OLF-eCMR

The new open source standard
for the digital consignment note

A software solution by companies for companies

- ☑ Legally compliant and compatible
- ☑ Freely accessible and free to use
- ☑ Easy installation, well-thought-out integration

Legal requirements

The CMR consignment note in international road freight transport is a civil law document that primarily serves as evidence of the transport contract between sender, carrier, and recipient. It defines rights, obligations, and liabilities and serves as prima facie evidence in the event of disputes. At the same time, it plays a crucial role in public law applications. Authorities use it, among other things, for cabotage control to ensure compliance with domestic transport regulations by foreign carriers. It is also required for customs clearance, tax audits, and security checks.

The additional protocol to the CMR Convention of 2008 (eCMR Protocol) offers the possibility of using an electronic consignment note (eCMR), which carries the same legal weight as its paper counterpart. This digital version must ensure authenticity, integrity, and accessibility through secure IT systems and electronic signatures. That is exactly what the Open Logistics Foundation ensured in the development of the eCMR software.
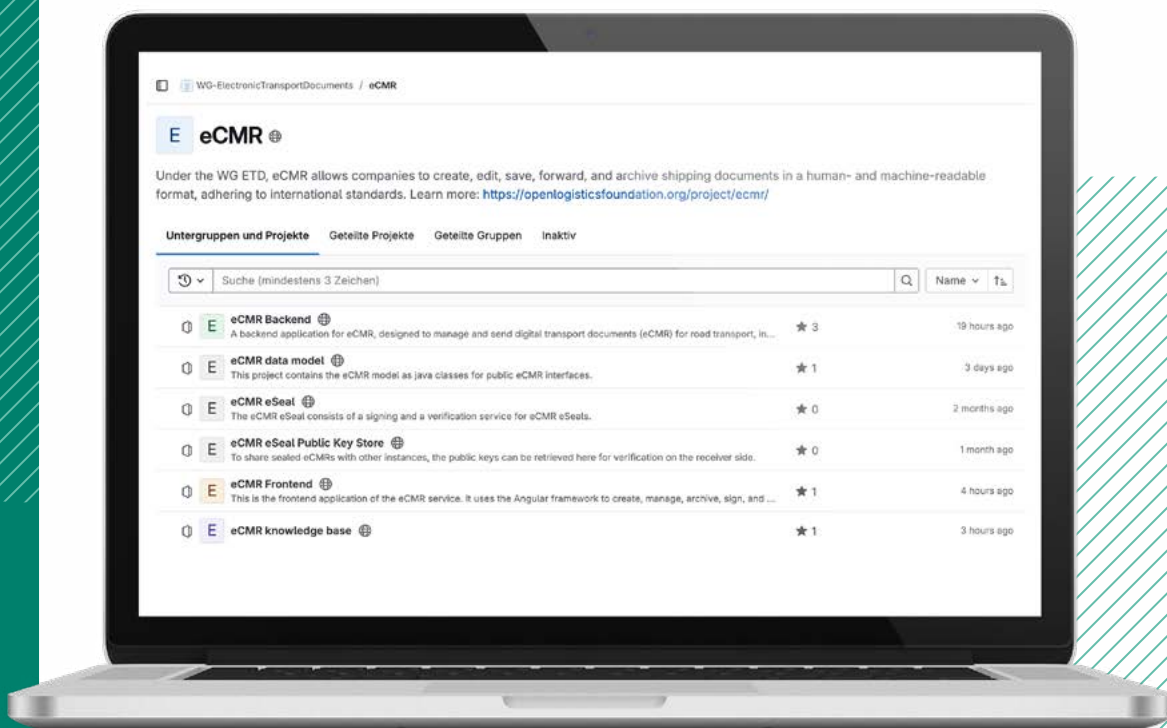
Technical realisation

The eCMR software is available to companies in the Open Logistics Repository of the Open Logistics Foundation and is freely accessible. This means: any company can download, customise, and use the software, and it is thus compatible with other users of the open source software. There are no licence fees. Companies can implement the software into their existing systems themselves or commission suitable IT service providers to do so.

The heart of the new eCMR software is the eCMR instance with the frontend as well as the backend and the APIs for importing/exporting data and user authentication:

- The **„Full version"** is aimed at logistics service providers and transport companies looking to set up their own eCMR instances for the first time.
- The **„Core version"** is of interest to companies that already have their own eCMR platforms but want to use the interface, for example, transport platforms. The eCMR software of the Open Logistics Foundation can also be used alongside the eCMR software of other providers, thereby expanding their own service portfolio.

One standard, many possibilities

In recent years, there have been various attempts to digitalise the CMR consignment note. However, the solutions that have emerged are rarely compatible. The Open Logistics Foundation now offers an industry-ready software that brings the digital consignment note (eCMR) into a unified standard.

The Open Logistics Foundation's eCMR software is a development by companies for companies: around 25 member companies of the Open Logistics Foundation have driven forward, tested, and validated the software in the Working Group "Electronic Transport Documents" and its associated project "eCMR." The Open Logistics Foundation accompanied the project procedurally in its role as a non-profit organisation and provided support through technical and legal expertise. The project originated from an initiative by the Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flow and Logistics IML. There, within the scope of the large-scale research project "Silicon Economy" funded by the Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport, components for an eCMR open source software were developed and made available via the Open Logistics Foundation's Repository.

The participating companies represent a cross-section of the market. Among them are international logistics service providers, leading transport platforms, and renowned logistics IT companies, corporations, medium-sized enterprises, and start-ups, mostly based in Europe.

The new software is legally compliant and cross-functional. It is suitable for companies of any size and any sector. The use of a standardised eCMR data model enables the exchange of eCMR documents across federated platforms. Neither a central instance nor a mediator or broker is required for this: any company or organisation can become part of the network. To sign and validate eCMR documents at company level, the software uses advanced electronic seals.

Further Information
Detailed information about the eCMR project and the eCMR service is available at www.openlogisticsfoundation.org/ecmr.

The most important questions and answers

How do I integrate the eCMR software into an existing IT landscape?

All building blocks and components of the software are available in the Open Logistics Repository and can be downloaded from there. As it is open source software, its download and use are free of charge. Companies with their own IT departments can integrate the software into their existing systems themselves. Small and medium-sized enterprises can outsource this task and commission an IT service provider of their choice.

How long does it take until the eCMR software is ready for use?

Installation takes only a few hours. However, customisation requires more effort. This varies from company to company, depending on which processes and applications are to be integrated.

Can I modify or extend the eCMR software?

The Open Logistics Foundation explicitly does not restrict changes or extensions to the software. However, the base – i.e., the standardised data model and the interfaces that ensure compatibility – should not be altered without good reason.

The Open Logistics Foundation explicitly welcomes the contribution of new functionalities to the Open Logistics Repository so that they are then available to all companies.

May I use the eCMR software to create my own commercial offerings for customers?

Companies may use the software without restriction in accordance with the Open Logistics Foundation License, including for the purpose of expanding their service offering. The service may also be priced accordingly. This also applies to functionalities developed based on the software.

Do I have to join the Open Logistics Foundation in order to use the eCMR software?

No, because every piece of software developed within the Open Logistics Foundation is open source. Its use is free of charge.

open logistics foundation

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