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## **2nd UIC World Conference on Railway Standardisation successfully held in Paris**

### ***Strategies and actions to achieve integration of the rail system through convergence of standards***

(Paris, 10 June 2015) The 2nd UIC World Conference on Railway Standardisation, organised by the International Union of Railways (UIC), was successfully held on 9 June in Paris, bringing together all major stakeholders in the field of rail standardisation among them railway operating companies, manufacturers, global standardisation organisations (ISO, IEC), research centres, institutions (European Commission, ERA...) and associations (UIC, UNIFE...).

The conference enabled an open discussion to be held on the latest developments, on the needs of the railway sector in the field of standardisation and to discuss and debate strategies and actions to achieve integration of the rail system through the convergence of standards.

Railway standardisation is a fundamental component for the implementation of the railway service expressed both in the achievement of the expected level of performances, like safety and quality, and in overall sustainability. Standardisation also forms a bridge between research innovation and the market which will in turn bring significant economic benefits.

UIC has been present on the stage of the international railway standardisation since 1922 and with its globally recognised UIC Code consisting of 700 "Leaflets" and with its International Railway Standards, has significantly brought out the railway knowledge at worldwide level promoting the technical cooperation among the members and, consequently, facilitating coherent worldwide development of the railways.

In his opening message to participants Mr Vladimir Yakunin, President of JSC Russian Railways (RZD), UIC Chairman, underlined that *"the newly created International Railway Standards (IRS) of UIC, that are based on a range of UIC leaflets created by its members for years, formulate requirements for railway systems, define the boundary conditions and are focused on the definition of functional possibilities and railway performance targets. They set out clear requirements of producing modern railway equipment and infrastructure elements, as well as provide for harmonised rules and procedures for the railway themselves."*

He also mentioned that if *"the spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation is kept and the work started completed, in the near future direct transportation between China, the Republic of Korea, India and other Asian countries on the one hand, and the European countries on the other to redistribute cargo flows from the sea, road and air to the railways will be witnessed"*.

On behalf of Mr Michele Mario Elia, CEO of Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane (FSI), UIC Vice Chairman and UIC Europe Chairman, Mr Alberto Mazzola, Senior Vice President International Affairs of FSI, underlined that *“Railway Operating Companies invest a lot of money in standardisation at any level and need a concrete return from it, therefore it is necessary that concepts like cooperation among standardisation organisations, complementarity of the different kind of standards, convergence of the solutions, support the business and the investments, service orientation be the basis of this activity”*.

The International Rail Standards (IRS) are developed by UIC in full complementarity with the standards issued by the other Standardisation Organisations, and consider the vision of the different stakeholders. Cooperation Agreements allow for full coherence in terms of programmes, work and developments with existing standards valid at regional or global level. Considerable progress and concrete results have been achieved together with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and OSJD. Many relations are ongoing with ISO in order to start an active cooperation on a number of items of common interest.

Mr Josef Doppelbauer, Executive Director of the European Rail Agency (ERA), gave an overview of the rail standardisation process in the European Union. He said that *“the importance of rail standardisation is fully recognised and that its role is to migrate to optimal harmonisation in the single European rail area”*. He stressed *“the need for closer cooperation between the main organisations in charge of railway standardisation, at mandatory or voluntary/professional level”*.

Four working sessions focused on discussing the interaction between the international organisations, common standardisation methods for passenger and freight services, cooperation and interface between manufacturers and railway operating companies and technical innovation input for railway standardisation.

In his closing speech, Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General, stressed that *“the rail operating community, together with all actors, have a big responsibility to provide the tools to steer the railway transport towards a major breakthrough. Thanks to its global dimension, UIC is inclined to offer its structure and competencies to create cooperation and integration of best practices, outcomes and processes around a representative consensus. Cooperation is the prerequisite for convergence, complementarity is the key to improvement and railway standards are the necessary support for business and investments”*.

## **CONTACT:**

### **UIC Rail System Department:**

Gianfranco Cau, Secretary of the Standardisation Platform, Secretary of the Rolling Stock and Energy Sectors, [cau@uic.org](mailto:cau@uic.org)

Roberto Tieri, Junior Advisor, [tieri@uic.org](mailto:tieri@uic.org)

**Media contact:** [com@uic.org](mailto:com@uic.org)