



INTERNATIONAL UNION
OF RAILWAYS

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The 78th UIC General Assembly was held in Warsaw at the invitation of Polish Railways, in connection with the launch of the ILCAD international campaign on safety at level crossings

The world railway organisation is making progress in its aims to achieve transparency, visibility at world level and stability; Memoranda of Understanding signed or being prepared with a number of institutions; annual report published for 2010-2011; progress underway on plan to define world railway standards; United Arab Emirates' NTA among UIC's new members; and 2012 will be UIC's 90th anniversary.

(Warsaw/Paris, 10 June 2011) The 78th General Assembly of the International Union of Railways (UIC), the worldwide professional association of the railway sector, was held on 8 June in Warsaw at the invitation of Polish Railways (PKP SA). This meeting was preceded on 7 June by the UIC Asian Regional Assembly followed by the Executive Board and a series of technical meetings.

The UIC meetings also coincided with the launch of the international ILCAD campaign in Warsaw, aiming to raise awareness in countries across the world of the risks involved at level crossings. The launch of this international campaign, coordinated by UIC, was attended by representatives from PKP-PLK and the Polish Ministry of Infrastructure, the UN (UNECE) and the Operation Lifesaver association.

A number of activities organised in close collaboration with the Polish authorities, such as crash simulations, awareness-raising sessions targeting young people, etc. were also open to UIC delegates.

The General Assembly was hosted by Mrs Maria Wasiak, Director-General of PKP SA and chaired by Mr Yoshio Ishida, Vice-Chairman of East Japan Railway Company, UIC Chairman, together with Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director-General, and attended by the chairmen and chief executives of several railways, including India, Korea, Iran and Via Rail Canada.

On opening the General Assembly, Chairman Yoshio Ishida informed members of the gradual resumption of normal railway activity in Japan following the disastrous events following the earthquake and tsunami, and warmly thanked all UIC members for their expressions of sympathy and their offers of assistance during this time of tragedy for his country.

The Director-General then gave an account of all the progress made over these last two years to make UIC more transparent (notably in terms of project management), more visible at world level and more stable in the long-term.

Transparency is reflected in the publication of a new form of annual report (in line with the structure and objectives recently published in the “Reference Document – Overview of UIC Activities 2009-2011”). Visibility on the world stage has been strengthened through the holding of around a hundred major international events over the last year (congresses, conferences, seminars and workshops), the work of around 200 expert groups and the development of major resources for communication with members and external institutions (websites receiving 100,000 visits per month, extranet, the UIC “eNews” newsletter). As for the stability and consolidation of UIC, these should be achieved over time by seeking to adopt a more business-oriented approach, by winning external funds for long-term financing (European funds for R&D projects for example), by developing coordinated research activities between European level (RCG) and world level (IRRB – International Railway Research Board), by continuing with the process of developing global standards, and by focusing UIC’s work on a number of “key activities” for the railway sector, defined in close collaboration with members.

UIC’s visibility on the world stage has been enhanced through the signing or preparation of a string of memoranda and agreements recognising UIC’s expertise and the impartiality of its opinions. These memoranda and agreements will of course be implemented in close collaboration with all interested members. Jean-Pierre Loubinoux mentioned in particular the agreements and negotiations with railway associations such as EIA, APTA and OSJD, and with intergovernmental organisations such as the World Bank, the UN (NGO status reconfirmed at ECOSOC, cooperation with UNEP, UNFCCC), NATO, ISO and IEC.

The assembly in Warsaw enabled progress towards a clearer vision of UIC’s aims with regard to world railway standardisation. The idea consists of assessing which current specifications (content of UIC Leaflets) could become world railway standards, respecting of course the rights of the railways which contributed to developing this pool of standards and also taking into account the specific characteristics of the various continents in terms of railway standards (USA for example).

The members of the General Assembly were moreover informed of the status of work to define a number of “key activities”. Initially requested by the UIC European Assembly and General Assembly and delegated to a Task Force, the aim is to identify those activities necessary for the development of the international railway system, and recognised as such by the members, which will require stable, long-term financing independent of the “opt-in” process (voluntary participation in projects). The members of the General Assembly will be presented with proposals at the next assembly so they can adopt a position.

Research activities are coordinated at world level by the IRRB under the chairmanship of Mr Boris Lapidus and comprise, in addition to the global standards, the development of a dissemination, communication and benchmarking system (notably via the Rail Research Portal currently in progress), the creation of an award for railway research (to be presented for the first time in 2012), and cooperation with WCRR, the World Congress on Railway Research (of which UIC is among the founding partners).

The UIC General Assembly then unanimously approved the association's accounts for 2010 as well as the financial and budgetary plans presented by Headquarters for 2011 and 2012. These results and financial plans are part of the course of action requested by members for transparent and strict management befitting the current context of global financial crisis, which particularly affected the transport sector and the railways. The actions of UIC Headquarters in this area were expressly acknowledged and are encouraged to continue.

The General Assembly was then informed of progress made within the 6 UIC regions, with presentations delivered by Mr Huh Joon Young, UIC Asian Region, Chairman of Korail, Mr Said Chaidid, African Region, ONCF, Mr Robert VanderClute, North American Region, AAR Vice-President, Mr Ali Abdol Saheb-Mohammadi, Middle-Eastern Region, Vice Minister of Transport and Chairman of RAI, Mr Mikaël Lemarchand, European Region, representing SNCF President Guillaume Pepy, and by Jean-Pierre Loubinoux for the Latin American Region, chaired by Mr Guilherme Quintella, Brazil.

Two new members were admitted during the GA in Warsaw: French engineering company Inexia as an affiliate member (European Region) and the National Transport Authority (NTA) of the United Arab Emirates as an affiliate member (Middle-Eastern Region).

The 79th UIC General Assembly will be held on 8 December 2011 at UIC Headquarters in Paris and will be the occasion to launch the 90th anniversary celebrations in the shape of a photo exhibition organised with contributions from all the members.

In his concluding remarks, Chairman Ishida, on behalf of all the members, expressed sincere thanks to Polish Railways as well as to their chief executive Mrs Maria Wasiak for their warm welcome and hospitality in Poland.

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