



# ECG-IRU

## Joint statement on e-CMR

January 2017





# Key objective:

**All European countries should ratify the e-CMR protocol without delay.**



## Benefits

- A digitised transport chain requires less paper, so it is better for the environment.
- e-CMR saves on printing costs.
- The electronic application is multi-lingual, facilitating international transport and controls by national authorities.
- Electronic documents are cheaper to process, with no costs implied for archiving.
- Currently, paperwork gets processed only when drivers return to the office, whereas electronic documents can be handled in real time.
- Improved supply chain visibility with electronic consignment notes could help enforce European laws, such as those on cabotage.

## Specific examples

- BLG Automotive Logistics (a large German logistics company) uses two million sheets of paper for the one million vehicles it transports each year. When extrapolating such data for the whole of Europe it means 16.5 million vehicles transported and 33 million sheets of paper used, representing 135 tonnes of wood each year. This resource would be saved if electronic consignment notes were used in all EU Member States.
- The costs related to paper consignment notes constitute 1.5% of the total costs of BLG Automobile Logistics.
- In addition, within individual companies, a document's original paper version must often be transferred from one division of the company to another, which is another cost element that could be eliminated with the use of electronic documents.
- In the Netherlands, independent studies show approximately EUR 4.50 savings in administrative costs with each CMR consignment note, with the switch to a digital CMR<sup>1</sup>.
- According to Transport en Logistiek Nederland (TLN), 40 million paper CMR consignment notes are used each year in the Netherlands for cross-border road transport. Hence, saving on the administrative costs alone could reach up to EUR 180 million annually with e-CMR.

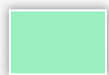
<sup>1</sup> Source: SIRA Consulting



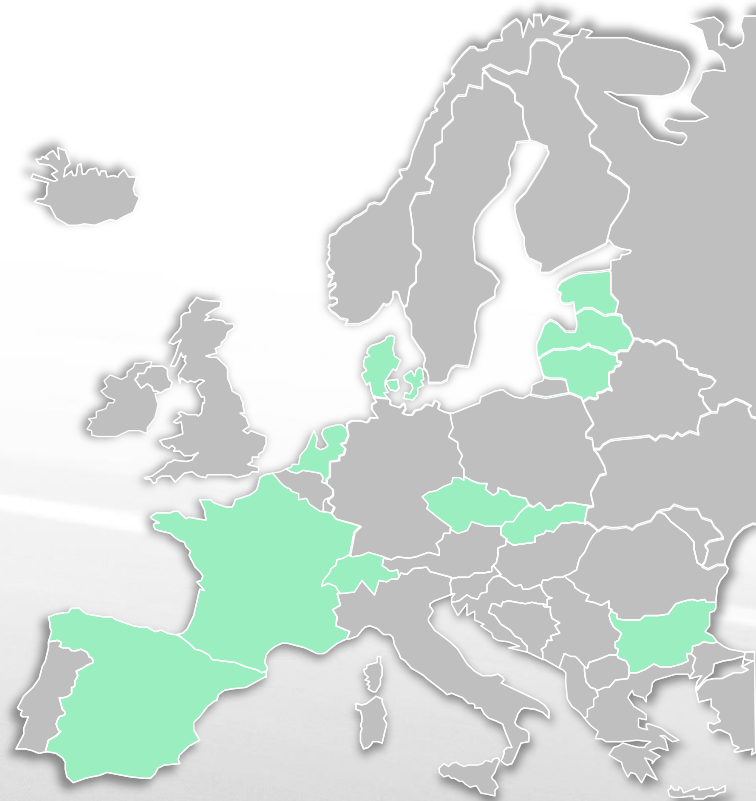




**e-CMR not ratified**



**Ratified or acceded to e-CMR**



## Background

Various legal issues concerning road transport in Europe are governed by the United Nations Convention for the carriage of goods, the CMR (*Convention relative au contrat de transport international de Marchandises par Route*). It was signed in May 1956 and entered into force in 1961, with 55 parties acceding to it.

In 2008 an additional protocol was signed on Electronic Consignment Notes (e-CMR) at a meeting of the Transport Committee of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). This e-CMR Protocol came into effect in 2011, and to date eleven countries have acceded to it. In October 2016 France also acceded to e-CMR and other countries that have already joined include Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain and Switzerland. Besides these countries, Belgium, Finland, Norway and Sweden were among the signatories of the Protocol in 2008, but have so far not ratified it.

The paper based CMR consignment note is an official document underpinning shipments between senders and transporters. It provides a paper trail of the logistics transfer and is the sole document held by the driver of the truck in relation to the load carried. Moreover, this document is the basis for national authorities to determine cabotage activities.

The ultimate purpose of electronic consignment notes is to make the supply chain paperless/digital in the near future, rendering operations more easily traceable, cheaper and efficient. Within the context of Europe, it is currently difficult to use electronic consignment notes where trucks cross, load or unload in a country which has not yet ratified the e-CMR protocol, so electronic documents cannot be used for the whole journey.

Hence the more member states using it, the more appealing the system becomes to countries which accept e-CMR and can therefore gain benefit from the system.

However, the legal framework for e-CMR at national level usually requires further clarification prior to implementation. In Germany, for example, section seven of the Road Transport Act requests “documents and proofs”, a “certified copy” and an “accompanying paper”. So, before the Transport Ministry can act, the judiciary would need to address the legal parameters.

## Definitions

**Accession:** the act whereby a state accepts the offer or the opportunity to become a party to a treaty already negotiated and signed by other states. It has the same legal effect as ratification.

**Party:** the term “party” refers to a state that gives its explicit consent to be bound by the treaty. This explicit consent is generally in the form of ratification or accession.

**Ratification:** Ratification defines the international act whereby a state indicates its consent to be bound to a treaty if the parties intended to show their consent by such an act. The institution of ratification grants states the necessary time-frame to seek the required approval for the treaty on the domestic level and to enact the necessary legislation to give domestic effect to that treaty.

**Signature:** where the signature is subject to ratification, acceptance or approval, the signature does not establish the consent to be bound. However, it is a means of authentication and expresses the willingness of the signatory state to continue the treaty-making process.

Note: All definitions as per the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties 1969.

## About ECG

Established in 1997, ECG is the Association of European Vehicle Logistics and represents the interests of almost 100 member companies, from family owned SMEs to multi-nationals, and is the major champion of the European vehicle logistics sector. ECG Members provide transport, distribution, storage, preparation and post-production services to manufacturers, importers, car rental companies and vehicle leasing operators in the European Union, Norway, Switzerland, Serbia, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Turkey and beyond. They operate more than 22,000 specialist car transporters.

## About IRU

IRU is the world's road transport organisation, promoting economic growth, prosperity and safety through the sustainable mobility of people and goods. Founded in 1948, IRU has members and activities in more than 100 countries. Its core constituents are national transport associations and transport operators, but it also works closely with business, governments, the UN and international organisations. IRU develops knowledge through training and the IRU Academy programme, builds networks via events, seminars and workshops all over the world, conducts advocacy and delivers services. From TIR, the world's only global customs transit system, and TRANSPark for drivers, to the UpTop global taxi network and its coach star rating system, IRU is at the forefront of innovation in road mobility.



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