



INTERNATIONAL UNION  
OF RAILWAYS

Good morning, Welcome, it is my honour to address you today.

Allow me first to warmly welcome and thank the CEO and representatives of the World Wildlife Fund Central and Eastern Europe for their involvement in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Signing Ceremony. It is a great pleasure for me to sign our memorandum of understanding here today as I know there will be many ways that we can work together on our common goals.

Sustainability is central to the mission of the UIC and vision for the railways. Railways are frontrunners in global climate action and will play a much more important role in future transport systems as a low emission mode and backbone of a sustainable mobility system. As one of the largest landowners in the developed world, railways are responsible for maintaining land over a wide area and therefore have a great responsibility and opportunity to protect biodiversity. Railway land hosts a broad range of habitats and species and has the potential to build and operate the railways in a way that can help reverse the current loss of global biodiversity.

According to the European Biodiversity action plan for 2030, investing in and deploying green infrastructure should to be considered in planning and designing transport networks. Railway infrastructure should be an integral part of the natural landscape and a “green network” that connect natural habitats as well as people. Enabling species migration and providing diverse habitats for many different species.

The UIC understands the benefits of cooperative partnerships with other bodies and how that can help our members to learn and improve. I am confident that working in partnership with WWF-CEE will help us to connect with members in Central and Eastern Europe on the important topic of biodiversity and sustainability more broadly. With this relationship, we wish to encourage dialogue among UIC members to share and promote best practice in building and managing biodiverse railways. UIC hope that this relationship will strengthen our work in the Danube-Carpathian region and also be a catalyst to grow to a global level with WWF.

As a last remark, we are happy to inform you that UIC members take a proactive role within Sustainable Land Use sector to provide solutions and best practice for the correct development of an environmentally responsible railway transport system. Within a period of 3 years, the UIC REVERSE project, with its members, will provide an overview of biodiversity issues for the first time within the railway industry at the international level. We invite UIC members to take part in this important project and we are pleased to be able to expand our network of contacts with WWF-CEE.

UIC will continue to play an important advocacy role in this regard, highlighting the potential of railways as a clean, environment friendly and sustainable cornerstone of green transport systems. And we are happy to raise the level of ambition and commitment on sustainable land use topic on railways with the collaboration of WWF-CEE.