

UIC Panel of Structural Experts Meeting and Exchange Seminar in Japan

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The Railway Technical Research Institute (RTRI), an affiliate member of the UIC, concluded the Research Collaboration Agreement with the UIC in 1994. The Institute has sent staff to the Global Dimension of UIC since 1997, and has participated in its numerous technical committees and joint research projects. The author has also been a member of the Panel of Structural Experts (PoSE), which is one of the committees under the Infrastructure Forum.

With such a close relationship in the background, fifteen members of PoSE visited Japan for the first time from September 16 to 20, 2008 for their biannual committee meeting and the Railway Bridge & Tunnel Exchange Seminar.

The seminar was held for the first time as a UIC activity in Asia to promote technical exchanges between European and Asian railway civil engineers. The RTRI hosted the seminar with the cooperation of Korea Railroad (Korail), Japan Railway Companies and the Japan Railway Construction, Transport and Technology Agency (JR TT). It was a full-day seminar held in one of RTRI's conference facilities, and fourteen presentations were given by the participants. European engineers made seven presentations, including an outline of the present status of Eurocodes and the Sustainable Bridges Project - part of the Sixth EU Framework Programme. Japanese engineers made six presentations; three JR companies from the main island of Japan (EJR, CJR and WJR) introduced their recent research and development activities, and JR TT introduced the features of the Shinkansen structures. The RTRI

gave an outline of *the Design Standard for Railway Structures and Commentary* and covered recent research topics on structural technology, while Korail made a presentation on bridge replacement. Fruitful expert discussions were also conducted at the seminar. The proceedings of the event was published, and can be accessed on the UIC website. At the end of the session, a UIC representative announced that such exchange seminars would be held once every four years in non-European areas. After the committee meeting and the exchange seminar, PoSE members took part in an inspection tour to three construction sites. They visited an EJR elevated viaduct construction site for continuous grade separation, as well as two tunnel construction sites of Odakyu Electric Railway Co., Ltd and Hanshin Electric Railway Co., Ltd. The RTRI is very happy to have hosted such an exchange seminar in Tokyo, and plans to promote joint research projects and technical exchange meetings with railway-related research organizations overseas to further extend its contribution to world railways.

