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90th General Assembly of UIC, the worldwide organisation of railways, was held on 10 July in Istanbul

The main challenges for UIC focus on Freight Corridors such as the Silk Roads, Standardisation issue, Digitalisation, Climate Change and sustainable transport, Educational programs

(Istanbul, 10 July 2017) The Executive Board and 90th General Assembly of UIC, the worldwide railway organisation, were held on 10 July in Istanbul, at the invitation of Turkish State Railways TCDD. The meetings were chaired by UIC Chairman Mr Renato MAZZONCINI, CEO and Director General of Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane (FS) together with Mr Isa APAYDIN, President of the Board and Director General of TCDD, UIC Vice-Chairman and in presence of Mr Jean-Pierre LOUBINOUX, UIC Director General. Mr Alireza ZOLFGHARIZADEH, Programme Officer (Transport) from the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) gave a guest keynote speech. Several organisations also attended the UIC General Assembly, such as CCTT, CIT, CER, USIC.

UIC Chairman Mr Renato MAZZONCINI in his report reviewed the activities of the railway organisation since the last General Assembly in December in Saint Petersburg and reminded the meeting of the orientations and main challenges for the months to come.

He stressed that; *“We have to encourage more investments and policies that give our sector the chance to be the backbone of the sustainable transport of the future. To make a step forward on 23 May 2017 we signed a letter to all the **Ministers of Transport** to reiterate the purpose, the values and the philosophy of the International Union of Railways (UIC).*

In Europe, huge investment is taking place, and more than 600 billion Euro are still needed, under the TEN-T program to deliver the Trans - European Transport Network and its 9 corridors. More than 1 trillion dollars are put on the table with the Chinese initiative ‘One Belt One Road’ to connect China and the world. India, where I was in February, has also set up an impressive plan of rail investments. UIC is the right platform to support the action needed.”

He summarised the main challenges for UIC as follows:

- *Freight corridors and Silk Road Study*

UIC Members were presented with the results of a study carried out on behalf of UIC by Roland Berger on the development of Eurasian corridors and their interconnection with European Rail Freight Corridors. More specifically the study presents an overview on the traffic volumes, market players, infrastructure and performance of the rail routes, forecasting their development and potential until 2027, it assesses the key success factors, best practice and impeding factors for the initiatives and makes recommendations for stakeholders of the transport chain.

- *Climate Conference COP23 and the Footprint Study*

For the 2017 round of UN Climate change negotiations, UIC will use its status as an organisation accredited by the UN and work with locally based members in addition to a coalition of like-minded organisations. The main objective of these action is to raise awareness and deliver key messages concerning sustainable transport and climate change at the upcoming COP 23 (Bonn, Germany 6-17 November).

Concerning the Footprint Study, it was reiterated that several “railway footprint studies” have been commissioned in the past, notably by ÖBB and by CER. Their common purpose is to illustrate the contribution of railways to society. The UIC study aims to fill two gaps by providing two particular insights. The first insight is an objective representation of the economic balance of rail, in view of a possible, lasting, bias-free comparison of transport modes. The second insight is the geographic analysis of the relationship between the rail transport system and its geographic and human environment. The UIC General Assembly approves the extension of the study be-yond mid-2018 as part of the global budget.

- *The TALENT project*

The development of the UIC eLearning platform is a key component of the TALENT project, the initiative aiming to prepare a new generation of railway talents working on domestic and international challenges.

The results of a survey the UIC conducted at the beginning of the year together with other studies demonstrated that the multidisciplinary nature of the transport industry requires competencies from multiple bodies of knowledge, matching with the multidisciplinary character of mobility systems. This calls for a new generation of training courses (more flexible and not focusing on fundamental disciplines only).

The TALENT project is currently exploring the potential of on line learning (e-learning) as a means to attract and develop talents in the rail sector. The Talent team is currently designing a learning environment with the goal to provide learning opportunities that are flexible, self-paced, collaborative, evolutive and recognized. The first pilot courses (topics ranked as very important in the UIC survey) will be dedicated to Railway Asset Management, Global satellite navigation, GRTMS and will address different railway professions. Rail Uni Net (Railway University Network) as one of main partners of this activity will be re-organised to meet the new requirements and become a working body of the Expertise Development Platform.

- *Digital developments*

Renato MAZZONCINI also highlighted the importance of the digital issue for railways. He said: "Digitalisation is the most disruptive issue that we have to deal with." He thanked the whole UIC team for organising the 1st UIC Digital Transformation Tour in Silicon Valley in May this year with around 20 representatives from UIC Members and welcomed the launch of the 2nd UIC digital Awards. He also invited Members to join the further digital conference

to be held in Rome on 18-19 September to exchange experiences on cyber-security and asset digitalisation.

- *Standardisation*

In terms of standardisation, he stressed that efforts have still to be made "to reinforce our assets and all the work done over the last several years in this field".

The General Assembly approved the report of the UIC Standardisation Platform. As its core activity, this Platform coordinates UIC's standardisation strategy and develop the professional standards to increase the value of the organisation's assets.

UIC Vice Chairman Mr Isa APAYDIN, who warmly welcomed the participants of this important General Assembly, held at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and the Middle-East, said: "I have the great pleasure and honour of carrying out our first major event after my appointment as the Vice-Chairman of UIC with your esteemed supports in the last 89th General Assembly in Saint Petersburg."

He mentioned the importance with the clean and cheap energy consumption and its environment-friendly and noise-sensitive position in the world.

He said "the competition on the rails is influencing the world with an accelerating momentum. The ever-developing technology has also affected the railway sector and it has made the trains, via their comfort and speed, compete with planes.

On this point, the importance of UIC established to develop the cooperation among its members and the railway transportation; to simplify the border crossing procedures and to develop the implementations related with the railway safety and security is becoming even greater. Its cooperation with international and non-governmental organisations such as EU, UN, OTIF, OSJD, CER, CIT, ECO, BSEC, ISO and etc. plays a vital role for maintaining the interests of its members in terms of global and regional transportation policies.

UIC is also an organisation that has succeeded in staying out of the political developments within the countries of its members since the very beginning of its establishment. In this regard, I would like to attract your attention to the fact that maintaining this approach is important for the future of UIC, I believe. Also, I express my gratitude to Mr MAZZONCINI, Chairman of UIC, Mr LOUBINOX, Director General of UIC and to all UIC colleagues.

We must surely emphasise that the developments seen in the European countries in terms of railway transportation has been triggered the Middle and Far Eastern countries and created a lively railway industry in recent years. Moreover, a new railway transport corridor is being built between the Far East and Europe as we call it the Iron Silk Road.

The Iron Silk Road Project will contribute to the prosperity of the world and will also become a railroad of peace and fraternity."

Mr APAYDIN briefly mentioned the latest railway investment developments taking place in Turkey, stating that since 2003 nearly 60 billion euros have been invested in railway projects in Turkey as a result of the state policy. 1213 km high speed railway lines have been constructed and are under operation, 4000 km rapid and high-speed rail lines are under

construction while 2400 km of conventional lines are going to be implemented with signalling technology and 2000 km of are going to be electrified.

By the year of 2023, the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, the target is to construct 3500 km of high speed and 1000 km of conventional lines.

He also mentioned that the restructuring of the railway sector in Turkey has been finalised and now the doors are open to local and foreign railway operators around the world.”

Report of UIC Director General on the organisation's activities

UIC Director General Mr Jean-Pierre LOUBINOUX gave an overview on main activities performed by UIC Headquarters and working bodies during the last period.

He reminded the meeting that all UIC bodies work in reference to the values of unity, universality and solidarity and in line with philosophy “Open, share and connect”. The three main pillars which guide UIC’s actions in all fields of international cooperation are: Professionalism, Productivity, Promotion.

In terms of professionalism, he highlighted internal work on quality management and the educational programmes as part of the TALENT project.

Regarding productivity, new tools have been introduced for better project management and financial follow up.

The promotion of UIC work is conducted through a number of conferences (around 80 per year) and dedicated events such as Digital as well as Research and Innovation Awards.

He reviewed the main achievements and challenges in the field of Digitalisation, Freight, Passenger transport and fundamental values covering Safety, Security, Sustainability, Research and Education.

Appointments

UIC Director General Mr Jean-Pierre LOUBINOUX announced the appointments within UIC working bodies and UIC HQ.

Regarding the UIC Freight Forum, after the retirement of Mr Ferdinand SCHMIDT, Mr Clemens FÖRST, CEO of Rail Cargo RCG (Austria), has been appointed new Chairman until the end of 2019.

Mr Enrico TRAPAZZO, from FS Italiane, was appointed new Chair of the UIC Legal Group.

At UIC HQ, two new Regional coordinators were appointed: Mr Jerzy WISNIEWSKI for the Middle-East and Mr Thierry BERA for Africa.

Finance

The current budget situation and preliminary orientations for the 2018 budget were presented during the meeting. The General Assembly approved the accounts 2016, noted the current financial situation and the perspectives for 2018.

Membership

The UIC General Assembly welcomed as new UIC Members
During this General Assembly, 3 Members were welcomed by UIC

Asia:

MASKA (Indonesian Railway association) as affiliate member

Europe:

AW Rail (to be Passenger operator, Italy) as affiliate member

BR-ICS (Austrian secure loading company) as affiliate member

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