



## **PRESS RELEASE nr.23 /2012**

### **High speed rail in the United States:**

#### **Heads of UIC member railways operating high speed rail systems meet America's political leaders**

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(Philadelphia, 13 July 2012) This week – which has brought together the world's railway leaders as part of the 8th UIC HIGHSPEED Congress held in Philadelphia from 11 - 13 July – a special day was organised on 10 July by UIC and APTA (American Public Transport Association) for key players from railways worldwide to meet representatives of Congress at the United States Capitol. This day served as an opportunity for all participants to freely share their experiences of high speed rail, at a time when the United States is considering the issue and taking the first decisions towards developing high speed services, particularly in California.

A special train chartered by Amtrak thus carried around 20 international railway leaders from Philadelphia to Washington, including Mr Satoshi Seino, Chairman of East Japan Railway Company (EJRC); Mr Yoshio Ishida, Chairman of UIC; Mr Vladimir Yakunin, CEO of Russian Railways (RZD); Mr Guillaume Pepy, President of French Railways (SNCF) and Chairman of UIC Europe; Mr Mauro Moretti, CEO of Italian Railways (FS), Vice-Chairman of UIC and Chairman of CER; Mr Süleyman Karaman, President of Turkish Railways (TCDD) and Chairman of the UIC Middle-Eastern Region; Mr Marc Laliberté, President and Chief Executive Officer (VIA Rail Canada), Mr Marc Descheemaeker, CEO of Belgian Railways (SNCB); and Mrs Ingrid Nuelant, Deputy CEO of Thalys International.

Nine committee-style discussion groups were formed with various members of Congress involved in the "High Speed Caucus", in order to better assess the positive environmental, economic and social outcomes of high speed rail and to explain the momentum which is building across the globe for the development of new infrastructure, corridors, stations and services.

A group lunch was held, during which Chairmen Satoshi Seino, Guillaume Pepy, Mauro Moretti, Valdimir Yakunin and Yoshio Ishida outlined high speed developments across the world. The overview started with Japan, where high speed rail began 50 years ago, followed by developments in Europe undertaken since the 1980s, and concluding with the decisions taken concerning high speed development in Russia.

Marc Descheemaecker (SNCB), Süleyman Karaman (TCDD) and Joaquim Otero (ADIF) also shed further light on the topic during a number of question-and-answer and discussion sessions.

This day of political discussions – held during a period when the United States has just voted on its transport budget, and when the Californian Senate has recently agreed on the financing of the high speed project in the state of California – came at an appropriate juncture. The day gave a symbolic and visionary feel to the UIC HIGHSPEED Congress, which was inaugurated that very evening in Philadelphia, in the presence of the most prominent representatives of American railway companies.

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