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11th World Congress on Railway Research – WCR 2016 – opens in Milan, Italy

(*Milan, 30 May 2016*) On 30 May 2016, WCR 2016 – the 11th World Congress on Railway Research – was officially opened at the Fiero Milano and will conclude on 2 June. It is taking place in Milan and this edition is hosted by FS, the Italian State Railways. These global congresses have been organised since the early 1990s and have become the major international forums dedicated to sharing information and experience between railway researchers, decision makers, manufacturers and operators, as well as fostering cooperation and innovation preparing rail transportation of the future.

The 11th WCR is being organised at the invitation of *Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane Group and Trenitalia*, under leadership of Mr Renato Mazzoncini – FS CEO and Vice-Chairman of UIC. The WCR 2013 Organising and Executive Committees were composed of representatives of the founding members AAR/TTCI (USA), DB (Germany), FS & Trenitalia (Italy), RSSB (UK), RTRI/JR (Japan), SNCF (France), UNIFE Italy and the International Union of Railways (UIC).

At the opening of the conference, 1000 delegates were registered from 30 countries around the world. The main congress theme is “**Research & Innovation from Today Towards 2050**”. From the initial 936 submitted and evaluated abstracts from 38 countries, 312 full papers have been selected to be presented, 72 of which are for the vision & future sessions and 240 for Today’s Research. In addition to this, there are 252 electronic interactive posters – 61 vision & future posters and 191 on today’s research, each containing four slides including multi-media content.

UIC regularly disseminates the R&D project results through this event sharing the newest technical – technological solutions and demonstrating its market uptake for driving the innovation and boosting the development of railway sector. Eight sessions are being chaired

by UIC HQ representatives, while several UIC staff members are also featured as presenters at the session and at an E-poster.

The official congress opening ceremony on the morning of 30 May, featuring several very high level speakers, was followed by a panel session and an inter-active press conference. Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, Director General of UIC, expressed his warmest thanks to the Italian hosts for the successful organisation of WCRR 2016. During the interesting first panel, Mr Loubinoux presented some very clear statements, explaining for instance possible ways to implement the very prestigious goals set by the UN Climate Conference COP21. He mentioned a set of so-called “5 Is”: proper Infrastructure, Investment, Innovation, Intelligence, and Interoperability – with a clear opening to cooperation with academia and young researchers, ‘start-ups’ from the digital world and interoperability between all international rail systems and with other modes of transport. Later on in this discussion he was asked what actions would be envisaged or needed to implement the ‘5 Is”. He then presented “5 Cs” for action to be undertaken towards Customers – everything we do should be focused on them and their needs – City, Centre – stations and hubs, where and how to link them – Corridors and the Complementarity of modes – optimisation of the role of each within an integrated transportation system with railways at the core.

Other themes which were put forward during the round-table were priorities such as safety, security – including cyber threat – today’s customer trends: “access, not owning” with real time information for flexible choices etc.

WCRR 2016 also offers its visitors a trade exhibition inside as well as a rolling stock exhibition on site, outside in cooperation with the *Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane Group and Trenitalia*.

Other UIC meetings focused on Innovation and Research in Milan

In order to optimise synergies between the WCRR World Congress and UIC bodies dealing with railway research at global level, several meetings have been planned in Milan: the UIC Regional Assembly Europe – RAE – the Research & Innovation Coordination Group – RICG and the “TALENT– training & education, the UIC interactive platform” as a side-event to the WCRR 2016. Also meeting in Milan was the UIC International Railway Research Board – IRRB – chaired by Prof. Boris Lapidus, RZD Russia, which aims to promote exchanges among members on research strategies and innovation and to implement joint activities for sharing information and experience on research.

The IRRB is also promoting the Third Edition of the UIC Global Research & Innovation Awards that will be presented in conjunction with the UIC General Assembly to be held in Russia in late November/early December 2016. Proposals for the UIC Awards can be uploaded until 1 September 2016 directly to the UIC based website <http://uic-innovation-awards.org/>

Detailed information on research and information – research data base – can be obtained by visiting the UIC Research Portal: www.railway-research.org

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