



INTERNATIONAL UNION  
OF RAILWAYS

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### **“Next Station”, the international conference on railway stations, attended by over 400 participants in Brussels**

**The station of the future has to meet several challenges: it will have to provide access to railway transport and serve as an intermodal hub, act as a source of revenue for its manager, slot into the urban fabric and life of the city, all the while boasting exemplary sustainable development credentials.**

(Brussels / Paris, 22 march 2011) On 17 and 18 March, some 420 participants attended “Next Station”, the 3rd international conference on railway stations jointly organised by SNCB-Holding and UIC at Square-Brussels Meeting Centre in Brussels. As the successor to the first two editions held in Rome (2005) and Paris (2007), the conference was attended by a number of decision-makers involved in the development, construction and operation of stations: railway CEOs, architects and consultants, railway company business partners, European institution representatives and associations, etc.

The speakers at the conference notably included Jannie Haek, CEO of SNCB-Holding; Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director-General; Sophie Boissard, CEO of Gares & Connexions, SNCF; Vincent Bourlard, Director of Stations, SNCB-Holding; Tetsuro Tomita, Executive Vice-President, JR East (who was represented by Mr Yokoyama due to the exceptional events in Japan); Carlos Ventura, Director of Passenger Stations, ADIF; Dr André Zeug, CEO of DB Station&Service AG; Antoine Hurel, Deputy Chief Executive, Veolia Transport; Kristoff de Winne, Head of Airport Development and Regulation, Brussels Airport Company; Said El Khadraoui, Member of the European Parliament Transport Committee; Fabio Bataggia, CEO of Centostazioni, FS.

As guest speaker, the conference featured the world-famous Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava, who designed the railway stations of Lyon Saint-Exupéry airport and Liège-Guillemins, and is currently directing the work on the World Trade Center Transportation Hub in New York (at Ground Zero).

In his opening speech, Jannie Haek, CEO of SNCB-Holding, reminded participants that *“over the past few years railway stations have undergone a real revolution, gaining tremendously in importance. This is very much true for Belgium, as the nearby station of Brussels Central testifies. Today, railway stations have become genuine points of confluence, true meeting points at the heart of the city. A whole*

*host of customers rub shoulders within their walls: train passengers of course but also the non-travelling public. There are even passengers who no longer come to stations merely to catch trains...*

For UIC Director-General Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, ever since the first editions of “Next station” *“stations have become an even greater strategic issue for both passenger and freight operators. This can be seen through the creation of new bodies (within the railway company or as a separate company, subsidiary or joint venture). The station, an essential part of the rail transport system, must fulfil all the operators’ needs, as well as becoming a multimodal and exchange hub – to better meet people’s expectations – whilst playing a vital role in the planning and urban fabric of the city. The issues are also economic (stations, particularly those in large cities, are the subject of partnerships and innovative financing arrangements), as well as environmental (stations must increasingly play a role in the image of rail transport as a “green” transport mode). Stations are becoming a source of business that is matching that of passenger and freight transport.”*

Two opening keynote speeches focused respectively on “High Speed and Stations” (Michel Leboeuf, Director at SNCF and Chairman of the UIC High Speed Plenary Committee), and “Comparing stations and airports: what lessons can be learned?” (Robert Tasiaux, Partner at A.T. Kearney).

The round table discussions and presentations during workshops focused on:

- The strategic issues surrounding stations with regard to future mobility
- How to enhance and coordinate the activities of various professions involved in station operations
- Intermodality: stations as multimodal and multiservice hubs
- Accessibility of stations and rail services, new technologies for customers
- Stations: meeting the challenges of railway liberalisation

In their concluding remarks, Jannie Haek and Jean-Pierre Loubinoux stressed the importance of the station’s governance (differentiating between large stations which are self-contained businesses and smaller stations), that stations can learn lessons from airports in a number of areas (particularly business partnerships) whilst retaining several characteristics specific to railway operations. As physical facilities such as information and ticket counters are phased out, stations will be able – at least in part – to “go virtual”. To enable citizens to benefit from the advantages of rail and intermodality, access to stations must be facilitated all along the chain, and this would also mean the involvement of public authorities at national, regional and local level, particularly for issues of funding (space becoming scarce and unaffordable). Technical and innovating architectural answers must be found. The development of stations in the future must increasingly make the passenger and citizen the core concern. The “green” station, a model of sustainable development, will also be one of the main issues of the future. In conclusion, the UIC Director-General stressed that the future of stations would be bound up with the future of railways. It seems certain that stations will continue to play a vital role in the urban, social and cultural fabric, above and beyond their transport role.

Participants in “Next Station” had the opportunity to visit the Belgian stations of Antwerp-Central and Liège-Guillemins, two exceptional achievements.

The presentations from this conference will shortly be available on the website [www.nextstation2011.com](http://www.nextstation2011.com)

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