

# 11th International Railway Summit promotes innovation for a sustainable future

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The creation of a sustainable rail sector that can help meet climate targets, remain financially viable and support social needs drove debate at the 11th International Railway Summit, which concluded in Berlin.

The summit was organised in association with the [International Union of Railways \(UIC\)](#) and supported by a Headline Sponsor, [Solidarity Transport Hub \(CPK\)](#).

After over two years of limited travel and cancelled events, 235 delegates registered to attend the event at the five-star Radisson Collection Hotel. Attendees could once again interact with peers, engage with new ideas and share the journey to a better future. The summit was also livestreamed online.

## **A two-day conference delivered by mobility leaders**

The theme of the summit was 'Innovating rail for people, planet and prosperity', and looked at the many aspects of social, environmental and economic sustainability. UIC's Director Rail System, Christian Chavanel, and Head of Sustainable Development, Lucie Anderton, chaired the two-day conference.

Dr Volker Wissing, Germany's Federal Minister for Digital and Transport, delivered a special keynote speech on 31 May. Minister Wissing began by saying that the summit was now more important than ever for promoting a sustainable society, because rail was both the clear leader in climate-neutral mobility and a reliable, dependable means of transport for people and goods, both during the pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

The CEO of Ukrainian Railways' Passenger Company, Oleksandr Pertsovskyi, had earlier shared their experience in the session 'How are the railways supporting people during the current humanitarian crisis?'

Other high-profile speakers taking part in the conference included the European Commission's Director of Land Transport, Kristian Schmidt, Josef Doppelbauer, Executive Director of the EU Agency for Railways, Christian Kern, Former Federal Chancellor of Austria, and Silvia Roldán, CEO of Madrid Metro.

### **Moving passengers and cargo to rail**

In the opening plenary 'How can mobility lead a greener and energy secure future?', UIC's Director General François Davenne said that road was the backbone of mobility now and that we needed to make modal shift a policy priority.

Minister Wissing would later echo this message, saying that the German coalition government had agreed to double the number of passengers on trains by 2030 and carry a quarter of all goods by rail by 2030.

Digitalisation was seen by speakers as key to this modal shift – amongst the topics debated were train and trade technology, high-speed rail networks, asset management, digital ecosystems, and how system data can attract potential investors.

### **A bespoke one-to-one meeting programme**

The heart of the summit is the one-to-one meeting programme that matches 'buyers' (operators, infrastructure managers, governments and regulators) with technical 'experts' relevant to their project requirements. 296 one-to-one meetings were scheduled at IRS11. Each marked the potential starting point of a new partnership.

### **Learning about the railways in Germany**

As is tradition, the summit began with technical visits to local rail facilities. Delegates were given a guided tour of Berlin's Hauptbahnhof station and of FlixTrain's Berlin Headquarters and control centre.

Later on the first day, Bettina Jarasch, the Vice Mayor of Berlin, and the Berlin state government's Senator for Environment, Mobility, Consumer and Climate Protection, delivered the welcome speech at a gala dinner.

The 12th International Railway Summit will take place in Rome from 21 to 23 February 2023.