



Speech given by Jean-Pierre Loubinoux
UIC Director General

Presentation of “EuropeTrain” Final Report
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The spoken word alone prevails

Dear members of the press,
Dear members of UIC,

I am happy to welcome you all to UIC tonight for the presentation of the EuropeTrain project final report. This is indeed the end of long technical studies started in around 2000, which now come under a context that is more and more sensitive to environmental aspects.

A strong argument to promote rail transport across the world is its proven advantages in terms of Environmental-friendliness and Sustainability.

This advantage against other modes of transport is proven by all studies dealing with the environmental impact of transport (studies on environmental external costs of transport, etc.).

Nevertheless UIC is more than ever committed to improving rail's performance in the environmental field

(UIC's Mission as defined in the Statutes: “Promote rail transport across the world ... Meet current and future challenges of mobility and sustainable development”).

UIC initiated the signature by its Members (CEOs) of the Sustainability Declaration (2010-2011).

They herewith accepted the commitment to continuously work on optimising and improving the Sustainability of Rail transportation.

This commitment was handed over in 2011 to the United Nations in New-York (Commission for Sustainable Development).

Permanent cooperation with UNEP. Follow up of the UIC Sustainability Report.

The main fields for possible optimization / improvement:

- increase energy-efficiency,*
- reduce diesel pollution and more generally CO2 emissions,*
- reduce railway noise.*

In Europe, in particular at EU level, the issue of transport noise and more particularly railway noise is high on the agenda. Transport policy encourages stronger modal shift from road to rail to master the challenges of increasing freight transport. One of the projects is the development of fast, reliable, interoperable freight corridors crossing Europe. The issue of acceptance of growing rail freight transport by populations is becoming a primary issue. This acceptance is directly connected to the issue of railway noise and further impact on rail transport, in particular freight transport, We are in perfect synergy with the guidelines of the 2050 White Paper.

It is now demonstrated that noise reduction at the interaction between wheel and rail, in the braking system, has the best cost /benefit ratio. It avoids high investments and maintenance costs for infrastructure managers as well as for public authorities (for noise protection walls, etc.). Libor Lochman for CER will address this issue later on.

This background led UIC in close liaison with its members and all railway associations, CER, EIM, UNIFE, UIP, ... to work from the end of the 90s on the Programme "Noise reduction of freight wagons through composite brake blocks".

These technical activities resulted in 2003, so 10 years ago, in the system approval of the so-called "K composite brake blocks".

But actually if these homologated "K blocks" represent the solution for the wagons to be purchased, they are not economically acceptable for the retrofitting of the entire freight wagon fleet currently operated in Europe (600,000 freight wagons).

Parallel studies in the framework of the Noise reduction programme, concluded that another type of composite brake block, the "LL Blocks", can meet the objective of an efficient and cost-effective noise reduction on existing freight trains.

But the "LL-Blocks" need further improvements before being introduced in Europe on a large scale. It was recognised that further tests were necessary to solve the problem of "Equivalent Conicity" and better estimate the LCC of the system.

Important decisions were adopted at UIC European Assembly in June 2009 to endorse the study to solve the "Equivalent Conicity" problems through a better block shape.

Also, the decision to pursue the idea to speed up and improve the LL-Brake Block Testing in Operations through a so-called "EuropeTrain" Test campaign in real life and dimension.

In September 2009 at the Directors-General Meeting in Berlin: 24 railways and the sector organizations UIC, CER and EIM signed a Joint Resolution.

Finally, 29 railways and 8 industry partners supported the UIC "EuropeTrain" Project. It was a true European project developed by the railway sector.

The "EuropeTrain" Project was managed by UIC and Johannes Gräber from Deutsche Bahn, was appointed UIC Project Manager for this "EuropeTrain" Project. That is an opportunity to warmly thank and congratulate Johannes Gräber and all associated partners for the successful completion of this complex technical project.

Some figures in short related to the "EuropeTrain":

- 32 freight wagons provided by 5 railway undertakings (DB Schenker, Rail Cargo Austria, SNCF, AAE, ZSSK Cargo), carrying all kinds of cargo,
- a total testing distance of 200,000 km,
- 16 test loops,
- all kinds of climate, geography, different gradients,...

As we reach this final stage Johannes Gräber will report about the most important lessons and recommendations.

But at this stage, I would like to underline that UIC has succeeded in managing this wide-ranging and complex technical project on behalf of its members. UIC is working on all these projects and studies whether technical, economic or social for its members, and with its members, so many thanks to all of them and also to my own team of experts at UIC.

The "EuropeTrain" project is of great importance for the rail sector. It will provide the railway community with an extremely important basis for decision-taking on a strategic issue: retrofitting of the existing freight wagon fleet in order to significantly reduce the noise level of freight traffic and take a new step towards more sustainable rail freight transport.