



PRESS RELEASE n° 34/2016

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## **13th UIC Sustainability Conference organised with the Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) opened today in Vienna:**

*Railways: efficient power towards Sustainability*

(Vienna, 12 October 2016) The 13th UIC Sustainability Conference, jointly organised by the International Union of Railways (UIC) and the Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) with the title “*Railways: efficient power towards Sustainability*” opened today in Vienna at the Hofburg International Congress and will be held from 12 to 14 October 2016. This conference follows a successful edition held in October 2012 in Venice.

The Conference features speakers from leading international organisations and European institutions, such as United Nations’ UNFCCC and UNECE, International Energy Agency IEA, European Commission, European Investment Bank EIB, the Austrian Energy Agency and high-level representatives from the rail sector including Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director-General, Yves Desjardins-Siciliano, President of VIA Rail Canada, Chairman of UIC North American Region, Mr Michael Stahlhut, the CEO of SBB Cargo, Switzerland, etc.

330 delegates from 25 countries are attending and participating in the debate focused on a sustainable future for the railway sector.

The conference aims to examine the key issues of how sustainability can give rail a competitive advantage, attract investment whilst reducing costs and risks.

This event covers 3 main sessions: *The Global 2030 Agenda & COP21 Paris Agreement*, *Railway delivering sustainable developments goals*, and *Railways delivering sustainable developments goals*.

This Conference will also give the opportunity to debate many technical topics including Carbon footprint in railways: integrated scope and innovative tools, Weather resilience and climate change adaptation, among others. These series of technical workshops will look in detail at key issues for railway sustainability.

Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General, opened the conference giving a message from Mr Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations: “*Sustainable transport is an important part of our common efforts to tackle climate change and build a cleaner, greener world.*”

*“... The transport sector can play a vital role in achieving the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. I count on the commitment of the global railway community*

*to make transport more sustainable – and your gathering is especially timely coming within weeks of the entry into force of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.”*

He also delivered a message on behalf of Mr Oleg Belozеров, UIC Chairman and Russian Railways RZD President, addressing the participants:

*“Sustainability is among the priorities of UIC. Its members consistently put measures in place that are aimed at improving the mobility of the population and the experience that passengers have with railway services.”*

*The UIC Environment, Energy and Sustainability Platform (...) set priorities for UIC activities aimed at environmental protection and sharing of best practices.”*

Mr Johann Pluy, Division Manager of “Railway Systems”, ÖBB Infra, declared that *“climate change is a reality. Natural disasters influence the reliability of railways and are costly. One of the solutions is the management of the railways. As Austria is an industrial country, powerful freight corridors are important. There are opportunities to improve the efficiency of the rail sector.”*

ÖBB is investing a significant amount in advertising to inform customers about sustainability. The company supports the climate strategy of the government and encourages innovative solutions.

Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux highlighted that: *“Sustainability is embedded in the core functions of UIC. Our mission statement is ‘to develop rail transport to meet the needs of sustainable mobility’.*

*Rail is the backbone of sustainable transport, which in turn is an enabler of sustainable development. Our contribution to society has impacts that reach far beyond the transport of people and goods...”*

*“...We have now published our first report on progress against these targets, ready for the United Nations Climate Change conference COP22 to be held in Marrakesh next month. These data and analysis have been collected, analysed and published in partnership with the International Energy Agency.”*

Mr Rajesh Sethi, Manager Sustainable Development and Mechanisms programme, UNFCCC, gave a quote from the UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Mrs Patricia Espinosa:

*“The 13th UIC Sustainability Conference in Vienna provides a forum for the rail sector to identify the key actions that railways can take to deliver action that increases global ambition to meet the climate change challenge.”*

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