

Railway security: our common goal

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Mr Coordinator,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak at this Forum held by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and to present the stance and work of the International Union of Railways concerning railway security.

Having followed the preparatory stages, I have observed that we increasingly share the same concerns. Political stability and economic development go hand in hand with increased trade, and therefore with efficient means of transport, one of which is rail transport: this has been clear throughout your work. For our part representing railway companies, we strive to increase their business and to strengthen the bonds and cooperative links which are necessary for international transport.

Here then, is a common goal, a common ambition shared by both our organisations.

Though the rail sector has always addressed technical safety by creating structures, developing procedures and technologies, and by committing its staff to making rail an especially safe mode of transport, over time – and particularly in the last 10 to 15 years – it has had to demonstrate a commitment to, and invest in, managing security issues such as criminal behaviour and malicious acts. Above and beyond that, it has had to find solutions to prevent and combat the threat of terrorism, for which mass public transport represents an attractive target. There is no need to remind you of the attacks that hit a number of countries represented here today.

The challenge can be seen in terms of rail's credibility or attractiveness as a mode of transport. Its technical or technological performance will have only a limited impact on customers if it is not accompanied by faith in our companies' ability to manage the risk of aggressive behaviour, theft, etc.

In the light of this fresh challenge, UIC, whose remit is to respond to the needs of its members, has stepped up its activities in this area to help them address issues concerning both their functional capacities as companies and the administrative competence of the public authorities, in a manner appropriate to the economic, political and social contexts in which they operate. There can be no single model for these solutions, since the issues differ from one country to another, but research and the sharing of experience and best practices can be of considerable benefit to companies attempting to address problems which fall outside their primary remit.

Our permanent working groups, specialist seminars and international discussion forums have allowed us to collectively analyse problems, develop expertise supporting the measures to be taken and establish consistent solutions, especially concerning the development of international traffic.

The challenge is to incorporate overarching solutions into company strategies in order to make security one of the factors in a quality service, rather than merely adopting a series of technical measures or recruiting large numbers of staff merely as a response to events, an increasingly costly and potentially ineffective enterprise. These solutions must of course be cross-cutting, that is, they must take into account the design and management of infrastructure and traffic operations as well as regional, national and international passenger services.

These solutions need to come from official institutions, since the problems caused by malicious and criminal behaviour and especially preventing and combating terrorism are matters for the national or international authorities. This does not mean asking railways to do the job of the police for them, but it does mean promoting joined-up thinking and synergies between all the players affected by the issue. Yet it is always difficult to coordinate an activity whose essence is geographical mobility and speed with organisations and institutions which are limited to particular, localised geographical regions.

This is true in every country, and may be further complicated by a country's individual administration. It is still more so in the case of international transport. The latter is an area where we particularly need the support of international organisations such as the OSCE to help us with border crossings, above and beyond the technical developments we are striving to implement.

Noteworthy progress has been made in the European Union, and work to implement a common security strategy is well underway. UIC has successfully provided collective responses to various requests from the European Commission, whether concerning the protection of critical infrastructure, increasing passenger transport security or the security of freight and of the whole logistics chain, an area on which important work is being carried out with regard to competition issues and complementary interaction between modes of transport.

Beyond the political borders of Europe, for which processes exist and cooperative ventures are being developed or strengthened, significant problems remain and progress must be made if the competent authorities on both sides of these borders are to successfully work together in facilitating border crossings. Time savings can be achieved whilst allowing each country to make the checks its legislation requires. To this end, it would be very useful and effective for international political organisations to call on their members, encouraging them to give this issue its due attention and find appropriate bilateral or multilateral solutions. If significant time savings are not made whilst taking account of individual constraints, then improvements in rail transport, bolstering transport capacity within the countries concerned, may well fall out of step with economic demands. UIC's work has long addressed border crossings from a technical and technological point of view, in order to make maximum time savings in our operating conditions. We need to pursue this further regarding administration and the constraints which ensue from working with the police, customs authorities, and health or other checks. If the railways and the authorities do not work together to put in place a consistent system, both parties' efforts to boost passenger and goods transport may be in vain.

It is for all these reasons that it is important for us to be able to talk and work together, transport professionals and political authorities, to collectively create an administrative framework for the economic development which is necessary to boost stability and growth in all our countries and especially those in the landlocked countries of central Europe. We as railways have no authority to legislate, but we can help ensure that the legislative or regulatory provisions you put forward for your members to implement take into account the

limits of transport modes and can be applied without major disruption to services in the sectors affected.

Mr Coordinator, ladies and gentlemen, this was my contribution on behalf of UIC concerning railway security and border crossings. I have not explored the individual aspects of terrorism which merit discussion in their own right. Though the most notable terrorist acts until now have essentially targeted passenger transport, especially mass urban transport, to achieve maximum political and media impact, freight transport and particularly the carriage of dangerous goods also require our attention. RID Chapter 1-10 does address some aspects of this, but it is not yet applied everywhere, and we must look beyond this to the risks associated with transporting large volumes of dangerous goods on railway infrastructure compared to the routes taken by road traffic, and individual countries or international institutions must define their priorities with a view to creating overall balance. Once more, it is vital for the administrative and political spheres to liaise and coordinate responses with the professional sphere in order to successfully combat a very real long-term threat.

We have come a long way together, and we know where we are going. We must now continue our work to create a more appropriate geographical balance, in which respect the OSCE has a highly important role. I would like to assure you on behalf of UIC that we are ready and willing to cooperate.

Thank you for your attention.