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Implementation of the Luxembourg Rail Protocol to the Cape Town Convention

current status as at 1st July 2025

[The Luxembourg Rail Protocol](#) to [the Cape Town Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment](#) is a ground-breaking global treaty which will make it much easier and cheaper for the private sector to finance railway rolling stock worldwide. It is applicable to all vehicles that run on tracks or above, on or under a guideway – so applies to a broad range of rolling stock, from passenger and freight locomotives and wagons to high-speed rail train sets, “yellow” (maintenance) rail equipment, light rail and metro trains, trams, cable cars and monorail and hyperloop cabins as long as the debtor or lessee has its principal place of business in a contracting state.

It provides for the protection and regulation of security rights held by creditors whose interests will be registered, and searchable online 24/7, at an [International Registry](#) based in Luxembourg.

The Protocol applies to financings of all new and used rolling stock, regardless of where the equipment is manufactured, operating domestically as well as in multiple jurisdictions.

It also introduces a new global unique and permanent numbering system for unique identification of rolling stock (referred to as URVIS – *Unique Rail Vehicle Identification System* - number).

The United Nations has recently adopted global [Model Rules on the Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock](#) setting out minimum standards for the permanent marking of rolling stock with URVIS numbers.

The Rail Protocol facilitates lease and secured finance from the private sector to support much needed new rolling stock procurement around the world, as well as necessary ongoing financing for existing fleets. It lowers the barriers to entry for operators, opens up new markets for manufacturers, and leads to a more competitive and dynamic rail industry worldwide – bringing important social, environmental, developmental and economic advantages, as well as new business opportunities for manufacturers, lessors and other stakeholders.

The Rail Working Group is a not-for-profit association constituted under Swiss law representing a broad cross section of the global railway community.

For a complete list of our members and more about us, please visit our website at www.railworkinggroup.org

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The Luxembourg Rail Protocol entered into force on 8th March 2024. The following states and organisations have thus far ratified the Luxembourg Rail Protocol:

Gabon	Paraguay	Spain
Luxembourg	South Africa	Sweden
European Union (in respect of its competences)		

Furthermore, the following states have signed the Protocol and are moving towards ratification (although the precise timing varies from state to state):

France	Mozambique
Germany	Switzerland
Italy	United Kingdom

Additionally, a large number of other countries in Europe, Africa and Asia are working on the adoption of the Protocol.

The Cape Town Convention and the Aircraft Protocol thereto was adopted in 2001 and is now in force in **85** countries. It has been a great success, with well over 1.5 million registrations covering 110,000 aircraft (as well as other registrable equipment) with an estimated value of over US\$ 1 trillion being registered since commencing operations in 2006.

For more on the Luxembourg Rail Protocol, visit www.railworkinggroup.org, as well as the UNIDROIT website www.unidroit.org or write to us at info@railworkinggroup.org. Keep up to date with all the latest developments via the Rail Working Group's [LinkedIn group page](#).