

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

Esteemed colleagues from the railway community,

I am honoured to welcome you and to open the Energy Efficiency Days. I warmly appreciate the opportunity to say a couple of words about the importance of this conference, which I hold in high regard.

The problem of energy efficiency became clear during the oil crisis of the seventies. So it is not something new. However, the challenge to increase energy efficiency doesn't limit itself to universities or research facilities any more. It has become manifest in public opinion. During the last couple of years, we have experienced a true energy revolution. Washing machines now have efficiency labels. Better housing isolation has become the subject of debates in parliament. People can obtain subsidies for sustainable development. And newspapers talk about green cars and the carbon footprint.

As the Belgian railway infrastructure manager, Infrabel has prioritized safety, punctuality and financial stability. But ever since we became an independent public company in 2005, I have stressed the importance of another priority, to be embedded in our organisation: corporate social responsibility. Encouraging dialogue and looking afresh this world's constantly evolving needs and

challenges are indispensable for a modern organisation serving society.

As a consequence Infrabel has joined the “energy revolution” from the start. And our energy experts have been working hard since, to develop a sustainable energy policy. We participated in several international initiatives concerning this issue and have actively worked together with our partners in UIC, ERA and ERESS. We have also found a natural ally in the SNCB. Mutual interests have led to the realization of several projects we can be very proud of today.

Infrabel’s energy experts are the best ambassadors of these projects and they will surely elaborate on this during the following days. But I do wish to stress three strategic energy targets Infrabel holds dear:

- First of all, a policy of sustainability cannot be successful without the commitment of the people who have to execute it. As I already mentioned Infrabel invests in **developing an organizational culture** wherein every member is fully aware of the challenges we face. Furthermore we want to increase awareness among younger generations. Only recently we successfully concluded the Belgian Railways Competition for Technicians. We awarded secondary technical schools for their ideas concerning environmentally friendly solutions for mobile cranes on construction sites. This way, we prepare the

engineers and technical staff of tomorrow to address the challenges we face today.

- Secondly, a story of efficiency implies **investing in green and renewable energy**. In 2011, Infrabel was the first in Europe to offer its operators an integrated green solution for rail infrastructure when we inaugurated a solar tunnel containing sixteen thousand photovoltaic panels to the north of Antwerp. Every year, we are able to provide four thousand trains with renewable energy! It makes me proud that undoubtedly some of you present here today made use of this sustainable solution.
- Finally, we must work to **reduce our energy consumption** on one hand and to **make better use of the energy we need** on the other. Infrabel has several major projects that deal with this issue. The concentration of our signal boxes and the strategic centralization of our logistical centres are conceived in a way to increase energy efficiency. Moreover, they are at the heart of a long term vision on sustainability.

I am convinced, seeing so many experts in the field here, that the following days will not only be informative but productive as well. We are gathered in an excellent setting: Antwerp, with its grand Central station to welcome visitors to its magnificent cultural institutions and its attention to the qualities of life. A city that

stands as a beacon for intermodality in Europe by linking its Port to an expanding rail network of freight corridors.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am very honoured to spend this evening in your company and I wish you lots of interesting thoughts, innovating ideas and constructive debates. I want to take the opportunity to thank everyone involved in the organisation of this event: my own Infrabel experts, and the colleagues from SNCB and the International Union of Railways. It is with pleasure that I now pass the word to Jo Cornu, the CEO of the SNCB.