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The UIC International Rail Research Board (IRRB) met on 28 November in Sydney during the World Congress on Railway Research WCRR

(Paris, 3 December 2013). The International Research Board (IRRB), the global working body of the International Union of railways (UIC) dedicated to world research, was convened for its Plenary meeting on 28 November in Sydney, Australia, where the 10th World Congress on Railway Research –WCRR 2013- took place during the same period. The meeting was chaired by the IRRB Chairman, Mr. Boris Lapidus, Director-General VNIIZht / RZD (Russia), in presence of the UIC Director-General Mr. Jean-Pierre Loubinoux and the Director of UIC Fundamental Values Department Mr. Jerzy Wisniewski.

Prior to the IRRB Plenary meeting, the Memorandum of Cooperation regarding the collaboration between the UIC and RSSB (Rail Safety and Standard Board) of the UK about the sharing of knowledge related to rail research had been signed by Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, Director-General of UIC, and Anson Jack, the Deputy Chief Executive of RSSB (*for more information, please see the UIC press release Nr. 33/2013 on the SPARK contract*).

During the IRRB Plenary meeting, a number of important issues were discussed. After a feedback on the progress of the UIC Standardisation Platform, the progress of the implementation of the IRRB Strategy Document 2011 and its Working Groups was presented and commented. Building on this work and the present IRRB Strategy Document, a new and updated Strategic Document was presented. Following this, the IRRB agreed on this draft document. The “2014–2016 Strategic Document” describes 5 areas for development, starting with the development of a global strategy for railway research:

- **Global Vision** – The path towards a IRRB vision for the global railways
- **Priority research areas** – The “Red Book” of railway transport = Code of railway transport challenges requiring scientific solutions resulting in future common activities as benchmarking, studies and projects.
- **Supportive high quality scientific network** – The establishment of “Union of world class rail research scientific network” and exploration of internal as well as external funding possibilities to support these future studies and common projects.
- **Dissemination and knowledge exchange** – The further development of the UIC Research Portal as a basic tool for the exchange of existing knowledge & information and knowledge gained.
- **Innovation stimulation** – UIC Global Rail Research & Innovation Awards to stimulate innovation and high quality rail research

The SPARK research database is directly linked to the aims of the 4th area as described above. SPARK and the UIC Research Portal can be accessed directly through the following links: www.sparkrail.org as well as www.railway-research.org. All UIC members were strongly invited to contribute to the success of the portal and data-base and to upload relevant documents to stimulate the exchange of information for the benefit of all members.

Area 5 is being implemented through the 2nd edition of the UIC Research & Innovation Awards, scheduled for December 2014, linked to the UIC General Assembly. The process of invitation for submissions for the Award has been initiated. For detailed information and submission see www.uic-innovation-awards.org

This Plenary meeting of the UIC International Rail research Board IRRB marked the last meeting held during the present 3-year term as described in the Terms of Reference. A letter calling for nominations for the position of chairman and vice chairmen has been sent out earlier. Following this, the chairman as well as 3 of the 4 vice chairmen has indicated to be eligible again. Australian vice-chairman Mr. David George will end his term due to the end of the term of the CRC for Rail Innovation, which will be followed by ACRI, the Australasian Centre for Rail Innovation, to be headed by Mrs. Vicky Brown who was invited to participate in the IRRB meeting. Mrs. Brown has been nominated as a candidate for the vice-chairmanship.

UIC General Director Mr. Jean-Pierre Loubinoux presented the nominations received for the 2014-2016 chair-team of IRRB, including a candidature from Turkey. This future expansion is particularly welcomed considering the role of modern Turkey at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and the Middle-East, and the emphasis currently put by Turkish State authorities on the development of a high-performance railway system for the country. Mr. Loubinoux will propose to UIC General Assembly on 12 December in Paris, a new governance for the IRRB in 2014-2016 with one chairman and four vice chairmen for the 2014-2016 term to be ratified by UIC member railways.

IRRB Chairman Mr. Boris Lapidus thanked Mr. Loubinoux and the IRRB members on behalf of his team for the trust given. He plans to work closely together with his team – of which he expects a strong engagement – to implement the new Strategic Document. He indicated that he wishes for an involvement and good cooperation with the 6 UIC Regions.

A close cooperation between all of the 6 UIC Regions and their members and - where they exist - between their “regional” Research Coordination Working Bodies will prove to be extremely fruitful in contribution to the quality and success of the work of the IRRB and the future of our global railway network.

For more information please visit the UIC website: www.uic.org , the SPARK website: www.sparkrail.org, the UIC Railway Research portal: www.railway-research.org and the site of the UIC Research and Innovation Awards: www.uic-innovation-awards.org

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