



My dear colleagues, my dear friends,

After merely 11 years as Director General of UIC, time has come for me to hand over this responsibility to François Davenne.

I wish him full success in steering and further developing our worldwide association.

I also wish to heartily thank all the teams from our headquarters or our regions, all our members and partners for their support and involvement, without whom nothing could have been possible.

As any organisation composed of so many members, of so many people, men and women, coming from so many countries, UIC needs attention and care.

I could talk about UIC for a long time!

Talk with strength, with passion and conviction, but also with tenderness.

Talk about its history

Since its foundation in 1921, UIC has received an international role, worldwide, as a platform for long term cooperation, beyond all political hurdles...

With, as its main mission, to promote the development of rail across the world, of interoperable infrastructures for the benefit of exchanges to come, or to come back, and all of this keeping in mind a spirit of collaboration and sharing.

Among some milestones of UIC deliverables, we can mention the TEN-T network, the European High-speed network, the major corridors, ETCS, GSMR, 700 leaflets, several international strategic visions, significative input on safety, security or sustainable development, work on LCC (Life Cycle cost), or LICB (Lasting Infrastructure Cost Benchmarking), production of POCS (Proof of Concept) for Operation, maintenance and services, ...

UIC is going to be 100 years old.

As an international association, present in all parts of the world, its life is obviously impacted by the evolution of the geopolitical context.

Transport being the vector of the mobility of goods and people, transport is obviously an important factor of the social and economic development of countries or regions.

UIC, being the representative of all railways around the world since 1922, has obviously seen and crossed very important evolutions, conflicts, alliances, divisions, disruptions, innovations, ...

UIC has always had the duty to adapt to this context with a constant preoccupation to bring the added value of rail to the development of modernising societies, of their infrastructures and services, among developed and developing countries.

In a word, to quote Isaac Newton, to help building bridges between cities, countries, regions and continents and avoid the erection of walls stopping any development and nurturing further conflicts...

Talk about its recent past

Who would still remember that our association, in 2008/2009 was coming out of a major crisis, was losing its members, was losing its experts, had no more resources, and that the associative funds were empty?

Who would still remember that, at that same period, the headquarters building of our association, where you like to meet and work, was about to close down, due to a lack of necessary maintenance and conformity to safety norms?

Among many duties in the course of the past 10 years, we had to:

- regain members' trust and stabilise our membership, which is today regularly increasing;
- restructure our internal organisation;
- shape a new governance for our 6 regions, and ensure its dynamic management;
- boost an efficient management of our forums and platforms, which are the incubators of new projects;
- do our best to manage the extreme complexity of the opt in process...
- create simultaneously a special unit capable to answer to external project calls, representing a necessary additional funding to preserve a good project portfolio, and hence the quantity and quality of our experts, in all our fields of competence;
- initiate a new approach of standardisation of our operation, maintenance and services processes, and simultaneously partner with normative bodies to avoid copying or duplicating risks;

- initiate a complete programme of professionalisation and renewal of our working tools and methods;
- modernise and boost our communication worldwide, and adapt to the better use of social networks;
- realise enough productivity to be able to honour my initial commitment to keep membership fees stable and recapitalise our associative funds up to 1 million Euros, which has all been done;
- create international partnerships in order to better position the credibility of our association through an external high-level recognition;
- anticipate in the creation of a digital platform bringing to our members an access to a new ecosystem, and enabling to hitch railways into a new sustainable integrated connected international chain of mobility;
- obtain the AFNOR quality certification for our association organisation, inviting by now members to join us in bilateral commitments;
- position UIC as a vector for the development of rail international corridors, adopting a new approach of modal complementarity and societal, sustainable profitability;
- engage into necessary modernisation and conformity works for our building, allowing by the way the possibility to optimise renting revenues, so that your HQ is costing you nothing.

Talk also about external and internal dangers

Of these dangers that can create a strong threat if anyone, within or without our organisation, would wish to abuse it, for its own benefit, whether personal or corporate, or if they would not understand our added value for our community and our sector...

To protect UIC from these dangers has necessitated explanations and diplomacy, but also being tough and constant, in all our endeavours and dialogue.

Talk about its strengths and weaknesses

Our association is the mirror of its own members, as illustrated by the organigram introduced in 2009.

Its strengths and weaknesses are therefore also the same as its members, whose involvement, expertise, support and global vision are fundamental...

Managed in the same way as would be an SME, the essential conditions for a common success are confidence, transparency, anticipation and service.

Losing those would be its highest risk and failure

Talk evidently about its future

Beyond all our competences

- technical evidently,
- economic,
- organisational,
- diplomatic,
- communicating

What was most important was to give all our actions **a meaning, a true value and a culture.**

3 values of **Unity, Universality and Solidarity**

3 pillars for our philosophy: **to Open, to Share and to Connect**

3 areas for our activity: **Technical, Strategic and Cultural**

3 managing principles: **Productivity, Professionalism and Promotion**

Even more than our virtues, these values and principles are more and more indispensable:

- in order to preserve the spirit of a multilateral cooperation;
- to resist to nationalistic shrinking priorities;
- to pursue our engagement and our work in favour of interoperability, long corridors between cities, regions, countries and continents;
- to build bridges and not walls, in the real and figurative sense of the expression.

UIC today, and for tomorrow, is strong, well respected and awaited within though a difficult geopolitical context.

Hence the ever importance of our international network that is uniting more than 200 members, 40 universities, 80 partners of this fantastic human web, IOP, internet of Persons worldwide.

It is our true cement, composed of such aggregates like empathy, transparency and mutual trust.

Our driving force is the heart and energy of all of us, all of you, who willingly get involved into it, and will continue to do so with strength, with passion and conviction, but also tenderness...

As any gathering of men and women of good will, UIC deserves to be respected, protected and beloved.

Better it is to appreciate its presence than regret its absence!

For 11 years I have dedicated myself to it with all my heart.

My heart that is telling me today to slow down but my heart that will always stay close to you...

Let me now conclude these 11 years of constant personal involvement, at the service of our international railway community and of a global vision, by thanking once last time members, partners and teams, with a poetic message specially written for this emotional moment of transmission...

Just remember...

*Here comes the day to tell you goodbye
After so many years to strive and try!
Some power, some respect and some notoriety...
But so many duties, responsibility...*

*Management, team building and a lot of contracts
Meetings and decisions, objective and results...
My day to day life left me little time
To enjoy either rain or sunshine!*

*In this sort of dizziness, and constant racing,
I would like today to stop and be looking
On all the roads run, share with you and quest:
What, why and how I've tried my best?*

*A lot of work, ideas, a little bit of talent,
Also, my deepest esteem, who knows some sentiment
For all those of you who supported me together
To grow our UIC everyday stronger.*

*In so many topics, technical or commercial,
Social or politics, all international,
Open, share and connect, in all transparency,
Is my philosophy, why you trusted me...*

*Here comes the time to give you my reverence!
Please just remember the key of my presence,
To all of you who helped me through,
Whatever I did, I always loved you...*