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3rd UIC World Congress on Rail Training 2015, held under the slogan: “Unite, Inspire, Connect” opened today in Lisbon, Portugal

(Lisbon, 15 April 2015), The 3rd Edition of the World Congress on Rail Training jointly organised by the UIC, Portuguese Railways CP, Rail Infrastructure Manager REFER, and its partners Fertagus, DB Mobility Logistics AG, DB Training, Learning & Consulting, SNCF and the Instituto Superior Técnico (IST) opened on 15 April at the Instituto, in Lisbon, Portugal, and will take place until 17 April 2015.

This event brings together over 200 participants from 40 countries (Asia Pacific, Africa, Europe, North America, South America and Middle East).

The World Congress on Rail Training 2015 is organised at the initiative of the UIC Expertise Development Platform, which draws its expertise from the regional Rail Training Centres Networks. Its main purpose is to enhance workforce development through sharing best practice in rail training across the entire industry.

This conference will focus on major topic issues for railways such Strategic and innovative practices – (e.g. using training to promote organisational innovation)

- Attraction of skilled force and diversity management
- Staff retention
- Skills mismatch and the need for sustainable partnerships between various stakeholders such as academia, research organisations, railway manufacturers, railway operators and infrastructure managers
- How to cope with the loss of corporate knowledge
- Transfer of competencies
- Motivation of personnel and satisfaction of customers
- New learning technologies and multimodal learning
- Safety & security
- Knowledge management & sustainability
- And more...

The key congress aims are to:

- Promote excellence in railway training through best practice models
- Highlight research findings in this area which bring innovation and have practical application to the industry
- Identify new challenges for training and training technologies

Technical visits will take place on 15 and 16 April alongside a number of workshops and other sessions.

Key note opening addresses were given by Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General; Mr Arlindo Oliveira, IST President; Mrs Ana Cristina Dourado, Fertagus CEO; Mr António Ramalho, REFER President and Mr Manuel Queiró, CP President;

Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General, welcomed the attendees and highlighted in his opening speech: "This event comes after the Madrid edition. It has been a growing success and it's now a global event. This global event is of utmost importance for the railway training professionals & HR community but also for the railway industry in general. Today we see "the global rail renaissance" and because the demand for rail is growing there has never been a better time to join the railway industry. Rail is more and more recognised as an important mode of transportation for the mobility of goods and the people at international level. By providing a sustainable solution that responds to the needs of a growing economy, rail offers society a competitive, environmentally friendly transport solution. COP 21 is going to be a very sustainable event in Paris.

It is therefore important to focus efforts on improving the quality of railway education and training in order to meet the skills demand of this rapidly growing sector.

Such an event which provides a unique platform for exchanging best practice, for sharing research findings, and potentially for identifying new challenges for training and training technologies, for fostering new and innovative ideas is fundamental & contributes to the sustainable development of railways. We have to focus on new products, like the UIC MBA which is going to be developed."

He concluded in warmly thanking the participants and all the sponsors. He gave special thanks to the steering group which makes progress to help serve the railway community.

Mr Arlindo Oliveira, IST President, then took the floor and thanked Mr Manuel Queiró, CP President, Mr António Ramalho, REFER President, Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General and all the delegates for being here.

He talked about the IST and explained that it is now one of the leading schools in Portugal with a top level of teaching. The instituto is well known in Portugal for the quality for students. Over the last five years there has been a new dynamic in Lisbon and differences in the vision of the students, it is more competitive. It is now very attractive for entrepreneurs. He thinks that Portugal has not done enough to support transportation and he hopes that this congress will help recognise this importance.

Mrs Ana Cristina Dourado, Fertagus CEO, explained that Fertagus is a private company belonging to Barraqueiro Group, the biggest private bus passenger transport group in the Iberian Peninsula. It is the first rail concession operated by a private company in Portugal, after the separation of infrastructure operation and management.

This system has been built in the last few years with the competence and effort of the HR either in an operational and technical way, which has implemented new and better solutions.

She is sure that this congress will allow knowledge in this important sector to be improved and will contribute to increasing the quality of the transport of the citizens – that is the aim.

Mr António Ramalho, REFER President, welcomed everyone and underlined in his speech the new opportunities in the private sector for globalisation in the market.

We are in a new cycle; we will change the management and the people.

There is an evolution in terms of capacity and investment.

We need to open our mind in train activity solutions for three main issues:

- Services to customers and responding to demands
- Return on investment
- Current globalisation trends

There is a huge revolution and we need to discuss this new activity of the training industry.

Mr Manuel Queiró, CP President, pointed out the excellent results CP has been achieving in the past two years, with notable growth in passenger transport in all its train services, in spite of the economic crisis and the general mobility market reduction.

Regarding the railways in Portugal, he highlighted the need to correct past public policies, which led to clearly insufficient investment in this sector. Investment is crucial to further leverage market share growth of trains in the global mobility market.

Regarding HR resources, railway companies need to find strategies to retain specialised know-how, as an essential factor for growth and development.

The programme then started with presentations from Morocco, Portugal, France, Brazil, Switzerland.

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