

Interview with Mr. David Zindo UIP President

Mr. David Zindo takes on the role of UIP President for the next 3 years. He was elected during the UIP General Assembly in Nice, France on 15 June 2023.

Where do you see UIP's untapped potential?

UIP has a very professional and knowledgeable team, but struggles to keep up with the steady flow of requests, meetings, regulation initiatives to review, position papers to issue, etc. This tends to dilute UIP's impact. I will recommend to the Executive Board to (1) set clear priorities for the UIP team, (2) allow for a reinforcement of the team and (3) to give me and the Secretary General a mandate to form alliances and/or working groups with other associations.

Another path I would like to explore is an enhanced cooperation with other important actors of the "railcars ecosystem" like the workshops and the railcars manufacturers.

I also want to see UIP fully unlock its power to educate and provide guidance in the complex regulatory framework surrounding the rail freight universe. UIP can help people better understand the rules of the game, which is important to optimize the input of the wagon keepers at the table of policy decision making.

“The future needs rail freight but rail freight needs to transform itself to have a future.”

Rapid technology shifts, 'greening rail freight' agenda, declining workforce, changing markets...how should rail freight deal with these new realities?

Embrace them. The future needs rail freight but rail freight needs to transform itself to have a future. If we keep doing business as usual we lose our chance to increase our attractiveness and our competitive position both inter- and intramodal. Without a radical change we simply won't be able to keep up with the demands of the customer.

We need to think 'digital', 'automated' and 'connected' and be flexible. We also need the EU to pave the way for a seamless, "borderless" and efficient railway network across Europe.

If you could implement one innovation in rail freight right now, which one would it be?

There are quite a few ideas in the pipeline for innovation in rail freight, some a bit more fanciful than others. But one idea that has seen a lot of efforts being put into its development and go-to-market readiness is the Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC).

Turning the DAC into a reality in Europe would bring great added value to the customers and the system as whole simply because of its wide-ranging benefits: faster and more reliable train departure procedures,



safer ground operations, more infrastructure capacity without new investments, more energy on the wagon to implement new features, more data capacity... and therefore ultimately more rail and hence less CO2!

We need substantial financial support for this but am convinced that the required €10bn of investment would have a very short payback for Europe. The amount of CO2 savings alone make it worth our society's while.



“I like to empower the people working with me.”

What is your favorite way to spend a day off?

There is no single favorite thing: I enjoy spending some time with my loved ones, watching a movie or a play at the theater, playing golf... but a full day off is very rare I admit.

What future do you envisage for the wagon keeper business?

Before the liberalization of rail freight, the wagon leasing business was a kind of “bank-on-rail” for tank wagons. The separation of the roles in the railway system at the beginning of 2000 and especially from 2007 on was a first game-changer with the introduction of the TSIs and the GCU. Wagon keepers became fully responsible for their “rail vehicles” (ECM, audits, maintenance guidelines, etc.).

Today, a wagon is not only a rail vehicle. It is a logistical unit embedded in the shippers' supply chain. The wagon keeper will play an increasingly active role in rail-based logistics chains, notably for containerized / palletized products traffic. This means rising to the challenge of expectations in terms of IT, customer service, supply chain visibility, etc.

What kind of president will you be?

My style is: keep it pragmatic, I like to empower the people working with me, and I always favor the collective over the individuals. UIP has an Executive Board with 8 members and 2 Vice-Presidents: I will work *with* them. UIP has a talented team, I count on them to do their best for the benefit of UIP members and the broader rail freight industry.

About David Zindo's professional background

Since 2015, David Zindo (49) has been the President of Stroom (formerly Ermewa Group), one of the leaders in freight railcar leasing in Europe and tank containers around the world. With a fleet of more than 125,000 elements for customers in the industrial, logistics and transportation sectors, the 1,300 employees of the Stroom Group contribute to the deployment of safe, reliable supply chains with a controlled environmental impact.

Prior to joining Stroom in 2015, Mr. Zindo was CFO at SNCF. He previously held various positions in the finance departments of the Geodis and Veolia Environmental Services groups and spent five years at EY Audit in Paris. He is a graduate of HEC Paris.

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