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European project RESTRAIL (REduction of Suicides and Trespasses on RAILway property): the final conference was held to present its final results and the way forward

(Paris, 19 September 2014) The RESTRAIL (REduction of Suicides and Trespasses on RAILway property) European project is coming to an end and held its Final Conference on 18 September in Paris, UIC HQ. This was the occasion to learn more about this successful project, its results and the way forward.

RESTRAIL is a research project co-funded under the European Commission's 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. RESTRAIL is a three-year project which started on 1 October 2011 under the coordination of UIC. The consortium includes 17 partners from 12 countries, UIC and 7 of its members: DBAG, FFE, IK, INFRADEL, PRORAIL, TCDD, TRAFIKVERKET, three research centres: VTT, CIDAUT, IFSTAR and three universities: HMGU, KAU and UNott.

The project aims to help railway stakeholders reduce the number of suicides and trespassing accidents and the costly service disruption caused by these events. One central goal of RESTRAIL is to provide the rail industry with an analysis of cost-effective prevention and mitigation measures as well as with recommendations and guidance materials to optimise the implementation of these measures.

Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director-General, delivered the opening speech of the RESTRAIL final conference:

"I am speaking today at the end of a process that has enabled players from very different backgrounds to work together on both a societal and technical issue, namely trespassing and suicides in the railways, thanks to considerable EU financing, without which nothing like this would have been possible. [...] The results achieved are particularly interesting and effective for the stakeholders concerned. They take the shape of a toolbox, enabling everyone to find the various analyses and answers in accordance with their needs, in order to develop a tailored strategy and to reduce both the number of trespasses and suicides in the railways – not least because of the human tragedy it represents – and also to mitigate the consequences of these actions for railway operators so that they can perform their primary function.

Today, as you will discuss during the course of the day, the RESTRAIL project has successfully fulfilled its objectives:

- *The various members of the consortium were able to work together in a spirit of collaboration to share their respective competences in their work on this human, societal and technical issue.*
- *A large number of general prevention measures as well as technical and human measures in the area have been analysed, assessed and classified in accordance with their possible roll-out.*

- *The most valuable measures were subject to field testing in order to confirm their applicability and to verify their effectiveness.*
- *All the measures are henceforth available to decision-makers in a toolbox, which provides railway end-users with the best available help when deciding to implement measures that are properly tailored to their social, institutional and professional context, insofar as there cannot be a one-size-fits-all solution, or in any case no single European solution that can be developed in the same way for all Member States.*
- *UIC has fully played its role in serving its members by getting the most interested railway companies on the subject to work together and by making the jointly-developed results available in an appropriate form to the railway sector.*

[...]There is no doubt that progress needs to be made beyond RESTRAIL in the strict sense in developing new solutions, as in the field of security, and indeed safety, nothing can ever be taken for granted. A link certainly needs to be made with the issue of level crossings, which was intentionally not part of the project, but which is a very relevant safety issue and one which UIC is also very committed to along with various institutional partners, and in particular within the framework of the annual “ILCAD International Level Crossing Awareness Day”.”

Ann Billiau, INFRABEL General Director, gave a keynote address with the example of Belgium, explaining that it has the densest networks in the world with easily accessible tracks and thus dramatic consequences. That is why INFRABEL is strongly committed to RESTRAIL to find solutions to reduce trespassing: finding hotspots (around psychiatric hospitals), and implementing new measures like the intelligent thermal camera to detect trespass and blue lights at stations to prevent suicide (the latter also used in Japan – the country with the highest suicide rate in the world). The awareness campaigns along with infrastructure measures (anti-trespass rubber panels) lowered the number of trespassers to-78% three months after its implementation. Mrs Billiau paid tribute to the Toolbox that is a dynamic and evolutionary tool. The RESTRAIL project is coming to an end but it is the beginning of solutions, measures to test and implementations.

The RESTRAIL toolbox, which is the final output of the project, was presented as well as the various field tests which were implemented within the project. The guidance material produced is designed to:

- Lead decision-makers through the process of selecting from the range of preventative and mitigation measures,
- Provide more detailed guidance on the implementation of those measures and provide a framework for collecting and structuring information in order to feed an accessible and documented database on implementation measures and efficiency across the rail community and beyond.

This tool was developed in RESTRAIL under the coordination of UIC with both practical and scientific aims. On the one hand it is a guide to best practice supporting better decision-making for the implementation of prevention and mitigation measures. On the other hand, it provides a framework for collecting and structuring evidence-based information about the preventative and mitigation measures already implemented.

This toolbox is now publicly available at <http://www.restrail.eu/toolbox/> and will be regularly updated by UIC in the future in order to provide railways as well as academics with a unique entry point for gathering and making available all the material that can be useful for the whole community to reduce suicides, trespasses and their consequences.

The RESTRAIL Practical Guide is available at <http://www.restrail.eu/>

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