



## EUROPE

# Taking rail forward

‘The digital revolution is deeply transforming our society, but that doesn’t mean less railway. If anything we need to make more use of rail if we are to meet the sustainability targets adopted at COP 21’, argued Isabelle Durant on February 16.

The former Belgian Transport Minister and Vice President of the European Parliament was presented with the Political award at the ninth European Railway Award celebrations organised in Brussels by CER and UNIFE. Durant told more than 500 guests that it was essential to ‘put rail back at the centre of our transport systems, in the hearts of railway workers, in the minds of the travellers and in the priorities of the decision makers’.

The Technical Award went to former Alstom technical director and UNIFE General Manager Eric Fontanel, for his work on interoperability over many years. He felt that Europe had laid the foundations for a ‘reliable, environmentally-friendly, safe and interoperable railway’, but emphasised the need to find new talent to continue the

process. ‘Do not underestimate the importance of your technical experts who can understand the railway as a system’, he urged. ‘There is a real shortage today, which everyone must address if we are to attract the best engineers into rail.’ ■