

UNIFE General Assembly 2015 held in Bucharest (*RailwayPRO*)

Leaders of the European Rail industry gathered on June 17 – 19 in Bucharest, Romania on the occasion of the 2015 European Rail Industry Association (UNIFE) General Assembly.

UNIFE members selected Bucharest for their General Assembly this year to demonstrate their hope that Romania and other countries in the region will absorb available EU structural funds to invest in their rail systems and also to draw attention to the enormous potential of the Romanian rail market.

The General Assembly programme included presentations and commentary from industry CEOs and high-level speakers from the EU and Romanian government, including Members of European Parliament, Claudia Țapardel and Iuliu Winkler, senior officials from the Romanian Ministry of Transport, European Commission, ERTMS Coordinator Karel Vinck and Executive Director of the European Railway Agency, Josef Doppelbauer and a high-level official from the European Investment Bank. After a keynote speech delivered by Romanian Secretary of State for Transport, Iulian Matache, and a video address from EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, Corina Crețu, attendees listened to a presentation on the Romanian rail system from the Romanian Infrastructure Manager, CFR SA, and high-level roundtables on EU investment for rail, EU Rail Industry Competitiveness and Market Leadership, EU Transport Policy, and on developments in ERTMS.

As a large Member State in Southeastern Europe, Romania and its rail system play a crucial role in the completion of the Single European Railway Area, especially with the two TEN-T Corridors passing through the country (Orient/East Med and Rhine/Danube corridors). Moreover, the European Rail Industry is heavily invested in the area, with the rail manufacturing industry employing around 50.000 individuals and the broader sector (including operators and infrastructure managers) employing at least 110.000.

UNIFE Chairman and President of Bombardier Transportation, Lutz Bertling, commented on the dynamic landscape of the current global rail market, stating: “This is a watershed moment for the rail sector. Now more than ever, we are all players on a global marketplace facing increasing competition, which is of course a threat, but also an invaluable opportunity—let us not forget that certain megatrends such as increasing urbanisation, congestion and environmental concerns are driving the global demand for rail solutions.”

Paying an official visit to Romania, UNIFE Chairman Lutz Bertling, met on June 18 with Mr. Klaus Iohannis, the President of Romania. The Romanian President addressed a formal invitation to the UNIFE President and the discussion focussed on a presentation of the railway industry.

Philippe Citroën, UNIFE Director General remarked, “UNIFE was pleased to host its members in Bucharest to highlight the opportunities and challenges for the rail system in the southeastern part of the EU and at the broader European level. We were especially privileged to have so many high level stakeholders from the European institutions and Romanian authorities attend and address our membership on the multitude of topics where our industry is involved.”

The UNIFE members have selected Amsterdam as the location for the 2016 General Assembly which will take place on 23 June, 2016.

<http://www.railwaypro.com/wp/unife-general-assembly-2015-held-in-bucharest/>