UIC and railML® act for creating the foundations for a Universal Infrastructure Data Exchange Format

(Paris, 19 September 2013) On 17 September, the International Union of Railways (UIC) brought together over 60 representatives from 17 countries to discuss the joint UIC-ERIM/railML initiative to create the foundations for a universal infrastructure data exchange format, a common "language" to improve the railway data exchange.

"We need to create a larger sector approach as the data exchange is one of the rare levers where important savings are still feasible without major investments" stressed Mr. Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General, in his opening statement. "With this initiative we have the opportunity to move from the current one-off expenditures to coordinated investments in order to have sustainable and state-of-the-art solutions. Railways need them now and we cannot afford to wait longer", concluded Mr. Loubinoux.

A concrete project plan was presented to the audience which consisted of representatives from railways, CER, EIM, ERA, EU-JRC, signalling and IT-industry, geographical institutes, universities and railway service providers.

Subsequently, the initiative was discussed during a Question/Answer session. There was a consensus that this common standard should be available as soon as possible for railway sector in order to avoid the multiplication of new data interfaces. They should satisfy different use cases ranging from legal EU obligations (RINF, Inspire) to everyday business needs (Operations, ETCS). However, this standard would not prevent from the use of existing national standards.

As huge savings could be reached by co-operation and better coordination between railway organisations, UIC proposed to act as a common platform to link stakeholders to coordinate the work. Furthermore, the use and further development of railML as a basis for common data exchange was consented as this open source format is already used by the major railways and ETCS suppliers.

A quick solution to fulfil the RINF obligations via railML data exchange format is envisaged by railways and ERA. "railML.org will be happy to extend the existing schemes to satisfy this request!" replied Vasco Paul Kolmorgen, the coordinator of the railML consortium. Several railways, such as DB, Infrabel and RFF, welcomed this proposal and declared their willingness to contribute with their knowledge.

The proposed roadmap was approved and the first short term results will be presented on 8 April 2014 at UIC. This conference will be open to all railway stakeholders. The presentations from this joint UIC-ERIM/railML-conference and the railML users conference, held at UIC the following day, are available on the websites of UIC (www.uic.org) and railML (www.railml.org).

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