

Protectrail kick off meeting

Wednesday 6 October 2010

The stakeholders vision on railway security

Opening speech: Jean Pierre Loubinoux, Director General, UIC

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am particularly pleased to welcome you **here** today, to UIC headquarters, for the European PROTECTRAIL project kick off meeting; a meeting which represents both the **culmination** of a long process and the **beginning** of an extremely important programme of work which will benefit our fellow citizens and our businesses.

The site of the UIC headquarters is significant because it stands as a physical symbol of cooperation, exchange and communication within the railway sector. Naturally UIC is constantly evolving in response to the changing requirements of its members, but it remains the only global organisation dedicated to enabling cooperation between railway undertakings, infrastructure managers, operators and their partners. No other railway organisation can claim such a vocation and I fully intend to work with my staff, with UIC's staff, to ensure that UIC is accorded the status it deserves, because in our changing political and economic environment the need to unite the railway sector has never been so pressing and so important.

Confronted with the challenges of the railway world, this cooperation is indeed more crucial than ever. This is of course relevant for technical aspects of passenger transport, freight transport and the rail system surrounding infrastructure, but it must also be relevant, and perhaps increasingly so, for those specific aspects that I have grouped together under the management of UIC's fundamental values. These concern in particular security, safety, environment and sustainable development, and international research and training: all those areas which are characterised by their role in either protecting railway activity or its efficiency, or promoting its benefits in the face of competition from other transport modes and growing environmental requirements.

The reinforcement of transport security, which forms the basis of the work you have accomplished together, the quality of which has been recognised by the European Commission, is a specific requirement that is increasingly influencing our activity. It involves both dealing with malice and everyday crime and also establishing responses to terrorist threats for which the transport sector constitutes an attractive target, insofar as all disturbances of public transport systems damage social links and disrupt the functioning of society, quite apart from their significant consequences as regards politics and the media.

Railway security has various complex facets. It implicates national authorities responsible for the security of the people and goods under their jurisdiction, railway undertakings that have to protect themselves, and relevant international organisations that have to guarantee a certain

level of international consistency, insofar as international transport is an important strategic focus for development. The European Commission of course plays a key role in this respect.

It has another feature – that of involving technological solutions, mobilising human factors and coming within the scope of a global strategy and institutional environment.

The efficiency of our security policies depends upon their integration upstream of our organisations, at the conception stage of our transport activity.

But I should like to emphasise that we will not solve tomorrow's problems with the solutions from yesterday and today. Research, invention, and innovation: these are the prerequisites for progress, even if it is perhaps instinctive to give priority to action and the short term rather than to investment and a long-term approach when faced with difficult times or an economic crisis such as we are currently experiencing.

It is with all this in mind that I wish to pay tribute to the relevance of “our” Protectrail project, which you all no doubt know far better than I, and which incorporates most of the aspects I have mentioned.

It brings major railway undertakings, state-of-the-art industrial companies and highly-capable research organisations together.

It unites 12 different countries and mobilises 8 railway undertakings, in addition to UIC of course.

It is committed in the long term – 42 months – so as to guarantee the quality of the resulting analysis and proposals.

For me it represents a major undertaking for us all and its impact will undoubtedly be felt far beyond the borders of Europe.

I do not want to keep you much longer, as the construction, negotiation and decision-making phase has already been rather lengthy and your work begins today, but I would like to give you every encouragement for the coming months and to assure you of the availability of those UIC groups that are fully implicated in the project and those which may be able to make occasional contributions should the need arise.

I am especially pleased that the railway undertakings who will ensure that your proposals, our proposals, are adapted to their needs are involved in this project, and I would in particular like to pay tribute to Mr Lubomir Hradisky from the Slovakian railway ZSSK, who will play an essential role within the UIC Security Platform in the years to come.

All that remains is for me to invite you all to the project's closing ceremony in three and half years' time! But rest assured that from now until then my colleagues and I will be constantly ensuring the quality and efficiency of the implementation of your project.

Thank you very much.