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### **The 5th “UIC Energy Efficiency Days” (EED 2014) 2014, organised with SNCB and Infrabel, opened successfully today in Antwerp**

(Antwerp / Paris, 17 June 2014) The 5th edition of the **UIC Energy Efficiency Days** Conference, jointly organised by the International Union of Railways (UIC), SNCB and Infrabel, is currently being held until 19 June in the historical city of Antwerp in Belgium.

More than 300 participants, from 25 countries – among them UIC Members, environmental experts, major stakeholders of the transport community involved in Sustainable Development at large and more particularly the energy efficiency issue, are discussing this strategic issue for railways. From the first edition of these Energy Days organised in 2000 and bringing together only 30 participants, this issue has now reached the stage of a real revolution, the Energy Revolution. In a world that has been changed, the green economy is an obvious part of the railway business.

This event will cover topics such as *Energy Efficiency as a strategic driver for railway business or Trends for 2030 and Beyond*, among others.

This International Conference will also give an opportunity to debate many technical topics such as Energy Consumption and Energy Efficiency, Tracking the electricity and carbon disclosure.

On 17 June, several addresses were given by UIC, SNCB and Infrabel.

UIC Chairman Mr Vladimir Yakunin delivered a message through a declaration made on his behalf, saying that: *“We are all aware that the production and consumption of energy is essential for the existence and development of humankind, but these processes inevitably have a negative impact on the environment. We are faced with a global challenge – the pollution of the environment resulting from the combustion of fossil fuels, which discharges into the atmosphere millions of tons of exhaust gases, carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxide, hydrocarbons and highly toxic lead compounds. But there is also another side to the coin – all the energy sources currently in use are finite resources, and at this rate of consumption of coal, oil and gas, within a century the Earth’s population will be embroiled in an energy crisis. That is why the steps to protect the climate, to improve energy efficiency, to cut emissions of exhaust gases and to reduce noise levels are becoming increasingly important”*.

Mr Luc Lallemand, CEO of Infrabel, Belgium Infrastructure Manager and Mr Jo Cornu, CEO of Belgium Railway Operator NMBS/ SNCB, as hosts of the Conference, also delivered a welcome speech. Mr Lallemand said: *“The problem of energy efficiency became clear during the oil crisis of the seventies. So it is not something new. However, the challenge to increase energy efficiency doesn’t limit itself to universities or research facilities any more. It has become manifest in public opinion. During the last couple of years, we have experienced a true energy revolution”*.

He added: *“I do wish to stress three strategic energy targets Infrabel holds dear: First of all, a policy of sustainability cannot be successful without the commitment of the people who have to execute it. As I already mentioned Infrabel invests in developing an organisational culture wherein every member is fully aware of the challenges we face. Furthermore we want to increase awareness among younger generations.*

*Secondly, a story of efficiency implies investing in green and renewable energy. In 2011, Infrabel was the first in Europe to offer its operators an integrated green solution for rail infrastructure when we inaugurated a solar tunnel containing sixteen thousand photovoltaic panels to the north of Antwerp. Every year, we are able to provide four thousand trains with renewable energy! Finally, we must work to reduce our energy consumption on one hand and to make better use of the energy we need on the other.”*

*Mr Cornu highlighted: “21<sup>st</sup> century mobility has also been transformed. These days, our clients expect a railway company to offer more than just train service. They feel that the station must also include qualities that are intrinsically complementary to a rail mobility solution. In order to respond to these needs, SNCB has renovated and enhanced many of its stations, and has developed a strategic vision based on 5 pillars: intermodality, accessibility, sustainability, security and the development of activities. To this end, our stations, which welcome approximately 4,750,000 passengers every week (2013 figure), offer our passengers and clients high-quality provisions, parking and business areas, convenient connections to the other modes of public transport (metro, bus), but also alternative and ecological transport solutions, such as bicycles or shared cars and charging terminals, all in a pleasant setting. As concerns energy efficiency and sustainability, it should be pointed out that our station buildings have been insulated in order to prevent wasteful energy consumption. Some of them, moreover, have been equipped with solar panels (for example, at Charleroi Sud, they provide 15% of the required electricity).”*

Mr Cornu and Mr Lallemand underlined the excellent cooperation and the work undertaken with the UIC team.

As a global introduction of one of the major events organised by UIC in 2014, the UIC Director General was also pleased to welcome the participants: *“In our role as the worldwide professional platform for technical cooperation, it is UIC’s responsibility to promote innovation and new developments, and to provide space for exchanging experience and best practice. We know that we have a strong performance but we know that it is important to keep improving and to retain our environmental leadership. [...] The rail sector must further innovate, also in developing effective partnerships with all actors involved, political stakeholders, international organisations, rail manufacturers.*

He added: *“It is difficult to overstate the importance of Energy Efficiency. It is vital to the rail sector’s future. It is essential for the development of sustainable transport systems. It is a prerequisite for commercial success in the modern world. More important, Energy Efficiency is the foundation of the rail sector’s environmental leadership. This advantage is recognised by the international community. The world needs resource efficient transport to enable sustainable development. I am particularly pleased to announce that last month, we received a message from UN Secretary General Ban-Ki-moon calling on UIC and our members set ambitious goals for reducing carbon emissions. UIC is now developing rail sector targets for energy efficiency and carbon emissions at global level – taking inspiration from the UIC-CER targets for the European Region. At global level we will add a target for modal shift, to emphasise the need for investment in energy efficient, low carbon transport. The proposed global targets represent an excellent response to the call from Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the international community. This allows UIC to highlight your efficiency and the potential of modal shift on the world stage.*

Mr Loubinoux was also extremely happy to inform all delegates about the “Train to Paris” campaign that UIC is preparing in view of the COP 21 negotiations on Climate Change due to take place in December 2015 in Paris. A high profile campaign steered and coordinated by UIC in association with the international railway community, with the full support of Christiana Figueres, the Executive-Secretary of United Nations’ UNFCCC.

Two additional important parallel events will complete the comprehensive overview on energy efficiency provided by the conference:

**The MERLIN Mid-Term Conference**

(<http://www.energy-efficiency-days.org/spip.php?article3>), the EU co-funded project dealing with the investigation on the viability of an integrated management system to achieve an optimised energy usage in European mainline railway systems

**The 9th edition of the annual ERESS Forum** (<http://www.erness.eu/>), the European partnership between Infrastructure Managers that deals with metering, billing and energy data exchange.

Presentations will be available soon at: <http://www.energy-efficiency-days.org>

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