UIC Regional Assembly Europe met in Paris on 6 December 2018

(Paris, 7 December 2018) The 27th UIC Regional Assembly for Europe (RAE) – gathering 119 members – and the European Management Committee (EMC) of UIC held their meetings on 6 December 2018 at UIC Paris headquarters prior to the UIC Executive Board and the General Assembly.

The RAE was honoured by the attendance of a special guest, Mr Melchior Whatelet, State Minister of Belgium. Mr Whatelet proudly announced that the EUROPALIA Arts Festival 2021 would be dedicated to the prominent influence of railways in arts over the last two centuries. EUROPALIA has been organising these biennial events since 1969, each focusing on a different guest country. Mr Whatelet warmly invited the European railways to join and support EUROPALIA’s four-month multidisciplinary programme comprised of numerous events throughout Belgium and across Europe.

Mr Edvīns BĒRZIŅŠ, Chairman of the Board/President of Latvian Railways (LDZ), elected as Vice-Chairman of the European Region for 2019-2020

Following the announcement of the resignation of Mr Bernard Guillelmon, CEO BLS, from his position of Vice-Chair Europe earlier this year, a call for candidates had been issued late October to appoint a new Vice-Chair to cover the complete 2018-2019 term.

Mr Edvīns Bērziņš’ (CEO LDZ) application was selected and he has been officially endorsed by the EMC and RAE as the new UIC Vice-Chair Europe from 1 January 2019 onward. He addressed a message of thanks stating the firm commitment of LDZ to the development of UIC activities, the continued promotion of all its obligations and to the development of the future European railway system.

As a result, for 2019, the Region Europe Chairmanship is now comprised as follows:

- Chair: Mr F. Cardoso dos Reis (IP), Portugal
- Vice-Chair (UIC): Mr Edvīns Bērziņš (LDZ), Latvia
- Vice-Chair (CER Chairman): Mr Crister Fritzson (SJ), Sweden
A region developing together through UIC: challenges and opportunities

Mr Francisco Cardoso dos Reis, Chair Europe, presented the 2018 report of regional activities to the RAE, highlighting this year’s successes and ambitions for 2019.

He particularly focussed on a number of key “challenges and opportunities”, topics which have been prepared for the European Region by the European assistants since the beginning of the year. These challenges cover a broad selection of headlines which are to be pursued by the UIC, Region Europe and its members: a set of technical priorities; a continuous focus on quality and processes; an even closer interaction between the UIC regions and the further development of closer relations with other stakeholders. These messages were endorsed by the RAE and will be used as part of the European contribution to the orientations that the UIC Chair will take into account for the UIC programme in 2019.

The RAE also approved the 2018 work programme of ongoing and new projects developed within there requirements of the Quality Management System (QMS). The Assembly voiced its commitment for successful results and further developments for the collective benefit of railway transportation in Europe. The proposed Virtual European Railway Academy (VERA) received noteworthy support from the audience: VERA intends to provide a sustainable solution in attracting young talents to railways, able to replace the retiring generation and keep the railway businesses up to speed with new technologies.

Reinforcing the regional strategy

Mr Simon Fletcher, UIC Coordinator Europe, presented the members with the updated version of the Rail Technical Strategy Europe (RTSE), the technical pillar of a well-coordinated European strategy.

The 2014 Rail Technical Strategy Europe (RTSE) and its vision counterpart, the 2013 Challenge 2050 (C2050) deserved a major update to reflect the recent evolutions within the general research and innovation field and particularly take account of the developments related to the emergence of digitalisation as a concept.

The new RTSE, to be published in January 2019, is in effect the merging of C2050 and the previous RTSE. It gathers both the vision and the enablers to achieve it into a single comprehensive document supporting the European Strategy. Using influences in the ERRAC Vision 2050 and embracing the 12 Capabilities developed by RICG, the RTSE develops 9 headlines covering the entire railway system and a number of enablers for each.
The RA-Europe officially endorsed the revised Rail Technical Strategy Europe, paving the way for the delivery of a railway system that is the backbone of European mobility in 2050. The RTSE will give further impetus to ambitious projects, an innovative approach which is already reflected in the 2018 projects and those for 2019.

**A continued strong support to rail research & innovation and standardisation**

The RA-Europe showed continuous strong support to the work of the Research and Innovation Coordination Group (RICG) chaired by Mr Bo Olsson (Trafikverket). The 12 Capabilities are now widely recognised and used as the Railway Operating Community (ROC) input to a number of strategic documents. In addition to other activities scheduled for 2019, the RICG is now working on breaking the Capabilities down to the next level of detail so as to further develop targeted cooperation on identified priorities.

Martin Brennan, the new UIC Head of Research & Innovation and Secretary ERRAC, reported on the latest developments within ERRAC as well as on the Plenary which took place last week. He noted there would be some important deadlines regarding Horizon Europe and Shift2Rail 2 in early Spring 2019. This will be a critical period for the ROC and the rail sector when it comes to influencing the Commission and the European Institutions on railway/transport research and innovation.

Last but not least, the progress made in the field of standardisation were praised by the RA-Europe – which appreciated the programme that has been migration of leaflets to IRS being on schedule.

The UIC’s Europe team is here to help achieve those objectives – [europe@uic.org](mailto:europe@uic.org)

**CONTACTS**

UIC Communications Department: [com@uic.org](mailto:com@uic.org)
Simon Fletcher, UIC Coordinator Europe: [fletcher@uic.org](mailto:fletcher@uic.org)