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Eurasian railway corridors: what is the future for freight?

With the major "Belt and Road Initiative" project launched by the People's Republic of China, attention is now focussed on the "new silk routes" and the Eurasian routes in general that link China and the Far East to the European freight corridors, particularly the rail corridors. This has been spotlighted at a time when the development of Eurasian rail freight has already been noticed.

In this context, the UIC Freight Forum commissioned a study from Roland Berger to answer the following pertinent question: "Eurasian freight corridors: what are the opportunities for freight stakeholders?"

Mr Schwilling presented the study to the public in Paris on Friday, 29 September at the headquarters of UIC and live on YouTube and UIC's website.

The Secretary General of OTIF, Mr Davenne, assisted and participated in this presentation and recalled the roles of the Organisation and of COTIF, which are pivotal and facilitate international rail traffic from the legal perspective. The interviews carried out in the framework of this comprehensive study also confirm that the CIM/SMGS consignment note developed on the basis of COTIF's CIM Uniform Rules has contributed to an increase in the volumes carried on Eurasian routes by making it easier to cross borders.

Beyond this well attested and documented statement, the study analyses the current and future requirements and proposes and summarises various solutions for the attention of freight stakeholders for the effective development of rail transport on the Eurasian routes.

The Secretary General of OTIF would like to thank UIC warmly for the invitation and for this study, which finally provides some specific elements for the development of traffic between all the countries concerned.