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88th General Assembly of the worldwide railway association UIC was held in Rome

UIC focuses on standardisation, security, digitalisation and the intensification of international and regional cooperation

(Paris, 8 July 2016) The Executive Board and 88th General Assembly of the International Union of Railways (UIC) were held in Rome on 6 July 2016 at the Italian Parliament, in the presence of the majority of UIC Members from the five continents. The meetings were led by Mr Oleg BELOZEROV, UIC Chairman, President of the Russian Railways (RZD), Mr Renato MAZZONCINI, UIC Vice Chairman, CEO of Italian Railways Ferrovie dello Stato and Host of the meetings, together with Mr Jean-Pierre LOUBINOX, UIC Director General, in the presence of the Chairmen of the UIC Regions Asia-Pacific, North America, Middle-East and Europe.

UIC Chairman Mr Oleg BELOZEROV highlighted the importance of sustaining a constructive dialogue between Members as well as stakeholders. He presented his report to the Assembly indicating the overall orientations for the second part of the year.

He said: *“Six months ago, we discussed the growing dynamics of cooperation between the UIC and the UN structures, as well as the dynamics of international transport activity as a whole. I would like to note once again that the UIC has stepped up its efforts on the international stage significantly and is achieving the goals set out in the UIC Working Programme. Responding to the challenges of the time, the UIC has made important steps in the last six months in the formation of the Strategy for the Development of Rail Transport. Today, we can state that the members of practically all the UIC regional assemblies have adopted strategic plans of action for the medium and long term.”*

He followed by saying: *“Standardisation is another priority area that has been developing successfully due to the endeavour of the UIC headquarters and its members.”* And: *“The development of international transport corridors connecting business hubs and facilitating international trade is an equally important area of our work”.*

And then: *“Intensifying regional engagement is another priority. UIC regional assemblies have immense potential for development. We can offer railways across the globe a broad range of areas for mutually beneficial cooperation – security, multimodal transportation, integration into logistics supply chains, international tourism and many more. They can eventually give rise to new UIC global projects”.*

Mr Renato MAZZONCINI, CEO of Italian Railways Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane, UIC Vice Chairman and Host of the 88th General Assembly of UIC, warmly welcomed all participants at the UIC Statutory meetings in Rome. He summarised what the main objectives should be for UIC as the worldwide railway organisation in the period to come:

- *“working together, that means with strong involvement of all UIC members from all regions and HQ teams, sharing a lot of information,*
- *ensuring environmental friendliness of rail transport,*
- *innovation and digitalization, developing smart railway*
- *developing rail corridors and ensuring interoperability*
- *achieving integration with other modes”*

He followed by saying: *“Standardisation is the heart of the association. I really invite all UIC Members to send experts, as it’s an occasion to share information, and construct a strategy on that”.*

Speaking of Standardisation, one of the main concerns of these meetings, the General Assembly approved the report of the Standardisation Platform, the overall strategy and method of work, including the programme of development and production of the IRS (International Railway Solutions), the continuous updating of the UIC Leaflets and the ongoing actions, the activities and results on the cooperation with IEC and OSJD as well as the forecasted steps for the future cooperation with ISO and CEN.

To develop the reflexions and exchanges in this field, the General Assembly also welcomed as a guest speaker Mr François DAVENNE, Secretary General of the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) who addressed the Assembly in particular on a recent OTIF publication called “Interoperability beyond Europe”. Mr DAVENNE explained the strategy of OTIF.

Mr Jean-Pierre LOUBINOX, UIC Director General, said: *“The Rail Operating Community worldwide thinks, acts and feels as one large family. Building a feature of peaceful and integrated mobility, between cities, countries, regions or continents, on the foundations of our traditions, experience and spirit”.* Mr LOUBINOX reported on global activities and highlighted three of them: Security, Standardisation and Digitalisation.

In the field of Security, in an overall context of terrorist attacks and threats and following a debate which stated at European level, it was decided at the December 2015 General Assembly to enlarge the security global work programme for 2016 with the following three additional specific projects that have been identified for further cooperation. In terms of digitalisation, he presented the programme of the recently launched Platform and reminded that within UIC it is a platform at the service of the other Forums and Platforms; starting from existing projects, the Digital Platform produces the necessary POCs (Proofs of Concept) which will in turn be presented to the members for appropriation and potential industrial use. He took this opportunity to announce the launch of the 1st UIC Digital Awards which will be presented during the next General Assembly in Saint Petersburg in December. Looking ahead in 2017, actions will include in particular a Seminar on maintenance IoT (Internet of Things) and big data in China during the second quarter of 2017.

Appointments

Mr Ferdinand SCHMIDT, Member of the Board of RCG, was appointed as Chairman of the Freight Forum to complete the mandate of Mr BAMBERGER, the Chairman of the UIC Freight Forum until now who has left Rail Cargo Group (RCG). Mr SCHMIDT will simultaneously chair the High Level Freight Meeting (HLFM). Mr Gerd NEUBECK, Representative of the Board of management for economics, law and regulation for European and international security issues and current Vice-Chairman, was appointed Chairman of the UIC Security Platform for a two year mandate until 31 July 2018. Mr LOUBINOX proposed to open the platform to the American continent and to appoint Mr Marc BEAULIEU, Security Director of Via Rail Canada as Vice-Chair person for a two year mandate up to 31 July 2018. Mr NAZAROV, RZD, was appointed Chairman of the Heavy Haul Platform. Mr USENKO,

Head of RZD International Financial Reporting Standards Division, will complete the mandate of Mr AKSENOV within the Budget & Audit Commission.

Relationships with partner organisations

A review of the current status of all the agreements that UIC has signed with partner organisations as well as the main achievements these agreements have allowed was made during the General Assembly.

Among new Memoranda of Understanding or Cooperation agreements signed, we can note that UIC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the European Investment Bank (EIB) which will provide technical assistance services through the European Investment Advisory Hub (the “EIAH” or “the Hub”) with the objective of providing access to a wide range of advisory services and expertise for European authorities as well as private and public project promoters. UIC will act as EIAH international technical point of entry / screening body for EIAH potential clients and stakeholders. UIC will participate together with the EIB and the European Commission, in knowledge / best practice sharing and dissemination initiatives in relevant areas of expertise within EIAH's scope of activities through working groups and thematic workshops.

The SEESARI (South-East Europe Alliance for Rail Innovation) declaration of intent as observer showing moral support for this initiative was also mentioned during the UIC General Assembly. The purpose of SEESARI is to develop, update, link and innovate the transportation network in South Eastern Europe (SEE) with a specific focus on rail in close cooperation, involving all stakeholders.

A Memorandum of Understanding between UIC and International Railways Sports Association (USIC) was signed during the General Assembly in the presence of Mr Dominique PAGET, President of USIC. This MoU has the objective to develop closer links and use the strength of each organisation for mutual benefits and for the values of the railways.

An MoU with the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf Secretariat General (GCC-SG) is also under preparation in order to increase coordination and build capacity amongst the different Gulf Member States on topics of mutual interest to them and to promote and strengthen a mutually beneficial cooperation in different fields of the rail transportation system, regulations, institutional set up, and to exchange knowledge and experience for that purpose.

The next Executive Board and 89th General Assembly will take place in Russia on 1 December 2016 at the kind invitation of Mr Oleg BELOZEROV, UIC Chairman and President of Russian Railways (RZD).

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