has delivered without agreement of the receiver. This means that all parties relevant to the consignment note will be informed that the delivery has taken place, provided that they are recognised in TransFollow, but no signature has been provided.



*Sign on Glass*

TSSC enables you to sign the consignment note electronically and in a legally binding manner.

## 8. Costs

The TransFollow app is free of charge. Scanning of the QR code or/and signing for delivery can be done directly on the mobile device using the TransFollow app that allows these functions.

TransFollow offers 2 options for connecting to the platform. For small and medium size users, a portal is provided that allows shippers and carriers to create and issue e-CMR documents. The party that will issue the e-CMR needs to first obtain credits at TransFollow. Credits cost on average €0.25. 1 e-CMR = 1 credit.

For larger users (with multiple e-CMR documents to be issued daily), TransFollow offers an application programming interface (API) key, that allows them to integrate and connect TransFollow to existing in-house proprietary software systems (i.e. WMS/ERP/TMS/FMS). API keys are charged at approx. €450.00 each and are subject to an annual service fee of €450.00. Integration into the proprietary software is estimated at 60-100 hours development time.

## 9. Whom to contact

Depending on the country of residence the best is contact the national transport association of which the company is a member of.

### **France**

FNTR<sup>5</sup> can be contacted:

Mr. Thierry Grumiaux

[Thierry.grumiaux@fntr.fr](mailto:Thierry.grumiaux@fntr.fr)

### **Spain**

SETIR<sup>6</sup> can be contacted

Mr. Ramon Fernandez

[rfernandez@setir.es](mailto:rfernandez@setir.es)

Mr. Guilermo Ortiz

[guillermo.ortiz@setir.es](mailto:guillermo.ortiz@setir.es)

### **The Netherlands**

The Dutch Association Beurtvaartadres<sup>7</sup>:

Mr. Patrick Huijgen

[phuijgen@beurtvaartadres.nl](mailto:phuijgen@beurtvaartadres.nl).

The respective associations will support you with all information. For further information on how to start working with paperless documentation via the TransFollow e-CMR in all other countries you can contact Hans H. Lip, International Sales & Marketing Manager.

The respective associations will guide and support you with necessary documentation and instructions. The e-CMR can be generated and issued via a web-based portal as well as the information how to take part in the pilot projects.

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<sup>5</sup> [www.fntr.fr](http://www.fntr.fr)

<sup>6</sup> [www.setir.es](http://www.setir.es)

<sup>7</sup> [www.beurtvaartadres.nl](http://www.beurtvaartadres.nl)

## 10. Pilot projects

The pilot projects are limited to a certain number of participants and with a limited duration. During the pilot project 1000 credits will be distributed for free for trial purposes. After this credits will need to be purchased at €0.25 per credit. Specific volume discounts and further steps can be discussed in due course. Other costs are not applicable, apart from the possible costs the transport operator needs to make for the purchase of mobile devices if needed.

More information about the pilot project you can obtain by either contacting your national transport Association or TransFollow directly.

## 11. Supporting materials

### ***Articles on TransFollow electronic platform for e-CMR:***

“TransFollow e-CMR (digital consignment note) now available in Belgium”:

[www.transfollow.org/en/ecmrbelgium](http://www.transfollow.org/en/ecmrbelgium)

“First ever border crossing to use e-CMR electronic consignment note”:

[www.transfollow.org/en/news/first-ever-border-crossing-use-e-cmr-electronic-consignment-note/20170119](http://www.transfollow.org/en/news/first-ever-border-crossing-use-e-cmr-electronic-consignment-note/20170119)

### ***Videos on YouTube on TransFollow platform:***

Video 1: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=DgHFxf34R\\_k&t=4s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DgHFxf34R_k&t=4s)

Video 2: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEQhzrre4ac](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEQhzrre4ac)

## 12. Glossary

**Carrier** (=transporter)– is any person or company who, in a contract of carriage, undertakes to perform or to procure the performance of transport by rail, road, air, sea, inland waterways or by combinations of such modes.

**e-CMR** – the electronic consignment note (see CMR).

**CMR** – the CMR Convention (full title Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road) is a United Nations convention that was signed in Geneva on 19 May 1956. It relates to various legal issues concerning transportation of cargo by road. It has been ratified by the majority of European states. As of 2013, it has been ratified by 55 states.

**QR code (quick response code)** – a type of 2D bar code that is used to provide easy access to information through a smartphone.

**Receiver** (=consignee) – is the company or person named in a freight contract to whom the goods have been shipped, as stated on the Bill of Lading.

**Shipper** (=consignor) – a company or a person that ships cargo to the consignee.



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