



Press Release n°284

**The closing of UIC HIGH SPEED 2008 in Amsterdam after three days of conference and exhibition: 1.300 participants from 44 countries**

*The official announcement of the next UIC HIGH SPEED in Beijing, China in 2010*

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(Amsterdam, 19 March 2008). Today, the 6<sup>th</sup> World Congress and Trade Exhibition on high speed rail, UIC HIGH SPEED 2008, came to an end. The UIC HIGH SPEED 2008 attracted 1.300 participants from 44 countries, including 220 speakers and 150 journalists. 90 exhibitors from all major industries of the high speed rail sector were present at the trade exhibition. 30 international students actively participated at the conference and gave their feedback in the closing session.

At the closing session, *Vipin Sharma, UIC Deputy Chief Executive* gave a summary of the 3 day conference, including the main conclusions and messages concerning the further development of high speed rail.

The main conclusions:

- High speed rail is THE solution for sustainable mobility needs (i.e. climate change, environment, energy, security, safety)
- High speed contributes to social and economic developments (i.e. megacities)
- High speed networks are planned in all parts of the world (e.g. China, Russia, USA, Brazil, Argentina, Saudi Arabia, Morocco)

The messages addressed to the *politicians*:

- The need for a level playing field and fair competition (i.e. external, VAT)
- The need for new high performance infrastructures (such as ERTMS for the European high speed network)
- Intensify investments on public infrastructure (long term investments)
- Promote public-private partnerships (PPPs)
- Upgrade existing lines to complement the high speed network

The messages delivered to the *railway stakeholders*:

- Economic models adapted to all geographical conditions
- Be ready for increased competition
- New business and marketing strategies (business, tourism, low cost)
- Sustainability as underlying philosophy for all aspects of business
- Promotion of international partnerships (e.g. RailTeam) and alliances
- Promotion of innovation in services (e.g. new information technologies)

- Stations as intermodal hubs and city centres
- New focus on freight traffic on high speed network (e.g. express mail)
- Implementation of interoperability
- Simplification for cross acceptance of rolling stock

The messages addressed to the *supply industry / high speed system integrators*:

- Innovation: further work on performance and quality
- Make of high speed rail THE sustainable transport mode (i.e. zero pollution)
- Reduce maintenance costs, and develop intelligent diagnostics
- Optimise energy efficiency (i.e. new energies, energy recuperation, LCC)
- Promote world standards, reduce costs through standard components or sub-systems
- Interoperability of trains
- Improve on-board comfort
- Security issues: self protected trains
- New technologies

The hosts Aad Veenman, the President of the Dutch Railways (NS) concluded: *“There is absolutely progress in the high speed sector and it is important to keep and expand the competitive advantages over air and car. The title of this conference “High speed rail: sustainable track for the future” is not ending with a question mark, but should be considered as a beautiful promise to everybody.”* and Bert Klerk, Chairman of the Management Board of ProRail added *“Rail experts in the Netherlands often say: “We have as many shareholders as the number of Dutch inhabitants. And that’s true. Railway is in the focus of our society. The railway business is more than technology. It’s about people, an emotional business. I am convinced this congress has proven there is a bright future for the revitalisation of the railways”.*

*The Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Railways of China, Mr. Lu Chunfang, officially announced that the next UIC HIGHSPEED will be hosted by China in 2010 with the words: “Welcome in Beijing in 2010”.*

*Michel Leboeuf, Chairman of the UIC HIGHSPEED 2008 Scientific Committee and SNCF Director of Development Passenger France/Europe and Iñaki Barron de Angoití, Director of UIC high speed department, awarded the three winners of the UIC HIGHSPEED 2008 student literary contest. The first prize, a one month InterRail pass, went to Annika Salo Kangas, student of the University of Technology in Finland. The second prize, a two week EuRail pass, went jointly to Mhimra Youssef and Florent Montoya from the Ecole Hassania des Travaux publics in Morocco. All prizes were donated by the EuRail Group.*

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