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UIC held its 84th General Assembly in Portorož, Slovenia, the UIC's birthplace in 1921

Strategic Visions for all 6 UIC regions now available in a coherent structure

Coordinated event organised in New York in the framework of the UN Climate Summit

UIC will coordinate a world campaign of the rail sector in view of the United Nations COP 21 Climate Change Conference in December 2015 in Paris

Launch of the UIC Rail Academy with an MBA, the only one of its kind

6 new Members joined UIC

(Portorož / Paris, 1 July 2014) The International Union of Railways UIC – the worldwide professional railway association-held its statutory meetings – Executive Board and 84th General Assembly as well as the UIC Regional Assembly for Europe (RAE) on 26 – 27 June in Portorož, Slovenia, at the kind invitation of Slovenian Railways (SZ). Portorož is the location on the Adriatic Sea where in 1921 the decision was taken at an intergovernmental conference to create an international organisation of railways – the UIC – with the remit to manage under one umbrella all international agreements, technical standards and regulations aiming to facilitating international transport by rail. After a second diplomatic conference in 1922 in Genoa, the UIC Constitutive Assembly took place in October 1922 in Paris.

From 51 founding members from 29 countries in 1922, UIC continuously extended its membership and groups nowadays 240 members on all five continents.

In opening the reception given by Slovenian Railways and UIC on 26 June at the Palace Hotel of Portorož, the symbolic place of UIC's birth, the Minister of Infrastructure and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Slovenia, **Mr. Samo Omerzel**, welcomed all participants in this symbolic place of the International Railway cooperation history. He underlined the essential rule of the railways to boost economic development at global level

On behalf of UIC and all members, UIC Director General **Mr. Jean-Pierre Loubinoux** highlighted the main milestones of UIC's development and major achievements of 92 years of international railway cooperation within UIC.

He said: *“This cooperative and friendly spirit led our members in 2009 to unanimously adopt the three core values guiding our daily actions: Unity – Solidarity – Universality”. [...] Today standardisation is a strategic issue of UIC with the aims of improving our positions as operators as well as developing intercontinental and intermodal interoperability on corridors between regions or continents. The recent publication of coherent “Strategic Visions” for the six UIC Regions represents another sign of consolidation of the worldwide railway family within UIC.*

One of you recently compared UIC to a “worldwide Innovation Agency for railways”. And indeed in the past decades, my predecessors, among whom I wish to pay special tribute to Louis Armand, opened the ways of the future. UIC is offering here a bridge between Past, Present and Future. A further success for UIC credibility is our links and recognition with leading international organisations, United Nations and its bodies ECOSOC, UNFCCC, UNEP, UNECE, UNESCAP, as well as the Union of Africa, World Bank, ADB and other regional organisations. In this regard UIC also acts as a bridge between transport, economy and society.”

The UIC Executive Board and 84th General Assembly met on 27 June: the General Assembly was opened by the Minister of Economic Development and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia, **Mr. Metod Dragonja** who warmly welcomed all participants on behalf of the Slovenian Government and Prime Minister Mrs. Alenka Bratusek. He emphasised that *“Slovenia is a small country with direct and good connections to the ports of Koper and Trieste and to inland connections. Slovenia plays the role of an integrator for Central and Eastern European and East-West connections, at the crossroads of three major Pan-European transport corridors. It also contributes as an integrator for the economies of Slovenia, Austria, Italy. Slovenia strongly contributes to the development of European railways.”* And: *“We are aware of the importance of infrastructure to sustain economic growth, in particular in view of the corridor development.”*

Mr. Dusan Mes, Director-General of Slovenian Railways SZ, welcomed the participants and said: *“UIC which comes back to Portorož, the place where the idea to create the railway organisation was born, has many crucial issues on its agenda”* [...] *“On the European scale, Slovenian Railways are not a large company. Slovenian Railways are an integrated business system with freight and passenger transport and infrastructure management as principal activities, carried out by individual companies within the holding organisation”*. [...] *“In passenger transport, Slovenian Railways are the backbone of public transport in the state. As the infrastructure manager, Slovenian Railways provide the maintenance of the state-owned railway infrastructure and guarantee safe traffic on it.”*

He added: *“Today's UIC General Assembly meeting is an important step in that direction, because successful alliances cannot be formed without formal framework and common standards of railway operations. The strategic challenges defined in the UIC document “Challenge 2050” are our challenges as well, the challenges of the present and the future. Without doubt an efficient railway system is of vital importance for growth and economic competitiveness, and for development of the society as such.”*

In the message delivered on his behalf as UIC Chairman, **Mr. Vladimir Yakunin** said:

“As you know, large-scale changes are currently taking place in production and transport geography. On the one hand, the countries of South-East Asia have become the “workshop of the world”, where one-third of the world's goods are produced. On the other hand, the EU, expanded to 28 countries, has created an enormous sales market. And let us not forget about the integration processes within the Common Economic Space of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia, which resulted in signing of the Eurasian Economic Community Treaty”. [...] *Unfortunately, despite the important role which railways play in domestic and regional freight transport, for historical and technological reasons the scale and intensity of **transcontinental** rail transport is restricted.*

As a professional railway association, therefore, UIC is making it a priority to promote inter-regional cooperation and to build a common understanding of the high-priority areas of the Union's work which should be implemented in practice.

*First of all, a few words about the preparation of the **UIC roadmap for the global development of rail transport**, which takes into account the strategies for developing each of the six regional assemblies separately. The members of virtually all the regional assemblies have discussed the proposals for the structure and content of the global roadmap.*

I am pleased that some of the Headquarters departments (the Rail System and Freight departments) and working bodies (the IRRB) have got involved in this matter. I hope we shall be able to discuss all the proposals in December, at the end-of-year session of the General Assembly.

I again invite all the regions to take an active part in this work.

*[...] I would like to focus particularly on the further development of **cooperation with the UN bodies** on matters concerning the legal regulation of all aspects of rail transport operations, including freight and passenger transport and border-crossing procedures.*

[...] History shows that despite geopolitical changes, the role of rail transport has always been, and remains, key to the development of all countries' economies, trade and tourism. And that means that the development not only of transport links but also of trade and economic links between the countries represented in UIC depends directly on whether we address the issues facing us today effectively."

Mr. Dongfu H.E. LU, Vice Minister of Transport of the National Republic of China expressed greetings and congratulations from the National Railway Administration of China, to UIC and UIC members on the occasion of this General Assembly on the site of Portoroz. He underlined the efforts and results achieved by UIC in terms of *"creating confidence, developing visions and ensuring responsibilities. The UIC is an essential place for exchanging international experiences on railway technology and research, business development and Visions for preparing the future of the railways"*. He stressed that *"the National Railway Administration of China NRA was also ready to play a role in the cooperation with ISO and UIC"...*

Report on UIC progress in 2014

Mr. Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, Director-General of UIC reported on UIC's actions and results since the 83rd General Assembly – held in December 2013 in Paris.

He presented the **Strategic Visions for all six UIC regions which are now available in a coherent manner**. Each of them has been defined in close collaboration with the members of each of these geographical areas and present, within each region's specific time horizon, the general development trends, the economic and political context, as well as the projects and action plans corresponding to each region. These visions form a vital tool for communicating to the outside world the vision held by the railway sector of its role serving society, both today and even more in future years.

Jean-Pierre Loubinoux mentioned the series of **Memoranda of Understanding** signed with leading International organisations or associations, the latest being the MoU signed with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC);

He reported on the progress of the strategic issue of **Standardisation**, including the elaboration of International Railway Standards (IRS) and the setting-up of closer cooperation links with ISO.

In the field of **Sustainable Development**, Mr Loubinoux presented the Strategy developed on the issue of Rail Transport, low carbon and modal shift challenge proposing a rail sector challenge for energy efficiency and CO2 emissions reductions. The challenge is designed to clearly illustrate how increased investment and modal shift to rail can help to secure the climate change two degrees scenario. UIC also announced that it will soon jointly publish a third version of UIC/IEA Railway Handbook on Energy Consumption and CO2 emissions with the International Energy Agency (IEA).

In this context the UIC Director General is honoured to participate and represent the railway sector in a High-Level Advisory Group set up by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Jean-Pierre Loubinoux was pleased to inform members that a **high level event with a railway session will be held in New York on 22 September in the framework of the Climate Summit organised by the United Nations**. This event will bring together representatives from leading international organisations and institutions to discuss through keynote speeches and panels perspectives for global institutions as well as for the rail industry sector.

An important decision at the General Assembly, unanimously supported by all the members, is also the preparation of a **world campaign of the rail sector**, coordinated by UIC, in view of the United Nations' COP 21 Climate Change Conference to be held in December 2015 in Paris. A task force with UIC members and leading associations will be set up very soon to manage this project.

In the framework of the strategy dealing with the **Talent and Educational issue**, the project of setting up a Railway Global Executive MBA (and a "Railway Academy") with the support of a network of leading partners worldwide was also presented and supported by UIC members present at the General Assembly. This MBA, hosted by the Business School EM Lyon, is supposed to attract external high potential talents to the railway sector and to develop entrepreneurial spirit and strategic leadership competencies with action learning experiences dedicated to the railway sector.

Jean-Pierre Loubinoux also reminded the meeting of the organisation of the next **UIC Innovation Awards** to be held in Paris in December 2014, as transmission of knowledge and know-how to younger generations, is one of the main vocations of the association. Under the coordination of the International Railway Research Board (IRRB), the UIC Innovation Awards aim at stimulating research towards the necessary innovations and step-changes for the railway sector of tomorrow.

In terms of **Communication**, Jean-Pierre Loubinoux reported on the actions done and planned to promote the position of UIC as a leading association at the worldwide level.

Reports from the UIC Regions

Progress on the implementation of the strategic action plans for the UIC regions was presented to UIC General Assembly members for the Regions of Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle-East.

All this work and the results obtained in the regional cooperation activities will all contribute to the definition of a Global Action Plan for UIC.

Management issues, appointments, membership

UIC General Assembly members unanimously approved the UIC accounts for 2013 as well as they were submitted as well as the information on the mid-year financial situation in 2014 and the budget guidelines for 2015.

In addition UIC members thanked the Headquarters for the transparency of the accounts and results submitted.

The UIC Director General informed the General Assembly members of a series of appointments in UIC working bodies: Mr. Rütger Fenkes (DB) will succeed Mr. Marc Giesen – who changes position – as Chairman of the Commercial and Distribution Forum (Passenger) for a two-year mandate.

Mr. Chaudary, CEO of the Rail Protection Force at Indian Railways (IR) was confirmed as the new Chairman of the UIC Security Platform – succeeding Lubomir Hradisky – and the General Assembly approved the designation of Mr. Gerd Neubeck, Chief Security Officer at Deutsche Bahn (DB), as the new Vice Chairman of the UIC Security Platform.

6 new members were welcomed to UIC:

In Europe: INFRABEL, the Belgian rail infrastructure manager, LISEA, the French infrastructure manager for the high-speed line connecting Tours to Bordeaux, Leo Express, Czech passenger operator and ZAG, Slovenian Rail Research Centre;

In the Middle-East: Etihad Rail from the United Arab Emirates UAE, and Rail Pardaz Seir, Iranian freight operator.

The 85th UIC General Assembly meeting will take place on 3 December 2014 in Paris in connection with the UIC Research and Innovation Awards ceremony, the 86th meeting in July 2015 in Tokyo in connection with UIC HIGH SPEED, 9th world congress on High speed rail, and the 87th meeting in December 2015 in Paris in connection with the United Nations' UNFCCC Climate Change conference.

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