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The 11th UIC ERTMS World Conference opens in Istanbul in presence of 800 participants from 38 countries:

All players involved in the implementation and development of ERTMS, ETCS, GSM-R, debate solutions to optimise rail investments across the world

(Paris/Istanbul, 2 April 2014) The 11th UIC ERTMS World Conference jointly organised by the International Union of Railways (UIC) and Turkish State Railways (TCDD) opened on 2 April 2014 in the presence of 800 participants representing 38 countries and all continents.

The main theme of the 11th ERTMS World Conference is “ERTMS – Optimising Rail Investments Worldwide”. Specific sessions are dedicated to user requirements, the state of the art and target situation for ERTMS, the ERTMS suppliers’ experience, reducing costs, implementation of strategies, as well as perspectives for technological progress for ERTMS.

This conference is taking place under the High Patronage of the Turkish Minister of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications, Mr Lütfi Elvan. In his welcome address, he underlined that railways as an economical, safe and secure transport system contributes strongly to a sustainable long-term transport policy. Railways need to develop transport corridors to achieve their development and implementation of such international corridors brings harmonisation, interoperability and common rules. The fast development of railways during previous decades in Turkey will bring an essential contribution to the creation of the new Silk Road which includes the Marmaray fixed link connecting Europe with Asia, North Africa, Middle-East and the Far-East.

Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General, is particularly pleased “to welcome all participants and stakeholders of ERTMS for the first time here in Turkey at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and the Middle-East, as a very strong symbol. Indeed Turkey has become one of the very leading countries having confidence in railways as an effective mean of promoting economic and social development in the present and future. [...] He added “I am very pleased to welcome delegates from countries and regions represented for the first time at ERTMS Conferences, in particular from North Africa, the Middle-East, Far-East, Asia, Australia, Brazil, .. The high interest for the 2014 Conference proves that ERTMS system – with its ETCS components for train-control and GSM-R for radio communications – has not only proven its viability in Europe but is also offering new implementation perspectives all over the world”.

Süleyman Karaman, Director General of Turkish State Railways (TCDD) and Chairman of the UIC Middle-East Region, warmly welcomed all participants and described the exceptional commitment to offer an effective and modern rail transport system not only for Turkey but also for neighbouring regions.

He underlined the strategic role of the Marmaray rail link which constitutes for the first time a continuous railway system from London to Beijing, what is symbolically the re-creation of the Railway Silk Road. The Marmaray link is a part of a new high speed, commuter and freight system beneficial in the future to neighbouring countries. Therefore the issue of interoperability to be discussed during this UIC ERTMS Conference is an essential topic for the future.

Other keynote speakers at the Official Session were Marcel Verslype, Executive Director, European Railway Agency (ERA), Philippe Citroën, General Director, European Rail Industries (UNIFE), Libor Lochman, Executive Director, Community of European Railways and Infrastructure Companies (CER), Luc Lallemand, Director General Infrabel, Belgium, EIM Vice-Chairman and Kari Kapsch, GSM-R Industry Group.

Prior to the Conference Opening Turkish Railways organised a technical visit for all participants focused on the Marmaray fixed link which included the visit of the two new Istanbul stations, Üsküdar and Yenikapi. During a briefing meeting all participants received very comprehensive information on all aspects of this project: the general planning and realisation of the project, the contribution of the project to the history and heritage of Istanbul (archaeology, etc.) as well as technical conditions for operations of the Marmaray rail link today and in the future.

More information on the conference is to follow.

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