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12th UIC ERTMS World Conference organised with Infrabel successfully opens in Brussels in the presence of Belgian Federal Minister for Mobility:

700 participants, from all 5 continents, and 22 exhibitors discussing "ERTMS – Managing long term safety investment in a rapidly changing world"

(Brussels, 1 March 2016) The 12th ERTMS World Conference jointly organised by the International Union of Railways (UIC) and Infrabel, the Belgian Rail Infrastructure Manager, successfully opened today at Square Meeting Centre in Brussels, in the presence of 700 participants, representing all parts of the world and 30 countries.

The Opening Ceremony took place in front of Mrs Jacqueline Galant, Belgian Federal Minister for Mobility, with the participation of Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General, Mr Luc Lallemand, CEO of Infrabel, Mr Josef Doppelbauer, Executive Director of the European Railway Agency (ERA), Mr Philippe Citroën, Director General UNIFE, Mr Libor Lochman, Executive Director CER, Mr Alfred Veider, Thales, main sponsor of the Conference, Mrs Kerstin Schreiber, CEO of Funkwerk AG, GSM-R IG.

Mrs Jacqueline Galant, Belgian Federal Minister for Mobility said: *"ERTMS is a big industrial success for Europe. It has become at this date the global reference system. ERTMS goes hand in hand with safety and interoperability".*

She added: *"The Belgian railway sector, in the image of the European railway sector, is engaged in an important mutation. The challenge to which Belgium has to rise, just as most other European countries, is to succeed in a transition from the national signalling system to ERTMS without jeopardising the safety, capacity and continuity of its railway systems. It heartens me that Belgium is one of the most advanced countries in the deployment of ETCS on its railway network. Safety is my priority".*

And then: *"The involvement of all stakeholders – infrastructure managers, railway operators, national and European authorities, and industry – is the prerequisite for making sure that the migration of the European railway system to ERTMS will be done in a coordinated way and unambiguously".*

She concluded: *"I want to underline the fact that by 2022, conforming to the master plan, Belgium will have equipped the whole of its railway network with ERTMS. This will mean: an increase in safety, reliability and capacity for the national network".*

Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General, highlighted the four factors which will determine the future dimension of ERTMS:

Firstly, the geographical dimension. *"ERTMS should definitively no longer be considered to be only a European unified system; we have to move to a global ERTMS, a GRTMS. … In this context UIC is willing to fully contribute to the geographical extension of ERTMS through the International Railway standards (IRS) that UIC is developing as voluntary specifications for the benefit of all Members worldwide."* He added that *"it is essential to keep the coherence and overall vision of the Rail System (with all its interfaces)."*

Considering the second aspect, the functional dimension, he stressed that *"the rail operating sector in Europe and outside Europe has to clearly define its Functional Requirements, FRS, with different sub-parts especially dedicated to the various regions."* … He then said *"Information*

gained from ETCS, with the support of intelligence and digitalisation must serve an overall rail system vision and not only block and speed control. Business is the new driver."

The third dimension is technological progress. *"ERTMS definitively has to be seen as a digital application. … A current challenge with rapidly increasing importance is indeed the integration of cyber-security into the requirements of ERTMS in order to protect the system. Another exciting evolution is the integration of satellite positioning for the operation of lines in "hostile" areas or remote regional lines. … We have to strongly focus on the cost aspect, the simplification aspects and the cost reduction.*
Finally ERTMS is a complex system, and UIC welcomes the decision of the European Commission to reduce its versions and to push for an upgrade of onboard systems to the new release, so as to limit the combinations, reduce installation costs and make easier future updates. All these aspects and the ways to secure the future of an interoperable ERTMS system in a changing world, marked by higher requirements and new technologies – first and foremost digital revolution – will be discussed in depth during the conference with the active participation of suppliers, operators and decision-makers."

Mr Luc Lallemand, CEO of Infrabel, the Belgian Rail Infrastructure Manager, and host of the Conference, said: *"We are convinced that ETCS is a necessity. A necessity to obtain a higher level of safety on the railway network. A necessity to achieve a Single European Railway Area. A necessity to modernise our assets and optimise our management through standardisation and economies of scale".*
He added: *"We are still facing a number of challenges; challenges that we have to tackle fast, as well as thoroughly. That is why we have to keep striving for an approach that is accepted throughout the entire sector, strive for an approach that everybody can accept. As for myself, I see two priorities that are strategically important at this moment. In the first place, there is the need for what we could call technological stabilisation. To clarify: I am not saying that the ETCS-system and the underlying technology should no longer evolve. But we have to be careful to ensure that the more or less mature product we have now will not be jeopardised by additional extras that will not necessarily have much to do with the essence. That is why I am saying today: let us temporarily freeze the scope of the ETCS development and finish the ongoing work and focus on deployment! Tangible results are what we owe to society!"*

And then: *"There is also the financial part of the story, the business case. And this needs to improve for all parties involved. Only when there is a certain balance between the burdens and the benefits for all individual partners will there be an extended support for ETCS. This is not limited to infrastructure managers or owners of rolling stock, who are both the real users of ETCS, but the suppliers must also be able to build a solid business case. Burdens and benefits should be equally distributed between all parties involved."*
He concluded: *"A great number of the issues I have just mentioned can be reduced to the need for discipline. Discipline to only buy off-the-shelf products, but also discipline to only offer off-the-shelf products.*
But also needed is a stable financial framework from public authorities. This to enable all parties involved to build a viable business model. This as well requires discipline.
Only this way can a business case with quite a substantial investment cost and a relatively short life cycle become positive.
And then we'll have our 'triple win': a win for the users of ERTMS, a win for the supply sector and, above all, a win for society who will get a safer transport mode!"

Mr Josef Doppelbauer, Executive Director of the European Railway Agency (ERA), highlighted: *"ERTMS is a long story, we are at a crossroads and a point of no-return point has been reached. We have to move from the development phase of ERTMS to the industrial phase. With the ERTMS stakeholder platform we will manage and enforce full compatibility. We have to strive for ERTMS to become global, reducing the cost of operations. To achieve this, it is necessary to respect the key principles and first of all discipline. Discipline in implementing functionalities, in implementing full specifications. We need to do both: stability of the system and full compatibility. In addition we have to be open to the future, for example we need to include satellite. Existing ERTMS*

investments shall be fully protected. He concluded in saying: "ERTMS is the backbone of Digital Railways".

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