

The spoken word alone prevails

Speech given by Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General

TRA 2014 – Strategic session

Rail as an Attractive and Sustainable Mode for the Future

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« I have a dream » ...

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by expressing my pleasure, as Director General of the International Union of Railways, to be present with you today and to address you as part of this special Strategic Session dealing with “**Rail as an Attractive and Sustainable Mode for the Future**” at this 5th TRA.

My organisation is especially active on behalf of its members in research and innovation in supporting them to make rail the most attractive and sustainable mode of transport for the future, in the heart of the transportation system.

Rail provides a vital service to European society and is an important ingredient for a strong economy. It has an unprecedented opportunity to achieve the sustainability it requires for the twenty first century. By doing so, it will be able to respond to the expected growth in transport demand, both passenger and freight.

Mobility is a fundamental right of our societies and it is therefore crucial that rail, being recognised as the most attractive and sustainable transport mode, becomes the backbone of a future multimodal transportation system, enhancing personal mobility and supporting social cohesion.

To maintain and develop this role in the future, the sector needs to meet enormous challenges. There is a need to protect the social, economic and environmental fabric.

In an ideal world, the railway of the future has developed by, say 2050, based on the best of what there is today - an absolute commitment to safety, green credentials, expertise in passenger and freight transportation, global leadership in railway research, innovation and manufacturing and, above all, its prime position as the provider of Europe's transportation needs.

But the railway of 2050 is also a very different railway; one that has moved significantly forwards and one that provides the backbone of the European transport structure as part of a user friendly, door to door integrated transportation system, with each mode playing to its strengths.

To meet the challenges of climate change, the supply of energy and transport network congestion, rail has attracted a multi-fold increase in its share of passenger and freight markets, particularly for longer-distance trips.

By 2050 Rail responds to users' needs, delivering reliable, affordable and attractive services as the core of a seamless and safe mobility network. The sector has applied its innovation skills to an assault on avoidable costs and to attracting new users, achieving significant modal shift.

Future Rail has attracted new customers by providing high-quality services that have stimulated popular support for rail and laid the foundation for public investment (which might well be more profitable than today's banks ☺).

In order to further build "Rail into this **"Attractive and Sustainable Mode for the Future"** we have to face all these and possibly other future challenges.

More than ever it looks like most of the rail stakeholders are slowly facing in the same common direction, having quite similar visions for the role of rail in 2050. The UIC has developed in 2013 a vision document "Challenge 2050" which has found broad support among the stakeholders. This has been followed by the next phase in the process "the Rail Technical Strategy Europe" - (RTSE).

Also, very recently ERRAC through the FOSTERRAIL project has developed their new SRRIA – the Strategic Rail Research and Innovation Agenda - and indeed it looks like we are all looking to face the many challenges in similar ways and that very encouraging.

Proceeding in this way will enable the sector to exploit its opportunities to satisfy customer requirements and develop the rail system of the future accordingly.

The European rail sector must increasingly rely on its ability to exploit a stream of innovations, so as to improve delivery of smart solutions across all our key outcomes while putting the user at the heart of the approach. I would like to mention:

- Value for money
- Sustainability (environmental, social and economic)
- Performance
- Safety and security
- Consistency
- Accessibility
- Capacity
- Connectivity

and when I speak of Accessibility, Capacity, Connectivity, even Safety and Security, I would like especially also to mention the research, development and innovations needed in relation to railway stations, extremely important inter-modal nodes!

Keeping all these notions in mind will help the sector to prepare for the challenges of how the future system is designed, constructed, operated and maintained.

The dynamic and successful rail sector that this strategy supports will be one that works holistically and innovates to evolve, increasing its ability to compete, to retain existing and attract new customers.

In this way, it can also contribute better to wider social and economic goals within the communities it serves. A strong international reputation for innovation will also act as a lever for the sector's contribution to the European export market in railway products, services and know-how.

A technical strategy relies not only on technological innovation but also on a culture of receptiveness to new ways of delivering customer service, and a willingness to challenge barriers. To maximize benefits, railways will therefore examine how best to facilitate change, including the establishment of advanced organisational and operational structures and systems.

Fundamental to delivering innovation within the railway sector is its ability and willingness to look outside its own bounds for the best and often most economic solutions, collaborating with technology developers and other specialists.

Increasing innovation within the sector requires incentives to be aligned better between stakeholders and along the supply chain. Such benefits could flow, for instance, from closer alignment of investment cycles and the development of improved value transfer mechanisms.

Reducing actual and perceived risk associated with technical innovation is important, as this is a major barrier to interoperability. Such risks may be operational, safety-related or commercial.

I believe that this new Rail Technical Strategy Europe as well as the newly developed Strategic Rail Research & Innovation Agenda from ERRAC and many other documents such as there are on a national level (incl. company level) are well placed to guide and inspire future innovation through the EU Framework Programme "Horizon 2020" including the planned Shift2Rail initiative.

To facilitate the facing of the many challenges in order to reach our common goal and vision of "**Rail as – the most - Attractive and Sustainable Mode for the Future**", a well-balanced, business-led program of innovation as well as a fruitful cooperation between the rail stakeholders, between the modes of transport and between European, national and regional levels is essential.

More than ever I am confident that we will be able to reach our goals in developing and innovation the rail system in the foreseeable future and turn our vision into a reality.