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UIC represented in its role as dissemination leader at the MERLIN Project Final Conference in Madrid

“Smart Energy for Smarter Railways”

(Madrid, 10 December 2015) The Final Conference of MERLIN, the EU co-funded project focusing on the viability of an integrated management system to achieve optimised energy usage in European mainline railway systems, and comprising 18 partners, was held today at the Spanish Railways Foundation (Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles, FFE) in Madrid.

Attended by around 100 participants from across the European railway community and beyond, the MERLIN Final Conference was the opportunity to share the results of the thirty-nine month project to investigate the key issue of how to achieve a more sustainable and smarter energy management system for the railways. UIC has played an important role in this project by leading the dissemination tasks and supporting the work package dealing with Recommendations, Market Uptake and Standardisation.

The conference was opened with introductory speeches by Andrea Demadonna, MERLIN Project Coordinator (UNIFE), Alberto García Álvarez, General Manager of the Spanish Railways Foundation (FFE) and Isabelle De Keyzer, MERLIN Dissemination Work Package Leader, on behalf of Marc Antoni, Director of the Rail System Department of the International Union of Railways (UIC).

According to Mr Demadonna, *“Merlin has contributed to sustainable transport systems through the development of various tools to improve energy efficiency. It is a success because cooperation has always been at the heart of our work.”*

Mr Alberto García Álvarez said Merlin is a very important step and agreed that cooperation is at the core of the project. He said that all the actors should continue to work together and go even further to meet the challenges of optimising energy consumption.

Isabelle De Keyzer, on behalf of Marc Antoni, Director of the UIC Rail System Department said, *“As highlighted during the COP21 event at the moment, rail is the backbone of the transport*

system. MERLIN is part of a global approach to reduce the carbon footprint of the transport sector as its final objectives are the reduction of rail's energy consumption. The proposals that have been prepared within MERLIN are a powerful tool to anticipate together what is yet to come. Doing this exercise jointly is important and is only possible if it is underpinned by such values as sincerity, mutual understanding, and respect. Because our common objective is to increase efficiency, competitiveness, and customer orientation of the rail transport sector as a whole in order to deal with the competitive pressure of the market.”

The results of the project were then presented by the technical coordinators and work package leaders. They stressed that MERLIN is all about electricity and that railways cannot afford to waste energy. They presented the methodology and process that was used to develop the tools, which take into account energy optimisation, capacity and competitiveness. These tools developed within MERLIN will enable a cost reduction of 10% to be made by 2020.

Highlights of the conference included:

- The strategic MERLIN methodology and process – strategic decision-making tool
- The operational MERLIN methodology and process – railway energy management system
- Five case scenarios as example of MERLIN benefits
- Recommendations for market uptake and implementation/standardisation
- Panel discussion: Plugging railways into the grid
- Technical visits to ADIF traffic and energy control centres in Atocha station

In conclusion, the MERLIN Final Conference has demonstrated that energy management is a key issue for railway systems and will remain a top priority on the European transport agenda for the foreseeable future. By taking an integrated approach, the MERLIN project was able to achieve successful results. To sum up, MERLIN has pioneered the holistic management of energy in the railways. This opens the door for further studies and a system level demonstrator within future initiatives like Shift2Rail.

All public deliverables as well as videos from the project will be available soon on the MERLIN website: www.merlin-rail.eu

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