

The 6th UIC World Congress on Rail Training (WCRT) takes place

(Paris, 01 December 2022) The 6th edition of the WCRT, organised by the UIC and partnered with SNCF, FS and DB, opened on 30 November at UIC Headquarters and is running until 2 December. The event is sponsored by Alstom and, for the first time since its inception in 2011, was hybrid and attended both in-person at UIC Headquarters in Paris and remotely.

The congress is bringing together more than 200 participants from over 40 countries around the world, representing railway undertakings, universities and engineering schools. The congress was organised by the UIC Expertise Development Platform, which takes its knowledge from the regional Rail Training Centre Networks, and its main purpose is to enhance workforce development through sharing best practices in rail training across the entire industry. The congress is a very successful event with many participants returning every year.

Meryem Belhaj-Clot, Deputy HR Director and Head of HR Development, opened the congress and welcomed all of the participants present on-site and online.

The event is a unique opportunity for railway HR departments and training professionals to get together and discuss current issues in their field and for the 3 days will focus on major subject issues for railways such as:

- Responding to Covid-19
- Innovation & technology
- Training simulators and virtual reality
- International and national frameworks for training and education
- HR training lifecycles
- Gamification
- Future skills strategies in an international framework
- Learning technology
- Sustainable management of skills and human resources

Keynote opening speeches were given by François Davenne, UIC Director General, Miguel Mesquita Faro Viana, UIC Chair of the Talent and Expertise Development

Platform from Infraestructuras de Portugal (IP), Marc Guigon, UIC Passenger Director, and Christoph Hieber, Senior Director, Deloitte.

François Davenne welcomed the participants and highlighted the fact that: *“This event comes just after COP27, which was held in Egypt. When looking at climate change, the railway is the most environmentally friendly form of transport. It is one of the major solutions for reducing CO2 emissions and therefore fulfilling the commitments made in the Paris Agreement (2015). One of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4) is to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. Training, education, and workforce development have a key role to play in supporting and anticipating future changes and challenges in the rail sector.”*

He emphasised the need to rethink learning strategies to develop the skills of staff, to attract the talent of the future, and to integrate more digital services which will improve the performance, quality and durability of systems. He mentioned the need to link technology and infrastructure, as how capacity on existing infrastructure can be increased in the future will be key.

He also emphasised that training will be a strategic priority for UIC.

Miguel Mesquita Faro Viana, then took the floor and stated: *“I would first like to acknowledge the authors’ patience and flexibility regarding the schedule changes and for having to work and review their papers several times over the 2-year process. Thanks also to all the presenters, including the keynote speakers. Secondly, I would like to thank the sponsors and partners for backing the congress via their financial support and making the whole event possible. Thirdly, thank you to the Hackathon regional team members, the regional organisers and project mentors, whose work allowed us to bring young talent, new blood, innovation and creativity to the event. I’m sure all the participants are proud of themselves. There are no winners and losers. We all won.*

Next, I would like to give a special word of appreciation to the Steering Committee colleagues from DB, SNCF, FS, the Rail Centre from the Netherlands, and Rail Training International from the UK for ten years of close cooperation, sharing, learning together, and important achievements for our cause and mission. Finally, I have to acknowledge the outstanding effort that the UIC personnel has put into organising the congress, as it usually takes 1.5 to 2 years to accomplish this, but this time it was planned in 9 months, with a very tight budget and few resources. Thank you François Davenne for making this possible within UIC. Thank you UIC colleagues and I would especially like to extend my appreciation to the HR Development Team for being the real heart and soul of the congress.”

Marc Guigon, UIC Passenger Director, gave a presentation on the UIC Covid-19 Task Force which was set up at the beginning of the pandemic and provided solutions and measures to restore confidence in rail travel throughout the crisis through various tools, guidelines, global meetings and conferences.

Christoph Hieber, from Deloitte, gave a presentation on HR and Global Trends, the future of training and development, and how it can help the transformation of organisations and the workforce, especially in regard to a skills-based approach.

UIC launched its first global TrainRail Hackathon as part of a series of measures to increase the railway's appeal aimed at universities and railway undertakings. This first edition focused on the theme "How can railways be resilient in the face of pandemics?" and was the result of multiregional collaboration between universities, railway undertakings, and corporate training centres. The final was held on 29 November, with the Hackathon awards being presented during the congress' opening ceremony. Meryem Belhaj-Clot, announced the winning teams and prizes:

1st prize: Project 5 – Intelligent passenger flow management system (African region) – Yasser Haddam, Rachid Laroussi el Alami, Anass Mandour, Chaimae Toubali, Aurel V.J Youbi Mibambo

2nd prize: Project 2 - Railway Foldable Container (Asia-Pacific region) - Keyi Li, Ruifan Luo, Yue Feng, Yuqing Zhang, Danyu Wang

3rd prize: Project 4 - Monarch System (European region) – Fabiano Fumagalli, Cristiano Majorca

Highly commended: Virtual Railway Ecological Solution (Asia-Pacific region) - Muhua Zhang, Zixuan Wu, Yujia Ma, Yue Gu, Qing Peng, Syed Waqar Hussain Shah

Booths with simulators have been set up for SNCF and Alstom.

In the afternoon of 30 November, technical visits were organised and hosted by SNCF (SNCF Réseau, SNCF Voyageurs, SNCF Gares & Connexion) and Trenitalia France (Frecciarossa 1000 high-speed train), these were:

- Centralized Network Control & Nexteo – SNCF Réseau CCU & Nexteo, Pantin
- A Rolling Stock Maintenance Centre – Technicentre le Landy, Saint-Denis
- SNCF driving simulators – Centre de Formation Traction, Saint-Denis
- The Training Centre for Suburban Rail professions – Université Transilien, Saint-Denis
- The Gare de Lyon station & Clock Tower – Gare de Lyon Frecciarossa 1000 – Trenitalia France, Gare de Lyon

CONTACTS

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