



UIP Press Announcement

Keepers' Summit 2019

Joint UIP/VPI “Keepers’ Summit“ in Berlin: The climate needs more rail freight transport – the wagon keepers are delivering

How to shift more freight traffic to rail – and that Europe-wide? At the Political Symposium of this year’s Keepers’ Summit experts from the sector and politics discussed how to increase rail freight performance and achieve a higher share of modal split of the environmentally friendly transport mode rail. The International Union of Wagon Keepers UIP and its German member association VPI invited to Berlin in order to look for solutions to the various challenges of a European transport transition promoting climate-friendly rail freight. “The European wagon keepers are investing heavily in innovative, digital wagon fleets which are integrated into modern logistic chains” explained Dr Heiko Fischer, UIP President and CEO of the VTG AG, about the contribution of wagon keepers to a powerful rail system in his keynote speech.

250 visitors used this opportunity to hear first-hand about the political strategies to strengthen rail freight transport. „A clear shift in the modal split to the benefit of rail freight transport is realistic. In addition to the already planned infrastructure expansion, a prerequisite for this is an increase of infrastructure capacity through measures such as ECTS signalling technology and 740-metre freight trains. Equally important is a continuous improvement of the sectors' competitiveness and innovative strength. The BMVI is actively pursuing this ambitious aim and places great importance on the implementation of the German Rail Freight Masterplan” highlighted Enak Ferlemann, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Minister of Transport and Digital Infrastructure. From the point of view of the European Commission, Elisabeth Werner, Director Land Transport at the European Commission DG Mobility and Transport, underlined that “The 4RP will significantly foster rail freight transport by creating a system in which European Trains will run freely on European Infrastructure, based on a single set of rules and guided by automatic radio communication between trains and infrastructure.”

The subsequent panel discussion took up the matter and made clear that European solutions are especially essential for the cross-border rail freight transport. This holds true for both, the topic of noise abatement as well as for uniform technical standards in the area of digitalisation. Sector and politicians agreed that climate goal ambitions in the transport sector can only be fulfilled with competitive, economically strong rail freight. Moreover, the representatives of the sector pointed out the efforts of companies to foster efficiency through innovation and automation as well as the commitment of the European Commission to support them, by among others already deploying 70% of available CEF-funding to the benefit of rail transport. Against this background, the experts further encouraged policy makers to support these efforts on the national level with corresponding funding for research and most importantly for the migration of innovative solutions. Concretely, wagon keepers expect from the German government to equip the overdue federal programme “Zukunft Schienengüterverkehr” (future of rail freight transport) with the necessary budgetary resources. With regards to the EU, the speakers voiced the need to improve the currently insufficient coordination of national master plans and to develop a consistent European strategy for rail freight transport.



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Prior to the Keepers' Summit, the annual UIP General Assembly took place. The members of UIP elected Johann Feindert, CEO of GATX Rail Europe, as one of two vice-presidents of UIP together with Per-Anders Benthin, CEO of TRANSWAGGON, and replacing Johannes Mansbart. In addition, UIP's members and its president, Dr Heiko Fischer, were happy to welcome Markus Vaerst, COO of the WASCOSA AG, as a new board member of UIP, thereby replacing Dan Distefano, president of NACCO.

After the Keepers' Summit, the participants gathered to summerly temperatures for the already firmly established "Get Together" in the Berliner Wasserwerk. On the following day, the 27th of June, UIP and VPI jointly hosted the 20th International Technical Information Day during which 11 speakers presented the developments on a diverse range of topics, ranging from the changes brought by the 4th Railway Package, over digitalisation and data exchange to the interaction of wheels and composite brake blocks.

International Union of Wagon Keepers (UIP)

Rue Montoyer 23
B-1000 Brussels
phone +32 2 672 88 47
mobile +32 471 342 474
e-mail infor@uiprail.org

Founded in 1950, the UIP – International Union of Wagon Keepers, with its seat in Brussels, is the umbrella association of national associations from fourteen European countries, thus representing more than 200 freight wagon keepers and ECMs with more than 210'000 freight wagons, performing more than 50 % of the rail freight tonne-Kilometres throughout Europe. The UIP represents the members' concerns at the international level. By means of research, lobbying and focused cooperation with all stakeholders and organisations interested in rail freight transportation, the UIP wants to secure on the long term the future of rail freight transport. www.uiprail.org