



Press Release

Brussels, 8 February 2012

under embargo until 20.00h

Karel Vinck and Francois Lacôte receive European Railway Award 2012

CER and UNIFE presented the European Railway Award 2012 today to European Coordinator for ERTMS Karel Vinck in the political category and to Alstom's Senior Vice President and Technical Advisor Francois Lacôte in the technical category. Since 2007, the European rail sector has honoured outstanding political and technical achievements in the rail sector. The European Railway Award 2012 attracted more than 500 guests from all over Europe, including high-level politicians and transport stakeholders.

Keynote speaker of the gala evening once more was Commission Vice-President **Siim Kallas**, who outlined key points of the upcoming fourth railway package. In his speech he addressed key future challenges for the rail sector, and emphasised the important role rail transport shall play in building the Single European Transport Area: *"The idea is to unleash rail's true potential, to raise the quality of service so that it becomes a real and attractive alternative."*

European ERTMS Coordinator **Karel Vinck** can look back at a long-standing career in civil engineering combined with an academic career that took him from Belgium to the USA and Italy. In 2005 he became European ERTMS Coordinator under the administration of Commissioner Jacques Barrot, and since then worked tirelessly on making the European rail network interoperable by taking the lead on ERTMS deployment on the European TEN-T Corridors.

In his laudatory address to Karel Vinck, **Brian Simpson**, Chairman of the European Parliament's Transport and Tourism Committee, said: *"I think the award to Karel Vinck comes in the tradition of giving the political prize to people who fight for a vision and who work hard to turn such visions into reality. Karel Vinck has toiled tirelessly to deliver ERTMS to our rail sector. His task has required diplomacy, determination and last but not least patience. He has been crucial in laying the foundations for ERTMS which are essential in delivering an interoperable, safe and efficient European-wide signalling system, a vital element in developing an integrated European Railway."*

When accepting the award, **Karel Vinck** made strong statement for seamless rail transport in Europe. *"We need more than ever all stakeholders to share the same European vision and commitment to develop European rail in the frame of an optimal multi-modal transport system. We can do more, we can do better. Time for action is now."*

CER Chairman and CEO of FS **Mauro Moretti** explained *"that many countries have not yet invested on ERTMS. For this reason the action of Karel Vinck, who succeeded in pushing for a standard ERTMS, proposed EU funding for infrastructure and rolling stock and convinced many countries to install it, is still needed."*

UNIFE Chairman **Henri Poupart-Lafarge** added on the subject of European-wide authorisation with an extended role of the European Railway Agency (ERA): *"The key to a truly fair competition between the different modes of*



transport is the removal of administrative and technical barriers, and developing member state-neutral authorisation procedures at European level. We are grateful to know the European Commission behind us on this issue."

It was then the Executive Director of the same ERA, Mr **Marcel Verslype**, who introduced the laureate of the Technical Award 2012 **Francois Lacôte**. Among the key dates of the latter's career with SNCF and ALSTOM he picked out one in particular: *"1990, Mr Lacôte became Director of Rolling Stock at SNCF and had the courage to campaign for the new and 'revolutionary' concept of the Duplex (double-deck) TGV that no one wanted."*

Francois Lacôte assisted in developing the first TGVs and later became the chief engineer for the world-record holding Duplex TGV, and today oversees the latest generation high-speed train at ALSTOM, the AGV. In his acceptance speech, he shared his vision for renewed collaboration across the sector to build up the railways of the future as a complete system: *"Europe must remain the world leader in rail innovation. In order to achieve this, we need a collaborative effort between rail industry, operators, and European regulators. Rail today is recognised as THE transportation system of the 21st century in Europe – this means we need to give it the appropriate resources, means, and lean regulations in order to unfold its vast potential."*

Pictures of the European Railway Award 2012 and the CER and UNIFE Annual Reception will be available on 9 February at www.annualreception.eu

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Background:

The 'European Railway Award'

The European Railway Award honours outstanding political and technical achievements in the development of attractive, profitable, and environmentally sustainable rail transport. Each award is rewarded with €10,000 prize money, which is donated to charities of the laureates' choice, in this case *Villages d'enfants*, the '*Cancer Fund for Children*' of the medical research team of the *University of Leuven*, and *UNICEF*. Past winners include Ken Livingstone (2011), Stefan Haas (2011), Felipe Gonzalez Marquez (2010), Roland Heinisch (2010), Moritz Leuenberger (2009), Bengt Sterner (2009), Jean Dupuy (2007), and Karel van Miert (2007).

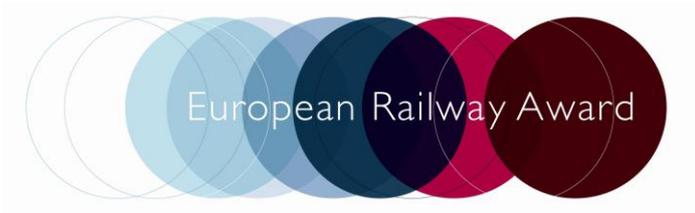
The European Railway Award 2012 jury comprised CEOs of railway and rail industry companies as well as political decision makers, including Brian Simpson, Chairman of the Transport Committee in the European Parliament, Matthias Ruete, Director-General of the European Commission's DG Transport and Energy, Klaus Gretschmann, Director-General of the European Council's DG for Transport, and Carole Coune, Secretary-General of the International Transport Forum.

Karel Vinck – Laureate "Political Award"

Karel Vinck, former CEO of the Belgian National Railway Company, SNCB, former chairman of CER and now President of the Board of BAM, the company which manages investment in mobility of the city of Antwerp, Belgium, was asked by former Transport Commissioner Jacques Barrot to take the lead on ERTMS deployment as the European ERTMS Corridor Coordinator. In this role, he supervises the implementation of ERTMS on the six so-called ERTMS corridors which are a backbone of mostly freight corridors. When taking on this responsibility, Karel Vinck declared that, in order for ERTMS to bring benefits, ERTMS implementation needed to go hand-in-hand with investments aimed at relieving bottlenecks and harmonizing the operational rules. He has put relentless effort to foster the interoperability of rail in Europe. His strategy and consensus building has been instrumental for the trans-European coordination of ERTMS.

Francois Lacôte – Laureate "Technical Award"

Francois Lacôte became famous as 'Mr Very-High Speed' as he was the designer of the first TGV train set in 1971 and oversaw the test campaign that has established the world record in May 1990 on rails (515.3 km/h). He started his career in 1971 at SNCF and joined, in November 2000, the Executive Committee of Alstom Transport as Technical Director. He is now the chief engineer of the Alstom VHS flagship: the AGV, the self-propelled high-speed successor to the TGV. Furthermore, he was instrumental in developing the so-called "Duplex" TGV. It is unique among TGV trains in that it features bi-level carriages. The Duplex inaugurated the third generation of TGV trainsets, and was specially designed to increase capacity on high-speed lines with saturated traffic. With two seating levels and a seating capacity of 545 passengers, the Duplex maximizes the number of passengers carried in one trainset. While the TGV Duplex started as a small component of the TGV fleet, it has become one of the system's main workhorses.



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The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together more than 70 European railway undertakings and infrastructure companies. CER represents the interests of its members towards the European institutions as well as other policy makers and transport actors. CER's main focus is promoting the strengthening of rail as essential to the creation of a sustainable transport system which is efficient, effective and environmentally sound. For more information, see www.cer.be

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UNIFE represents the interests of the European Rail Industry towards the European institutions, international railway associations and other business relations. The European Rail Industry provides competitive railway systems for increased rail traffic and follows the objective of making rail transport the sustainable solution for the challenges of 21st century mobility. The European Rail Industry consists of trend setting industries in the field of rolling stock, infrastructure, information technology and signalling, provision of part and services. For more information, please visit www.unife.org