UIC, the worldwide railway organisation, together with the Spanish Administrator of Railway Infrastructures Adif open “NEXTSTATION”, the International Conference on Railway Stations in Madrid:

Smart Stations in Smart Cities

(Madrid /Paris, 19 October 2017) From 19 – 21 October 2017 the International Union of Railways (UIC), together with the Spanish Administrator of Railway Infrastructures Adif are organising “NEXTSTATION”, the International Conference on Railway Stations, to focus more particularly on the link between Smart Stations in Smart Cities.

The conference is being attended by over 400 participants representing 30 countries from all over the world.

This conference is the opportunity to bring together all the actors involved in this railway issue: governments, international organisations and representatives from the transport world, railway undertakings, as well as station managers, local authorities, service providers, manufacturers, architects, urban developers, research agencies, etc.

The conference was launched today in an opening ceremony, with a welcoming address given by Mr Renato Mazzoncini, UIC Chairman, CEO and Director General of Ferrovie dello Stato italiane FSi, Mr Iñigo de la Serna, Spanish Public Works Minister, followed by Mr Mohamed Rabie Khlie, Director-General of Moroccan Railways ONCF, Chairman of UIC Africa and Mr Jean-Pierre Louboinoux, UIC Director General.

During the Opening Ceremony, high-level representatives highlighted the need for railways and railways stations to become increasingly smarter.

In his speech Mr Mazzoncini insisted on the smartness of railway stations based on several pillars. He said: “For a smart city, it is important to have a smart station. The infrastructures have to be more integrated in the city and be more eco-friendly, with good architectural design, robust materials and affordable systems. Standardisation and innovation should help”. He insisted also on technology with High-Tec systems which enable the development of smart services. Another pillar is management and services. “On the one hand it is necessary to find easier solutions and new tools for train station managers in terms of security sustainable
resource management, facility management and information management. On the other hand, it is very important to continuously improve the catalogue of services to meet all user’s needs” he added. And: “If rail stations wish to continue to play new roles and become centre of human interaction, they need to continuously provide new services that consider the current and future needs of commuters”. He concluded by adding: “We also need to pay attention to small and medium stations, whose business model is more difficult. They are equally important for passengers and we shall not forget about them in this conference”.

As country guest, Mr Inigo de la Serna, Spain’s Minister of Public Works, officially opened the Next Station conference in Madrid. He particularly insisted on the important role played in Spain by railways, as the sign of modernity, bringing social progress. He also mentioned the economic and social benefits of the development of high speed systems and said that is crucial to continue to develop transport systems in a sustainable, intermodal and a smart way.

He said that after 25 years of the creation of high speed rail in Spain, this model can be considered as a global benchmark at the worldwide level. He added that railways also have to play a role on the passenger global experience. He mentioned the work currently done with other ministries about the smart dimension. A practical guide, which involved the vision of Adif, will be presented in November. This document will be followed by the development of smarter stations in the coming months and years. Mr Inigo de la Serna finished by announcing the setting up of a universal plan on accessibility for the period 2018-2026. He said: “We need to develop a transport system based on inclusion on grown on sustainable model with the participation of people to serve the needs of our society”.

Mr Mohammed Rabie Khlie, Director-General of Moroccan Railways ONCF, made the link with the previous edition of the conference, which took place in 2015 in Marrakech.
He said that the railway stations are the backbone of the transport system of mobility. “In terms of railway station management, there is no global solution but solutions adapted to the different contexts; the priority is to take into account the spaces and the related services”. He mentioned the link to be made between grown and new digital services.

Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General, said: “Since their development, stations have always been interesting places. Places of interface between intracity and intercity mobility, between all modes of transport, in a sustainable combination”. Beyond their historic importance, he mentioned their role in global travel, of which they are the cause, the consequence, and the symbol. He said: “Around the world 1 million kilometres of rail infrastructure carry one million trains everyday which transport 100 million passengers from or to around 10,000 stations. But on this huge network each station is unique as a social mirror of its city, its country, its people”.
He concluded by highlighting the capacity of railway stations “to make us dream, to dream of the smart mobilities of tomorrow, by inviting younger generations to dream even higher and smarter than the heritage our forefathers left us”.

For Adif, the 6th Station Congress Next Station 2017 “is an open door to the smart stations of the future, drawing the challenges, marking the road that many have already undertaken and that in the immediate future we will see how it becomes a reality.

We have counted on the invaluable collaboration of experts who have helped us to better understand the challenges we have ahead in the unstoppable transformation into intelligent stations within intelligent cities.

But fundamentally, we share ideas about the future challenges and how to continue to move forward in a hyperconnected world so that the railway stations continue to be an engine of change.”

It is precisely this dream that led UIC to ask the editor of Langages du Sud publishing house to produce for this conference an art book on stations around the world: Dream Stations, a Worldwide Odyssey.

More information on the content of this conference is to follow shortly.

If you need to illustrate the railway station issue please visit our boards on Pinterest.

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