

Agata Pomykała

10th UIC World Congress on High Speed Rail

10th edition of the UIC World Congress on High Speed Rail, organised by UIC and TCDD, Turkish State Railways, took place on 8–11 May 2018 in Ankara. 1,000 participants from the rail and transport world, representing 30 countries, including high level representatives and 115 speakers discussed and exchanged the opinion on 'Sharing knowledge for Sustainable and Competitive Operations'. The exhibition accompanying the congress was an opportunity to get acquainted with the products, solutions and innovations offered by 51 producers from both Asia and Europe.

Turkey, as a country located in a region where the influence of Europe, Asia and the Middle East intersects, characterized by a very dynamic development of rail transport, including the expansion of the high-speed rail system, was already in 2015 chosen as the host of the 10th edition of the Congress.

The Scientific Committee of the Congress, which, as for many years, was led by Michel Leboeuf, Honorary Chairman of the Intercity & High Speed Committee, over two years worked on the substantive preparation of the event. The Scientific Committee consisted of representatives of UIC and members of the High Speed Rail Committee operating within the UIC, representing the associated railways. There were 10 meetings of the Committee and 6 UIC - TCDD bilateral meetings. 290 authors reported nearly 340 presentations, of which only 150 were finally chosen to be present during the Congress.

The opening ceremony of the Congress, whose main guests were Ahmet Arslan, Minister of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications, Isa Apaydin, President of the Board, General Director TCDD and Vice President UIC and Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, General Director of UIC, gathered over 300 representatives of the institutions and railway organizations from around the world.

During the opening session, UIC Chairman, Mr Renato Mazzoncini, particularly highlighted the sustainable dimension of high speed: „High speed rail does have a part to play in responding to the challenge of reducing the sustainable impact of transport. In this sense the main High Speed Rail strategy is „shift to rail” where journey are made by lower CO₂ per passenger emitting modes. High Speed Rail advantages in terms of energy consumption compared with other competitors is one of the main drivers to reduce carbon footprint in transport sector. A study conducted by UIC in France and China already concluded that the carbon footprint of High Speed Rail can be up to 14 times less carbon intensive than car travel and up to 15 times less than aviation even when measured over the full-life cycle of planning, construction and operation. This UIC Congress, with its worldwide dimension, represents today an emblematic stage of the globalising world that the railway system is facing. The global high speed rail network is one of the great feats of modern engineering proving to be the best form of transportation ever invented. It is rapidly expanding across continents worldwide. Indeed High Speed Rail is currently in operation in more than 14 countries with a length of 42,000 km. The High Speed rail network is constantly growing and this proves why each year more than 2.2 million people decide to take High Speed Trains”. Over the past 10 years, High Speed has represented a complete transformation, a sort of revolution in motion. It not only boosted tourism, economic development and business but it also changed people's lifestyles.

UIC Director General, Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, said: „More than 3000 high speed trainsets are operating daily worldwide transporting 2.2 billion customers every year. High speed, wherever it has been developed, is a booster of innovation for the railway sector and its industry. Why not imagine it would be the new opportunity to be the vector of a new freight high speed mobility in line with e-commerce, development. High speed, wherever it has been developed, is an enabler of employment and growth of GDP. High speed, wherever it has been developed or will be developed, must be accompanied in parallel by the renovation or upgrade of conventional interconnected lines, to extend the benefit of speed to larger and further territories and cities”. He also referred to the role of UIC as the worldwide association of railways, with research institutes and its network of universities, always wish to bring innovative ideas, successful experience, breakthrough developments to its members, to the railway sector.

Mr Marc Guigon, Director of the UIC Passenger Department, presented the status of High Speed Rail around the world, describing the evolution from the last Congress of Tokyo to the current Congress. He indicated the increase of High-Speed network was 20% in three years to reach 42,000 km during the Congress, and 46,000 km for the end of this year. The increase of passenger km was more than 40% over the last three years; that means the existing network increases its efficiency by 20%. Then he showed maps of High-Speed lines under construction and planned in all continents. He finished with the evolution of rolling stock and railway stations.



UIC World Congress center Congresium Ankara



From the left: Andrew McNaughton, Strategic Adviser HS2 and Michael B. Christides, General Secretary of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) – moderators of the discussion „How high-speed railways shapes local and regional development”

Philippe Citroen, Managing Director of UNIFE, presented the position of producers focusing on the issue, the impact of signaling on increasing the capacity of the line and underlined the important role of railway sector suppliers contributing to the development of high-speed rail with major projects implemented worldwide.

The rich program of the Congress in 25 parallel sessions allowed to get acquainted with the 150 presentations presented by 115 speakers from around the world. They have been grouped into 25 thematic blocks, including: infrastructure planning, infrastructure earthworks, infrastructure bridges & viaducts, rail system signalling, station design & architecture & performance, train design and purchasing strategy, commercial competition & traffic forecasts, electric power supply, operation maintenance, socio-economy service quality, RAMS and cybersecurity, energy and environment, Asset Management & LCC, maintenance renewal, standards & regulations, station construction & management & connections, territory management.

In the closing session Jean-Pierre Loubinoux delivered a few concluding words: „Over three days in Ankara, messages on the position of high speed as a backbone of a new chain of sustainable, integrated, connected, international mobility were given. Chain in which transportation is becoming a combination of spare and time slots”.



Participants of the discussion panel „Competition and cooperation”



Ahmet Aslanow, Minister of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communication, receives the act commemorating the 10th World Congress of High Speed Rail

In the end of Congress it was organised a technical visit of Ankara Railway Station and visit of the city of Konya, organised by taking the high-speed train from Ankara and a ride in the driving cab at 250 km/h.

Polish accent were presentations of The Railway Research Institute:

- ♦ Gradual improvement instead of breakthrough – development of high quality passenger services in Central-Eastern Europe (Andrzej, Massel Deputy Director, Railway Research Institute (IK), Poland);
 - ♦ The ED250 (Pendolino) experiences in Poland - first years of exploitation (Jan Raczyński, Expert, Railway Research Institute, Poland);
 - ♦ The New Station Lodz Fabryczna as Model of Multimodal Hub Integrating Conventional and High Speed Railway with Local City Transport (Agata Pomykala, Jan Raczyński, Ewa Raczyńska-Bulawa Expert, Railway Research Institute, Poland, Expert, Lodz Agglomeration Railway, Poland);
 - ♦ Development of airports connections by high speed and conventional railway in Poland (Andrzej Zurkowski, Jan Raczyński, Railway Research Institute, Poland);
- and moderation the session Commercial & Economy & Society Socio-Economy Service Quality by Professor Andrzej Szarata from Cracov Technical University.

The 11th Congress will be held in China at the end of June 2020 and Morocco will host the 12th edition in 2021.



Agata Pomykala

Agata Pomykala works in Railway Institute in Warsaw. She is a graduate of the Technical University in Lublin (Management and Marketing) and postgraduate of French-Polish School Organisation and Management/EDHEC Business School (Master en Management Europeen).

In 2009-2011 as a project director in the High Speed Centre, PKP PLK S.A., she was in charge of strategy planning and communication. In 2011-2012 she was the project manager in PKP INTERCITY and was responsible for development and marketing of passenger service between Poland and Czech Republic, Germany and Austria. In years 2013-2014 she was the General Secretary of the Polish Association of Transport Engineers & Technicians.