



PRESS RELEASE

30.05.2024

Keepers' Summit 2024 : Rising to the DAC challenge

UIP – the International Union of Wagon Keepers in cooperation with its Italian member association ASSOFERR welcomed 120 rail freight stakeholders from around Europe to its annual flagship conference - the 'Keepers' Summit' - on 30 May 2024 in Venice, Italy.

With all eyes and ears on the panelists' reflections on what it means and entails to automate and digitize rail freight, the star of the show was 'DAC' – the digital automatic coupler : more than a simple technological innovation but hailed as a beacon of progress because it could truly catapult rail freight into the 21st century.

For the opening, the Deputy mayor of Venice Andrea Tomaello, UIP President David Zindo and ASSOFERR President Armando de Girolamo took the floor and professed the need and will to bring about change to the world of rail freight. *"Why do we even talk about the need for transformation? Because rail freight is not competitive. From any angle: price, reliability, service. If rail freight wants to have a future, automation and digitalisation of rail freight transport operations are the way to go...and the Digital Automatic Coupling points the way."* David Zindo, UIP President

Panelists Mark Topal (OEBB; EDDP by Europe's Rail), Sabrina de Filippis (Mercitalia), Pier Luigi Navone (ANSFISA), Gianluca Tomei (Knorr-Bremse), Paolo Paglieri (Wabtec, FP5 – TRANS4M-R), Giorgio Travaini (Europe's Rail) discussed in the first panel how an innovation like the DAC can act as a catalyst for change and full integration of rail freight in multimodal logistics. The speakers highlighted the efforts that go into its development and shared their respective perspectives on how it can change rail freight operations. All confirmed the intention to use DAC as part of their plans on digitalisation.

"Our limits are in our mind." Gianluca Tomei, Technical Director Knorr-Bremse.

Rail freight is a part of citizen's everyday life. Italian Transport Vice Minister Edoardo Rixi underlined its importance to the economy of Europe. The panelists Gianpiero Strisciuglio (IM RFI), Antonella Scardino (NASPA), Donato Liguori (Ministry of Transport) and Zeno D'Agostino (ESPO) of the second panel emphasized the need to have an infrastructure that can deliver on people's need for supply in essential goods by rail. The NPRR (National Plan of Recovery and Resilience) dedicates around €25bn to improving rail transport with a focus on digitalization and connectivity of central

nodes such as ports and terminals. The objective is an interconnected infrastructure without which the DAC will not be able to unlock its full potential.

The political and financial support' panel, moderated by Renato Imbruglia (Conftrasporto) with speakers Alessandro Panaro (Intesa San Paolo Group), Enrico Puija (Ministry of Transport), Pasquale Russo (Conftrasporto) and Marco Campomenosi (Member of European Parliament) agreed on the importance of modernising rail freight so it can play its role for Europe's future mobility and competitiveness. Crucially, rail freight needs to connect to European ports, the place of transit of 75 % of goods entering or leaving Europe. Only then can we achieve true multimodal logistics and shift the majority of inland freight to rail and other sustainable modes of transport.

Finally, Mr David Zindo, UIP President and CEO of Stroom Group concluded:

"We have seen the new world where we need to go. A world with a level playing field for all modes, a modernised network with digitized, automated and connected rail operations.

This is absolutely crucial in achieving the Green Deal objectives to preserve the planet for future generations. And it requires an industry-wide consensus and coordination and the financial support of the EU and governments."

Background

UIP

Founded in 1950, the [UIP – International Union of Wagon Keepers](#), with its seat in Brussels, is the umbrella association of national associations from 14 European countries, thus representing more than 250 freight wagon keepers and Entities in Charge of Maintenance (ECMs). The fourteen member countries are: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

As the voice for more than 248'000 rail freight wagons, the UIP represents half of the whole European wagon fleet - one of the most important resources for rail freight transportation in Europe. Research, lobbying and constant exchange with all stakeholders and organisations interested in rail freight transportation play an important part for the association in gearing all efforts towards a step change in efficiency gains in rail freight services. By means of participation in many working groups and committees at European and international level, the UIP brings the perspective and interests of wagon keepers to the table and works in cooperation with all interested parties to secure the future of rail freight transport in the long term.

UIP is recognised by the European Commission as a Representative Body in the railway sector.