

RESTRAIL midterm conference

12 June 2013, UIC HQ

Opening speech: Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, Director General of UIC

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am especially delighted to be among you today to open the midterm conference for the European project RESTRAIL, for many reasons.

First of all the RESTRAIL project addresses issues related to human behaviour; whether it is attempted suicide or trespassing on railway property for various reasons, human behaviour is at the heart of the debate. Why do some people ignore or use the potential danger in the railways and put their lives at risk, voluntarily or involuntarily? Is there any way of impacting the motives or behaviours involved, by better knowing them or identifying them in advance, and by acting at an early stage to reduce their occurrence?

Secondly, this subject concerns transport management by railway companies and brings to the fore the relationship between infrastructure managers and operators, in terms of image and responsibility in the event of an incident or serious accident. The concrete technical consequences or such acts have an impact on railway operations and thus on customer needs, considering the essential role of railways in terms of local, regional and national land use planning, of the environment, etc. How can the consequences of these acts be mitigated while meeting the needs of people, the legal system, the police, etc.?

Thirdly, UIC has been involved in the bidding process for European projects at the request of some of its members and with their support. It is clear that what had been worked on as part of this project will feed into the overall perspective.

Fourthly, this subject had brought together, within UIC, various partners from different countries and with different outlooks: academics, association members, railway operators and representatives of national authorities. In view of the complexity of the issue, bringing together all potential stakeholders, each with their own role to play, is undoubtedly a source of mutual enhancement and collective efficiency.

Fifthly, I would like to thank all the people involved and share my particular pleasure at the fact that UIC is the coordinator of this project, beyond being simply a stakeholder, as it is in many other projects. This is a gauge of the confidence and professionalism of the teams involved, and I would like to underscore that fact.

I could find many other reasons to enumerate, but I would rather simply venture to say that this project is on the right track: it is meeting its deadlines and taking into account its constraints, it has already highlighted some interesting ideas, and especially it has a firmly operational focus. We are not aiming to “reinvent the wheel”; we want to provide various decision-makers with comprehensive decision-making assistance in the form of an efficient toolbox comprising potential measures of all kinds, tried and tested on the field and analysed, in order to help them respond as best as possible to this human, technical and professional problem.

I do not wish to speak for too long; now is the time for various heads of work packages to take the floor and report on the progress made in the work that they are managing. I would just like to underline the quality of the work that has already been carried out in the finest spirit of cooperation, as can be seen in the second newsletter prepared for the event today.

Let me assure you that I will continue to follow very intently how this project unfolds. I believe research projects are absolutely fundamental, as for most of the fields we work in and security in particular, innovation is the key to progress.

I wish you an excellent conference