



Shift²Rail, the biggest European rail research and innovation programme of the decade:

The railway operating community intends to actively contribute through the “Shift²Rail College” composed of UIC European members

(Paris/Brussels, 20 February 2014) As Europe gears up for the launch of the biggest rail research and innovation programme of the decade, the UIC is helping a college of companies from the European rail operating community in the preparation of a consortium and the identification of the activities it would like to undertake within this ambitious programme.

At a high level event in Athens on 19 February, arranged by the Greek Presidency of the European Union and in the presence of the MEPs, Commission officials and very senior rail sector managers, the importance not only of Shift²Rail as a concept was highlighted but also that it must get working as soon as possible.

Shift²Rail is an initiative that has been developed by its Founders, led by UNIFE, the body representing the suppliers and manufacturers. With a planned budget that runs to around 900 million Euros and being a significant part of the EU Horizon 2020 programme, the programme will encompass research, innovation and demonstration activities in all aspects of the rail system.

The rail sector has never before had a research and innovation programme that is quite like this one. When the structure is fully and correctly in place, it will represent an unprecedented joint effort by the European rail sector and the European Union to create a real breakthrough in rail technology in order to develop the future European rail system.

With its major targets of enhancing the capacity of the European rail system to cope with increased user demand, increasing the reliability and quality of rail services and significantly reducing the life cycle and maintenance costs of the overall system, it is of course highly important that all ROC (railway operating community) stakeholders are able to play as much of a role as possible in this venture.

Led by the Europe team at UIC, the consortium, known as the “Shift²Rail College”, is planning to engage fully in the work of Shift²Rail. At its recent steering committee meeting, the College agreed that it is essential that only full Associate member status will be suitable and so the focus is on developing this position.

The College is currently formed of some 15 companies but we are delighted to be able to announce that TrainOSE in Greece and ZS from Serbia are going to join and that there are others currently considering their position.

The College was represented in Athens by Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General, and Simon Fletcher, UIC Coordinator Europe and Chairman of the Shift²Rail College Steering Committee. In a key presentation to the assembled Parliamentary, Commission and sector stakeholders, Jean-Pierre Loubinoux recalled that ever since the idea of Shift²Rail had been brought to the attention of the ROC, there has been support for the concept. He formally declared the intention of the College to **commit to full associate membership**. He said: *"The College has agreed that it intends to work inside Shift²Rail as a full associate member. We are delighted that the proposed revisions to the regulatory text appear to be leading towards a more even framework to enable this to happen. We believe that the College must be included at the most influential level within Shift²Rail, meaning a role in the governance of the work that will be done to shape the future European rail system."*

Simon Fletcher, UIC Coordinator Europe, highlighted that *"collectively the team is ready to play a significant role in the really important next phase of developing the Master Plan and bringing the much desired-for input to it from the ROC. Shaping the operational processes by which Shift²Rail will succeed in delivering quality outputs is an important task that we are eager to help develop."*

The Shift²Rail College is an entirely inclusive group of companies ready to collaborate to innovate. There is plenty of room for many, many more to get onboard, share the investment and gain from the outcomes from the wide range of development that will emerge from the Shift²Rail work programme.

The College has already defined the activity areas in which it would like to see not only Shift²Rail develop but in which it would want to be directly involved. This activity will of course be very strongly influenced by the rail sector vision "Challenge 2050" that was published in February 2013 and the subsequent ROC Rail Technical Strategy Europe (RTSE) published in February 2014.

"Challenge 2050" is available at: <http://www.uic.org/IMG/pdf/challenge2050.pdf>

Rail Technical Strategy Europe (RTSE) is available at:
http://www.uic.org/IMG/pdf/rail_technical_strategy_february_2014.pdf

CONTACT

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If you any questions about the College that is being set up, then get in touch with UIC Regional Coordinator, Europe, Simon Fletcher fletcher@uic.org who will be able to provide you with the latest update on the situation.

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