

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the International Union of Railways (UIC) sign a Memorandum of Understanding

(Genève/Paris, 26.05.2010). The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), represented by its Executive Secretary, Mr. Ján Kubiš, and the International Union of Railways (UIC), represented by its Director General, Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, signed a new Memorandum of Understanding on 24 May in Prague, on the sidelines of the 18th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum.

The aim of this MoU is to further strengthen the co-operation between UNECE and UIC in the pursuit of their common objective: the integration and development of the European transport of goods and passengers by railways.

UNECE and UIC endeavour the development of sustainable transport and thus promote environment and health friendly transport systems to reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Efficient and safe rail transport plays a particularly important role for sustainable passenger mobility and freight transport in a pan-European context.

This MoU will include the exchange of information and expertise, cross-participation at events sponsored and organized by UNECE and UIC on international legislation, technical interoperability (harmonization, standardization), trans-boundary management, management of priority corridors, accessibility, international security, and rail safety.

In addition, possible cooperation issues will be identified in the following areas:

- the modernisation of infrastructure for conventional railway and intermodal transport,
- the improvement of railway operation, organisation and management,
- the development and utilisation of databases and facilities,
- the improvement and harmonisation of railway techniques and technology.

UNECE and UIC will also strengthen their cooperation for the development of relations with the private sector and international financial institutions in order to achieve effective implementation of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) concept in the European railways and intermodal transport systems, and for the development of relations with other international organizations with a view to developing a competitive Euro-Asian Railway network.

Ján Kubiš, said: “this new MoU confirms the quality of our cooperation with the International Union of Railways. We look forward to working even more closely on the development of sustainable transport in the pan-European region.”

Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General, added “UIC is delighted to further strengthen the cooperation with UNECE and to share railway expertise, professional knowledge and experience available at UIC thanks to its members’ contributions. The current international trade flows and the ever growing environmental challenges create new perspectives and needs for efficient, safe and economically viable transport, boosting sustainable performances particularly on long-distance routes. One of UIC’s key projects is the development of the Europe-Asia corridor which perfectly aligns with UNECE’s mandate to develop trans-boundary rail transport within Europe and Europe-Asia territory.”

Note to the Editor:

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

Based in Geneva, it is one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations. It was established in 1947 to promote economic integration among its member States and beyond. UNECE has 56 member States located in Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and North America.

Through dialogue, policy advice and technical assistance, UNECE helps its members cooperate to mutual benefit. It develops international norms, standards and regulations with national experts of member countries and serves as the secretariat for a number of regional and global conventions and protocols.

In carrying out its mandate and initiatives, it works closely with the other United Nations regional commissions, global institutions and key stakeholders. More than 70 international professional organizations and non-governmental organizations also participate in our work.

UNECE's areas of expertise cover economic cooperation and integration, energy, environment, housing and land management, population, statistics, timber, trade, and transport. Through these targeted fields, UNECE endeavor to improve living standards in a sustainable way.

Website: <http://www.unece.org>

The International Union of railways (UIC)

The Paris-based UIC currently groups 200 member railways from all parts of the world. Its main mission consists in promoting the development of rail transport at world level and organising international cooperation among its members. Main cooperation projects are focusing on technical harmonisation and railway standards, development of freight and passenger business (including high speed), sustainability of rail transport, safety and security, training issues. UIC maintains close cooperation links with over 50 international or professional organisations.

For more information on UIC: www.uic.org

UNECE already supports the "*International Level Crossing Awareness Day*" (ILCAD) that will take place on 22 June 2010. Rail and road sectors of more than 45 countries are organising educational measures and the promotions of safe behaviour at and around level crossings constructed around the common message "Act safely at crossings! For more information: www.ilcad.org

UNECE is also a partner for the "*2nd Global Rail Freight Conference*" (GRFC) organised by UIC and Russian Railway (RZD) that will be held from 6 to 7 July 2010 in saint-Petersburg. This conference is a significant event in the international rail freight calendar and will bring together top executives and decision makers, rail and logistics professionals, customers, influential politicians and regulators, and institutions from the entire world. For more information: www.uic-grfc.org

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