

Message to G4 CEOs, 29th September 2016, Budapest, Hungary

Dear Colleagues,

It is with regret that I address you these words of greeting as neither me nor UIC Coordinator Europe Simon Fletcher are able to be with you today for the G4 meeting and to help Hungrail celebrate their 10th anniversary.

As you know the issue of developing rail business in south eastern Europe is an important topic and one of the reasons why we are proud to have been able to regularly attend previous meetings of G4 and to have closely supported the development of the SEESARI (South East Europe Strategic Alliance for Railway Innovation) research undertaking.

On behalf of our member companies (120 in Europe), we have developed the UIC values of “Unity, Solidarity and Universality” structured the development and delivery ethics of “share, open and connect”.

The South Eastern European area is strategically important to the development not only of the European economy but also in the development of the future European railway system.

In order to facilitate this forward development, we are developing many synergies with other international associations and bodies. We also cooperate with around 100 partner institutions, among which the most important is our consultative status at the UN – ECOSOC and UNECE as well as bodies such as the European Investment Bank and the World Bank.

Since its creation in 1922 UIC has been and continues to fulfil its primary role as technical and business platform developing for and with our members and partners, specifications, technical documents and business processes all of which are international solutions for the operation, design, construction, maintenance and management of the commercial services of the railway system.

UIC has also been a pioneer in the domains of railway research and innovation across the world, and the promotion of four fundamental values: safety, security, sustainability and the transmission of knowledge of good and best practices to younger generations. It is these values that have been integrated into the SEESARI undertaking and we would encourage you to all play a full and very active role in that initiative.

Now with the emergence of new technology we have entered the third industrial revolution: the Digital Era. Rail, as the backbone of European transportation must take advantage of the opportunities that this era brings.

Now that the European legislation and TSIs for technical and administrative interoperability are largely in place, the task of implementation through research and standardisation work must now really start to take effect.

The recent publication of a Digital Roadmap in conjunction with CER and other partners, as well as the preparation and publication of a joint developmental plan (endorsed at Innotrans just last week) entitled “Tomorrow’s Railways, Today”, will help to focus the forward agenda of projects and other pieces of research that the UIC undertakes and lead to a useful set of outcomes that are of added value to the railway operating community.

Security of the rail system still features large in our thinking and there is a piece of work currently ongoing to focus attention on the known issues.

The UIC is attracting young innovators through a series of awards programmes that focus on technical and business innovation as well as the more specific aspect of digitalisation.

We are also developing a number of prototypes known as “Proofs of Concept”. These provide concrete solutions to known issues such as the detection of shunt defects on track circuits and detection of broken rails. We are engaging with a number of partners in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of these ideas and they will then form the basis for new IRSs (International Railway Solutions) for use right across the railway sector.

The second edition of our digital conference will be held during our General Assembly in Saint-Petersburg on 1st December 2016. The theme is focussing on system capacity and more and better connectivity – you are warmly invited to participate in these topical events.

Please once again accept our sincere apologies for not being able to attend in person and please be assured that our interest in the topics that you are planning to discuss remains high. I wish the G4 meeting great success and we will make every effort to attend the next meeting.

We look forward to seeing you in St Petersburg.

Jean-Pierre Loubinoux

Simon Fletcher