

Belgian deputy prime minister backs rail

Georges Gilkinet says that Belgium will put rail in the spotlight.



Belgian deputy prime minister and minister of mobility, Mr Georges Gilkinet, has pledged to make rail a “top priority.” His pro-rail comments came in a recorded video address to a European Rail Industry Supply Association (UNIFE) conference in Brussels on March 27.

Gilkinet told attendees: “today, the train will play a pivotal role in the green transition. We need the European Union (EU) to connect the dots between our national networks. The benefits will be enormous for our economies.”

Belgium assumed the presidency of the European Council (EC) in January, a post which it holds for six months. Gilkinet promised that “the Belgian presidency will put the train in the spotlight.”

Belgium is hosting three days of rail-related activities this week as part of the Connecting Europe Days event.

UNIFE’s Next Gen Rail conference on March 27 brought together representatives of the European Commission (EC) and EU member states, as well as rail industry executives, policymakers and human resources experts, to tackle the issue of the skills shortage facing the rail sector.

A wide range of speakers noted that rail has the ability to solve many of the challenges Europe faces, including environmental, industrial, transport and gender, but only if the pipeline of talent into the industry is better established.

UNIFE’s head of public affairs, Mr Jonathan Nguyen, says: “it was a fruitful day. The task ahead of us is big.”

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