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UIC held its 82nd General Assembly in Paris

In his opening address, Chairman Vladimir Yakunin detailed the strategic guidelines aimed at raising the global profile of UIC:

A strong focus on standardization and the creation of future UIC International Railway Standards (IRS)

An agreement was signed between UIC and RZD on holding “Next Station”, the 4th International Conference on Railway Stations on 17-18 October in Moscow

(Paris, 27 June) UIC – the worldwide professional association grouping 240 Members from 95 countries and all 5 continents- held its Executive Board and 82nd General Assembly meetings on 27 June at its Paris headquarters. The Executive Board and General Assembly were chaired by UIC Chairman Vladimir Yakunin, President of Russian Railways (RZD) together with Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General, and Alberto Mazzola, International Affairs Senior Vice President FS, representing UIC Vice Chairman Mauro Moretti.

In his opening address, Chairman Vladimir Yakunin gave details of the strategic choices he had announced at the previous General Assembly in December 2012 when he took over the chairmanship of the railway association. He underlined that UIC, with the support of its members, has to strengthen its global status and enhance its influence vis-à-vis business partners, international organizations and other parties throughout the world. UIC should also expand its role in helping to define transport policies at a global level.

He said: *“The driving forces that are capable of making our vision of the future a reality are the founding principles of **involvement**, **integration** and **innovation**. I hope you will agree with me that each organisation, each company that has joined UIC is part of a large body. And for the system to work efficiently, each part of it must be involved in its activities. At the same time we must not act by ourselves, on the basis only of our own advantages and interests. In order to ensure that our work is efficiently organised, we must co-ordinate our cooperation in order to surmount national and regional borders. Finally, pursuing an innovative approach to our activities – including our projected actions – will be a powerful factor in developing the organisation. UIC can become a global centre of innovation in the railway sector, whose opinion will be taken into account when decisions are taken at the highest level.”*

Chairman Vladimir Yakunin summarized his vision for UIC's development, based on UIC's three core values of "Unity", "Solidarity" and "Universality" and referring to three principles, the three 'I's:

- The first objective is stronger **Involvement** and a more active participation of members so they can influence, through their professional associations, the future development of global transport policy. Stronger involvement should also result in the multiplication of cross-regional and global co-operation projects,
- another focus is on the need for **Integration**, in particular legal and operational integration, with a particular view to the development of international rail freight corridors, as well as closer integration and extended co-operation with international organizations,
- the **Innovation** objective has to be at the center of all activities and projects. UIC has the vocation to become a global center of innovation. Innovation should feature in particular in activities concerned with sustainable development, research, and the transfer of knowledge to young managers and specialists.
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On behalf of UIC Vice Chairman Mauro Moretti, Alberto Mazzola emphasized the need to further develop and intensify co-operation with railway associations, e.g. the European associations CER and EIM, as well as with international organizations such as the UN, ERA, OSJD, and with the main standard organizations. UIC should ensure a coherent development of railway activities around the world and, for example, ensure a strong railway presence and influence as regards sustainable development, at the next UN COP Conference in Poland and the Sustainable Development Commission in New-York.

UIC Director General Jean-Pierre Loubinoux reported on the main progress of UIC activities since the last General Assembly in December:

- the general economic situation, the economic recovery in some areas (railway dynamic)
- the development of regional visions: a very important strategic basis, progress with concrete actions, rail training centers, etc.
- a presentation of the main activities based on 6 global professional values, Safety, Security, Sustainability, Standardization, Scientific research, with a specific emphasis on the necessity of focusing on Training and the Development of skills integrating young talent.

Agreements and MoUs

He highlighted, in particular, the importance of signing Memoranda of Understanding – among other things he announced the latest MoU to be signed in the near future with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)-, and agreements with international organizations. He underlined, in particular, the recent agreement signed with MIIT (Moscow State University of Railway Engineering) which aims at strengthening the cooperation and collaboration between the two organizations in the development of modern transport educational systems and training, for the international railway community and for the benefit of society on a wider scale.

Standardization: aim to create International Railway Standards (IRS) – UIC to become the global unification body for Railway Operating Rules

One of the most important technical topics on the General Assembly Agenda was related to Standardization, which is one of the most important issues currently being developed by UIC.

The UIC General Assembly finally approved the overall strategy of the UIC Standardization Platform and approved the developments concerning cooperation with international standard organizations IEC and ISO. Mr Loubinoux reported on

- cooperation with ISO, IEC...
- the medium or long term transformation of UIC Leaflets into “UIC International Railway Standards” (IRS) or the creation of new IRS
- work at the same time on 1520 mm IRS (broad gauge) and 1435 mm IRS (standard gauge)
- the objective of making UIC the global unifying body for Railway Operating Rules and Maintenance

Agreement signed between UIC and RZD on 4th “Next Station” global conference in Moscow

An agreement between the RZD President and UIC Director General was also signed to formalize the organization of “Next Station”, the 4th international conference on railway stations that will be held in Moscow on 17-18 October. This global conference with the general theme “Stations: Linking Railways and Society” will provide a unique opportunity to benchmark and exchange experience on all strategic issues connected to the development and management of railway stations: planning and financing, station design and operations, business partnerships, the sustainable station, integration into the urban environment, etc.

Chairmen of the 6 UIC Regions (Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle-East, North America, Latin America) or their representatives informed General Assembly members on progress in implementation of their respective regional Action plans. An important step was the completion of two strategic documents (“Rail Vision”), one for Europe “Challenge 2050”) and one for Asia-Pacific (“Strategic Action Plan for UIC Asia-Pacific 2013-2016”). A first report produced by the Middle-Eastern Region (“Regional and Supra Regional Rail Transportation Linkages – Middle-East”) will be adapted to become the “Rail Vision” for this region.

Finance

Relating to the Financial issues, General Assembly members unanimously approved the 2012 Accounts of the association as well as the projected results and guidelines for 2013-2014.

Membership

3 new companies were also welcomed as new UIC members:

-For Asia-Pacific:

- RZDstroy, Russian rail service provider, as UIC Affiliate member
- ARA, Australasian Rail Association, as UIC Affiliate member

-For Europe:

- FPC, Russian Passenger Operator, UIC Associate member

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