



President’s Word:

**A Stronger,
More Member-Oriented FEDECRAIL**

The past months as President of FEDECRAIL have been both exciting and transformative. We have continuously worked on our members’ key issues while also driving the organization towards becoming a more member-oriented network. Our commitment to strengthening the heritage rail sector remains unwavering, and we are taking concrete steps to enhance collaboration, visibility, and support for railway preservation across Europe.

One of our key developments is greater transparency—you can now find our scheduled meetings for the year online on our website. We have also introduced commercial memberships without voting rights, allowing businesses to show their support for the heritage rail sector in Europe in new ways.

Looking ahead, we will be working more closely with like-minded organizations, building partnerships that strengthen our collective voice. At our upcoming conference on the Isle of Man, we have invited several distinguished speakers, and we hope to see many of you there. If you haven’t booked your place yet, now is the time! Also, don’t miss out on our special opportunity for young, active participants in the sector.

Another crucial issue we continue to explore is insurance, which many members have brought to our attention. Additionally, our growing social media presence is helping to raise awareness—not just about FEDECRAIL’s work but also about the broader significance of railway preservation. This is about more than just trains and trams—it’s about safeguarding history, culture, and the invaluable role of rail transport in shaping our societies.

We are excited about the journey ahead and look forward to continuing this work together with you!

*Warm regards,
Mimmi Mickelsen
President, FEDECRAIL*

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UNECTO Congress 2024

UPDATE No. 66

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Business Sessions on the Isle of Man – Don't Miss Out!

The upcoming Fedecrail Conference on the Isle of Man will offer a diverse range of insightful and engaging business sessions, covering key challenges and opportunities within the heritage rail sector. If you haven't already planned your participation, now is the time!

Please note that the order of sessions may change, but all the topics below will be covered during the event.

Governance and Inclusive Practices – Featuring Steve Oates (HRA, UK)

We are honored to welcome Steve Oates, CEO of the Heritage Railway Association, to our conference. He will share valuable insights on governance and the Railway 200 initiative, as well as participate in panel discussions on inclusion, diversity, and equality within the sector. This session will explore how we can strengthen and modernize our organizations by focusing on these essential areas.

Safety: Lessons Learned from ERA and EU Work

How have EU and ERA regulations impacted railways across Europe, and what can the tramway sector learn from this experience? A comprehensive report on regulatory developments, key les-

sons, and their impact on safety culture will be presented. We are also proud to welcome Josef Doppelbauer, former Executive Director of the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA), who will share his expertise.

Additionally, we will explore the differences between railway and tramway operations and how the railway sector's experiences can help prepare tramways for future regulatory initiatives. This session will take a deep dive into accident prevention, safety awareness, and strengthening safety culture across the industry.

Horse-Drawn Tramways: A Living Heritage on the Isle of Man

Did you know that the Isle of Man is home to one of the world's last operational horse-drawn tramways? These historic trams are still in use today, offering a rare glimpse into the past. In this session, local experts will showcase how they maintain and operate horse-drawn trams in a modern context, highlighting the challenges and successes of preserving this unique heritage. A must-attend session for heritage enthusiasts!

Marketing and Events in the Heritage Rail Sector

How can we better market our heritage railways and tramways, attract more visitors, and engage stakeholders? Join Oliver Edwards from Fox & Edwards Event and representatives from the Isle of Man Tourist Board for an in-depth discussion on

effective marketing strategies and event planning that drive growth and visibility.

This session will also include a hands-on workshop, where we will explore social media, traditional marketing, and business perspectives on outreach. Get inspired by successful initiatives and bring fresh ideas back to your organization!

Energy Challenges: The Future of Power in Railways and Tramways

With the shift towards sustainable energy, how will heritage railways adapt? This session will discuss the challenges of coal-based power, electrification, and renewable energy. Members will share their experiences, and we will explore innovative solutions for the future of energy in heritage operations.

Steve Oates will also join this session, contributing valuable insights on the energy challenges facing the heritage rail sector and the practical steps organizations can take to adapt to a changing energy landscape.

Join Us and Be Part of the Conversation!

These sessions offer a unique opportunity to engage with industry experts, share experiences, and help shape the future of the heritage rail sector. Whether you're interested in governance, safety, marketing, or energy, there's something for everyone.

Haven't booked your spot yet? Secure your place now and be part of these insightful discussions!

Want to engage more young professionals? Don't miss our special opportunities for young active members at the conference.

We look forward to seeing many of you on the Isle of Man!

FEDECRAIL

Nominate Council Positions in FEDECRAIL

FEDECRAIL is seeking new board members who are ready to contribute to the development of our international organisation. We encourage our members to nominate candidates for the board no later than 1 March to contact@fedecrail.org. As a

board member, you are expected to:

- Participate in our **digital board meetings**, held monthly in English.
- Be available for occasional **physical meetings**, although most of the work is conducted online.
- **Actively contribute** between meetings by taking on specific tasks and collaborating with other board members.
- Follow FEDECRAIL's policies and work in the best **interest of FEDECRAIL**.

We are looking for open-minded individuals ready to take responsibility and contribute to the work of the board. We value broad representation, considering gender, age, experience, and geographical diversity.

What does it mean to be a board member?

As a member of the FEDECRAIL board, you do not represent your country, your association, or the organisation that nominated you – you represent the entirety of FEDECRAIL. However, nominations must come from a member or a member's organisation and must include:

1. A photo.
2. A CV.
3. A short motivation explaining why the candidate would be an asset to FEDECRAIL's work.

Possible Responsibilities within the Board:

EU and Partnerships Coordinator

- Oversee issues related to the EU and partner organisations while building sustainable networks.

Youth Coordinator

- Support the implementation of our new youth programme and help develop youth related initiatives, ideally as a younger representative.
- Plan events for the younger generation.

Membership Development and Recruitment

- Develop strategies to engage new members, particularly from underrepresented regions such as Eastern Europe.
- Maintain regular contact with members and create conditions for a member oriented FEDECRAIL, ensuring strong communication between the members and FEDECRAIL's board.
- Keep track of the membership registry and actively work on keeping it updated.

Communication and Visibility

- Lead external communication efforts, including social media and the translation of materials into additional languages.
- Ensure that we effectively communicate our

goals and strategies and maintain high quality in our work.

- Support the translation of key documents and the inclusion of diverse linguistic groups in the organisation's activities.
- Enhance Fedecrail's reputation as a leading organisation in cultural heritage and railways.

Cultural Heritage and Policy Advocacy, Legal Matters

- Draft guidelines and influence international policies related to cultural heritage preservation.
- Manage legal issues and provide expertise in matters related to regulations, compliance, and insurance for member organisations.

Events and Collaboration

- Organise conferences and foster relationships with museums and other stakeholders.
- Plan events, conferences, and meetings both digital and physical.
- Secure the quality and support working groups in their planning for meetings.

Funding and Financial Sustainability

- Secure funding through EU projects, sponsorships, and grants to support the organisation's long-term goals. Digitalisation and Innovation
- Lead projects related to digital solutions, such as virtual twins and database management.
- Help with database strategies for best practice or for example suppliers of various kinds.

Welcome to the Isle of Man from **May 8th to 12th!** We have a **youth offer** and hope that many members will take this opportunity to send participants under the age of 26 so they can join, engage, and get to know FEDECRAIL.

FEDECRAIL

Reminder: Book Isle of Man Conference

Have You Booked Your Place for the FEDECRAIL Conference on the Isle of Man? FEDECRAIL is pleased to invite you to our annual conference, taking place on the Isle of Man from 8-12 May 2025. Under the theme "**Connecting Rails, Inspiring Futures: Embracing Heritage and Touristic Rail**

& Tramways," the event will bring together representatives from heritage railways and tramways across Europe.

As Europe's largest network for the heritage rail sector, this conference offers a unique opportunity to meet operators of museum railways and tramways, discuss key challenges and opportunities, and explore how we can ensure a sustainable future for heritage rail.

The Isle of Man, with its rich railway and tramway history, provides the perfect backdrop for this event. Alongside business sessions, workshops, and networking opportunities, participants will experience the island's unique transport heritage firsthand.

Don't miss out on this key gathering for the sector. Register today and be part of shaping the future of heritage rail!

FEDECRAIL

Follow Us on Social Media ...

... and help Us Spread the Message!

FEDECRAIL is expanding its digital communication, and we invite you to be part of our journey! We are now on **Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok**, where we share news, initiatives, and inspiring content about the heritage rail sector across Europe.

In addition, we are working on launching a **YouTube channel**, where we aim to highlight the work of our members through videos and reports. To make this happen, we need your help! We are looking to connect with marketing and social media managers within our member organizations and their networks.

Together, we can amplify our message, strengthen support for railway heritage preservation, and reach a wider audience. Follow us, share our posts, and get in touch if you would like to contribute content to our YouTube channel!

👉 Do you have someone in your organization responsible for communications? Please contact us—we'd love to collaborate!

contact@FEDECRAIL.org

FEDECRAIL

Annual Reports, Plans, and Budget now Available Online

As part of our ongoing commitment to transparency and member engagement, we are pleased to announce that our Annual Report for 2024, along with the Annual Plan and Budget for 2025, are now available on our website.

We encourage all members to review these documents and share their thoughts. Your input is invaluable as we work together to implement the Annual Plan for 2025. We recognize the growing need for stronger collaboration and greater member participation, and we hope to see active engagement from across our network.

In addition, we have now finalized our agenda for the year, with one of the key focus areas being the revision of our Constitution. This is a significant step in ensuring that Fedecrail continues to evolve and strengthen its role in representing the heritage rail sector.

We look forward to working with you throughout 2024 and beyond. Let's shape the future of FEDECRAIL together!

Visit our website to access the reports!

Join FEDECRAIL as a Volunteer

Help Shape the Future of the Heritage Rail Sector

Are you passionate about heritage railways and tramways? Do you want to actively contribute to preserving and promoting Europe's railway heritage? FEDECRAIL is looking for volunteers who are eager to make a difference.

We are particularly seeking individuals who can support us in the following areas:

- **Organizing meetings and conferences** – Assist in planning and managing key events that bring the heritage rail sector together.
- **Supporting digital functions** – Help develop and maintain online tools, communication platforms, and digital engagement.
- **Spreading FEDECRAIL's message** – Contrib-

ute to outreach efforts through networks, social media, and communications to strengthen awareness of heritage rail.

This is a great opportunity to connect with like-minded people, gain valuable experience, and actively support the future of the heritage rail sector. Whether you have expertise in event planning, digital communications, or outreach, your skills can make a real impact.

Visit our website today to explore available volunteer positions and see how you can get involved.

Find out more here: www.FEDECRAIL.org Join us in ensuring a strong and thriving future for heritage railways and tramways across Europe.

FEDECRAIL

FEDECRAIL & Railway200

How Are You Celebrating?

The **#Railway200 campaign** provides this year a unique opportunity to showcase **200 years of railway history** and its lasting impact across Europe. As part of the celebration, an interactive timeline has been launched, developed with expert input from the National Railway Museum. This timeline offers a deep dive into key moments in railway history through:

Historical maps and key events

- Audio features and explainer videos
- Links to further resources for in-depth exploration

You can explore the timeline here:

<https://railway200.co.uk/timeline/>

At FEDECRAIL, we encourage all heritage railways and tramways to actively participate in this celebration. One of the best ways to do so is by **listing your events on the official Railway200 website**.

This ensures that your activities gain visibility as part of the larger European effort to commemorate this milestone.

Make sure your railway



or tramway is represented by adding your events here: <https://railway200.co.uk/get-involved/>

Let's work together to highlight the significance of heritage railways and ensure a strong presence in the Railway200 celebrations! If you have exciting plans for the anniversary, let us know—we'd love to hear how you are marking this historic year.

FEDECRAIL

Chemins de Fer de la Haute Auvergne:

Line saved 30 Years ago

Big anniversary programme

In 1991, a page was turned for the legendary Cantal triangle: the line between Bort-les-Orgues and Neussargues was closed to all traffic for good. The story could have ended there. But two pioneers of the tourist train in France refused to see this beautiful line disappear. One of them is Jean-Michel Piernetz, who will be the co-founding president of the Chemins de Fer de la Haute Auvergne (CFHA) association until his handover in 2021. The association's main objective? The return of trains between Bort-les-Orgues and Neussargues. The

elected representatives then divided the line into two parts: south of Lugarde, the velorail project, while to the north the train would once again whistle through the valleys. In 1997, the first tourist train ran under the banner 'Gentiane Express', between Riom-ès-Montagnes and Lugarde.

Thirty years on, the legacy is still there, and it was time to celebrate this anniversary in style! The weekend chosen was Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 August 2024. Dominique to oversee it all. Over the weekend, no fewer than 30 volunteers were mobilized to carry out all the tasks, from operating the trains, to ticketing and organizing the events, not forgetting the catering, which was expertly managed by the unfailing Amélie-Romain duo.

On the programme:

- **A model railway exhibition** at Riom-ès-Montagnes, with reproductions of the stations and engineering structures characteristic of the Cantal region. Visitors could find no fewer than six networks! The Club de Modélisme Ferroviaire d'Aurillac (CMFA) came with an HO reproduction of Lioran station, while the Amicale des Cheminots Modélistes de Limoges (AMCL) brought a reproduction of Landeyrat station. To complete the picture, Pierre-Olivier exhibited a reproduction of Riom-ès-Montagnes station, complete with the Barajol viaduct in HO built by Laurent Chelminiak.



Jubilee trips with a diesel railcar. Photo: CFHA

Finally, volunteers from Freelug and Auver'bricks brought along two Lego brick networks, which delighted young and old alike.

- At Lugarde station, volunteers from APSFI and ARCET were on hand with **driving simulators** to inspire young and old alike (organized by Vladimir and Philippe)!

- 39 km further north, at Bort-les-Orgues station, Loic was keen to showcase an 'old-fashioned' **track job**. Assisted by Quentin and Antoine, the valiant team replaced no fewer than eight sleepers by hand on track 2. Philippe and Kilian were able to give first rides on a rail bike, departing from Bort-les-Orgues station.

- Also, in Bort-les-Orgues, Bruno organized two very fine **exhibitions**, one retracing the history of the association, the other the history of communication within the railway. Jean-Michel was also on hand to tell visitors about 30 years of human adventure. The station hall also hosted an exhibition of railway caps and objects such as lanterns, locomotive plates, medals and mileage points, as well as a fine collection in 0-gauge models of equipment that ran on the line from Bort-les-Orgues to Neussargues.

- Throughout the weekend, SNCF **diesel railcar** RGP X 2725 hosted a screening of the film 'D'Aurillac à Bort-les-Orgues, la ligne asphyxiée', directed by Franck Gentil.

To top it all off, the association organised several shuttle buses to run **nine trains** a day on the 16 km route between Riom-ès-Montagnes and Lu-

garde. Camille coordinated the traffic. Each train was run in tandem: a driver and a conductor. The Bort-les-Orgues hostel, bought by the association at the beginning of 2010, was also back in action, as it welcomed the thirty or so volunteers mobilised over the weekend!

These 30 years were the occasion to **inaugurate a plaque** in Riom-ès-Montagnes station in the presence of numerous representatives, to thank all the volunteers who took part in this human adventure. It's up to us younger members of the community to keep the dream alive and find new solutions together, so that we can continue to inspire young and old alike on board our historic trains.

CFHA

UNETO:

'Preserving, maintaining and restoring our heritage'

2024 annual congress in Dax/France with 300 participants

UNETO's annual conference was held in Dax from 28 to 30 November 2024. Dax is located in the Landes department in the Nouvelle Aquitaine region of south-west France. The conference was held in the hotel Le Splendid and the Atrium Hall,



both built in 1928 in the Art Deco style, and both listed as Historic Monuments. The choice of these venues motivated the theme of our conference: **'Safeguarding, maintaining and restoring our heritage'**. The conference brought together 300 participants from France, Belgium and Switzerland.

Thursday morning was devoted to welcoming delegates. After lunch, the conference began in the **plenary session**. The opening session was chaired by Dominique Bussereau (former Minister of Transport), Julien Dubois (Mayor of Dax), Renaud Lagrave (Vice-President of the Nouvelle Aquitaine region), Eric Requet (Deputy Prefect of Landes, representing the French government) and Claude Steinmetz (President of UNECTO).

After a presentation of the Le Splendid hotel, its construction and restoration, and the Atrium, the conference could begin. The first **round-table** concerns the **built heritage, stations and buildings**. The second concerns **rolling stock, locomotives, carriages and wagons**. Marie Noëlle Polino, from the SNCF's Heritage Department, presented the 900 rolling stocks preserved by the SNCF and entrusted to associations and to the Mulhouse Train Museum. The last section dealt with **infrastructure, track and engineering structures**, including the Livradois Forez track and the Tarn tourist railway viaduct.

After the break, the subject of opening up to competition and its **impact on tourist railways** was examined. The next round table dealt with **communication issues**. The afternoon ended with a presentation by Daniel Pfeifer, Director of the STRMTG (Service Technique des Remontées Mécaniques et des Transports Guidés), the department that supervises tourist railways outside the main lines.

The evening began with the traditional aperitif, followed by dinner. Julien Dubois and his first deputy, Martine Dedieu, also attended the meal. Friday mornings are devoted to **workshops**. One workshop concerns occasional traffic with historic equipment on SNCF's main lines. The second concerns regular services on dedicated tracks or on lines without regular passenger traffic. Two other workshops dealt with insurance and solutions for marketing trains.

A break was taken to visit the exhibitors' stands. **20 exhibitors** came to present their activities, in the fields of ticketing, infrastructure maintenance,

wooden or metal sleepers, souvenirs, tools, etc. This enabled companies to meet almost all of France's tourist railways in one place, but also enabled UNECTO to hire out stands, thereby reducing conference costs for participants. After the break, three other workshops were organised, on regular and occasional services, and on project financing.

The UNECTO **General Assembly** took place in the afternoon. The evening began with the essential aperitif, accompanied by a 'banda', a typical orchestra from Landes and the Basque Country. This was followed by the gala dinner and an evening of musical entertainment.

On Saturday, participants visited the **La Rhune rack railway** in the Basque Country. This century-old rack railway has just had its track completely renewed by its owner, the Département des Pyrénées Atlantiques. The rolling stock is originally used on the line in 1924, and the weather was magnificent, offering exceptional views from Hendaye to Biarritz and along the Atlantic coast.

A meal in Sare brought the conference to a close. The **accompanying people** had a guided tour of the city of Dax on Thursday afternoon, and on Friday a day by bus to visit the Landes department. – The 2025 conference is scheduled to take place in the Vosges.

Jacques Daffis

MRO:

Safety Conference 2025 in Mjölby/Sweden

Strengthening Security and Support for Our Members

The Museibanornas Riksorganisation (MRO) held its annual Safety Conference in Mjölby, Sweden, on January 25-26. This event continues a long-standing tradition of providing safety discussions, updates, and workshops for MRO members.

One of the key topics this year was **insurance solutions for the heritage rail sector**. MRO and JHRF have successfully negotiated comprehensive insurance options for their members for several years, working together with the company Söderberg & Partners to secure the best possible coverage. By

negotiating as a collective, members benefit from better protection, pricing, and tailored solutions for their specific needs. Regular discussions take place between MRO, JHRF, and Söderberg & Partners to ensure that the insurance solutions remain relevant and effective.

MRO is proud to have secured affordable and flexible insurance solutions for all our members in Sweden, ensuring that they can choose the coverage that best suits their needs.

MRO Awards & Youth Engagement

During the conference, we also hosted the **MRO Awards**, celebrating outstanding contributions within the sector. One highlight was our **Youth Award**, which includes participation in the annual Fedecrail Conference. We are delighted that this initiative provides young professionals with valuable learning and networking opportunities within the European heritage rail community.

Two Dedicated Conference Sessions

The conference was well-attended, with nearly all MRO members represented. The event was divided into two key sessions:

Safety & Internal Auditing Training

This session provided training in internal auditing, ensuring that members are well-equipped to conduct their own Safety Management System (SMS) assessments.

Heritage Preservation, Coal Supply, and Collaboration

A mix of workshops, discussions, and presentations focused on long-term sustainability in heritage rail operations, including the future of coal supply and the importance of joint efforts to preserve railway heritage.

The weekend proved to be highly valuable, strengthening member organizations' understanding, collaboration, and support structures. The insights gained will be instrumental in ensuring continued growth and development within the heritage rail sector.

MRO remains committed to providing ongoing support, training, and advocacy for its members. We look forward to building on these discussions and continuing to work together toward a stronger and more sustainable future.

Museibanornas Riksorganisation (MRO)





Stoomtrein Maldegem – Eeklo:
Steam Festival 2025 in May
Attractive guest locomotives

The annual steam festival at the Belgian Maldegem - Eeklo Steam Railway will be a two-day event, to be held at Maldegem, Belgium, on **Saturday and Sunday 3rd and 4th of May 2025**. The railway is honoured that the station and line have recently been recognised as a Flemish National Heritage Site by the "Vlaams Agentschap Onroerend Erfgoed" (Flemish Agency for Fixed Heritage). An achievement of which we are very proud.

Planning is proceeding well. There should be five locos in steam on standard gauge including, the railway's resident Austerity 0-6-0st WD196 "**Errol Lonsdale**" which will be commemorating the 200th anniversary of Public Railways, 1893 St Leonard built 0-4-0t "**Yvonne**" which will be working trains to Eeklo double headed with Cockerill type 4r 0-4-0VBT 3098 of 1926 which is visiting from Haaksbergen in the Netherlands.

La Meuse built 0-6-0t "**Bebert**" will also be in service, returning to steam after a major overhaul carried out in house at Maldegem. The large Krupp Built "Hannibal" class 0-6-0t "**Tom**", which is now entering her third year on loan to Maldegem from the suspended Ijmuiden Steelworks steam train, will also be a mainstay of services to Eeklo. In addition to the steam locos, it is planned to have

"Tom" together with a Van Hool bus

NMBS/SNCB class 62 BoBo **diesels** visiting from Infrabel and to use these to work some services on the preserved line.

On the **narrow-gauge** line, Maldegem's own Hanomag 0-4-0wt "**Yvonne**", from 1906 will operate a frequent service on the narrow-gauge line, hopefully joined by a second steam loco for which negotiations are ongoing. As usual, there will be an international selection of trade stands and model displays present as well as the popular food and beer terrace outside the workshop.

2025 is also the one hundredth anniversary of the first public bus services in Belgium, and to commemorate this there will be about **15 preserved busses** on display. It will be possible to take a ride on one of these. Maldegem lays about 14 km from Bruges on the Belgian Dutch border and can be reached by train to Eeklo or Bus route 50 from Bruges station. For groups wishing to attend, transport from Bruges or Aalter railway station or elsewhere can be arranged by preserved bus.

Kevin M Hoggett

Stoomcentrum Maldegem

Contact e-mail avonside040@telenet.be

Website: www.stoomtreinmaldegem.be

WIMH:

Katowice European Steel and Coal Heritage Conference

10 and 11 April 2025

Details have now been confirmed for the follow up to the 2023 successful industrial heritage conference in Katowice. This year's conference will focus on practical protection of fossil fuel heritage, including the continued needs of supplies for industrial and mobile heritage. Dates are **Thu 10.04** (main business sessions) and **Fri 11.04** (study visits to experimental coal mine "Barbara" and the historic coal mine "Ignacy"). Main business sessions will be hosted at the Silesian Parliament building in Katowice. The preservation project for the "Ignacy" mine was recognised with a Europa Nostra European Heritage Award in 2024.

The conference has been organised by various bodies in Poland, including the Government Ministry of Culture, with active support and input from the WIMH platform working group. Key topics for discussion will include the preservation and continued use of mining heritage as a vital means of presenting coal's central and historic role during the industrial revolution. Ideas include the concept of creating a working mine museum as an ongoing source of supply of coal.

Representatives of FEDECRAIL members will be very welcome to take part in this conference. Full details and registration form can be found on the website of the lead local organising body, the Silesian Industrial Heritage Foundation:

www.muzeatechniki.pl/esch/ Enquiries should be addressed to: biuro@muzeatechniki.pl

*Peter Ovenstone - Secretary, WIMH
Working industrial & Mobile Heritage*

WIMH:

Developments as Part of the EU and Geo Gobal Political Landscape

During November and December, the new European parliament held their confirmation hearings for

the new members of the commission. In the new Year the parliament approved the new commissioners, and so they could start work. WIHM sent letters to seven of the commissioners, based on the relevance of their portfolio to us. These letters congratulated them on their appointment, provided an overview of what WIHM does and to ask for a meeting with them. We have had three replies, two will come back to us and one is too busy.

With Members of Parliament the political year started for practical purposes in September. We had a **first meeting** with MEP Hannes Heide, who is the S&D party co-ordinator on the Culture Commission in the EU Parliament. We are arranging a meeting his colleague Mr. Zoltan Tarr who is the co-ordinator for the EPP in the coming months or with one of his assistants.

In the meantime, we had very useful **online meetings** with a senior official from the Mining Department of the Ministry of Industry in Poland. Also present at that meeting was the Polish MEP Lukasz Kohut. We discussed preserving the Polish Mining Industry as an important part of the Polish economic history in the last 300 years. (See for more details the article of Peter Ovenstone about the Katowice conference "European Steel and Coal Heritage" held on April 10th and 11th)

On February 4th we attended the **webinar "Cultural Deal for Europe"**, organized by the European Cultural Foundation, Cultural Action Europe and Europa Nostra. With ca. 130 persons present in person and ca. 1.000 online. The presentations and discussions were held in a series of panels, with themes like Culture and Democracy, Culture and Security and Cultural and Sustainability. During these panels there were remote contributions from Ukraine, Serbia and as an example of the big cities, from Glasgow City Council. It was encouraging that several MEP members of the EP Culture Committee (including the Chair) also took part and made some valuable contributions.

The deputy Minister of Culture & National Heritage of Poland Mrs. Marta Cienkowska gave a presentation outlining a number of the priorities of the Polish European Presidency for the first 6 months of 2025. She urged also that efforts should be made to create a simpler structure of European Cultural funding, like existing successful funding streams Creative Europe and Erasmus.

The general tone of the webinar was that recogni-

tion is needed that Culture has a greater value in all aspects of changes that are now going on in the world. Therefore, the Secretary General of Europa Nostra unveiled the idea of the “**Cultural Compass**” as a general direction for the whole cultural sector on a united basis to move to. This was focused on a likely role of the EU as a counterbalance against the USA of President Trump and Mr Musk in which Culture seems to be accorded little significance in current policies. There are concerns that in the current electoral climate, both in the EU and the US that heritage will be accorded less of a priority than before. So, we need to redouble our efforts as the heritage sector to protect the heritage we have.

Jaap Nieweg

WIMH mandated officer FEDECRAIL

FEDECRAIL Joins WATTRAIN’s Coal Committee

A Holistic Approach to Energy, Sustainability, and Heritage Preservation

FEDECRAIL is pleased to announce our participation in WATTRAIN’s Coal Committee, recognizing both the challenges and opportunities related to fuel supply and sustainability in the heritage rail sector. However, we see this issue **as much broader than just access to coal**—it is part of a larger discussion on energy, environmental responsibility, and the long-term future of all heritage operations.

Our approach is not limited to working solely with rail organizations. We **actively seek broader perspectives** and engage with other historic and heritage sectors that share similar challenges. Many vintage and industrial heritage operations—beyond rail—face similar concerns regarding sustainability, regulatory pressures, and access to traditional fuels. FEDECRAIL believes that these conversations must be **inclusive** and consider the needs of all heritage-based activities to ensure their continued operation in a changing world.

This initiative aligns with several of FEDECRAIL’s ongoing efforts, including:

- **Working Industrial Mobile Heritage** – Addressing challenges across all forms of mobile heritage transport.
- **Environmental Group** – Exploring realistic sustainability strategies that work for heritage operations.
- **Policy and Legislation Engagement** – Advocating for balanced regulations that acknowledge the unique needs of heritage rail and historic transport.

While discussions around coal and alternative fuels are central, FEDECRAIL also remains committed to **taking responsibility for climate issues** while balancing the authenticity of heritage operations. Our goal is to ensure that sustainability efforts do not compromise the historical accuracy, technical integrity, or viability of heritage railways and tramways.

This is why we continue to monitor developments such as the recent **bio-coal tests** in the UK, which were presented at WATTRAIN’s July 2024 conference. At the same time, we remain engaged in broader energy discussions, including the Plan Paris commitments and fossil fuel transition policies, ensuring that heritage rail and other historic transport operations are fairly represented in these critical global conversations.

FEDECRAIL firmly believes that **collaboration is key**. By working not only with WATTRAIN but also with a wider network of stakeholders, policymakers, and heritage organizations, we can build a more informed and resilient sector. A united and inclusive approach will allow us to advocate for policies that reflect the realities of heritage operations, while also contributing to sustainable solutions that protect both our environmental responsibilities and our historical legacy.

We look forward to taking an **active role** on this committee while continuing to support our members and the wider heritage community in navigating the complexities of energy, regulation, and sustainability.

FEDECRAIL



Upcoming Meetings & Events – 2025

Fedecrail continues to organize key meetings and working groups throughout the year. Below is an overview of our planned activities, both online and in-person. Stay tuned for further updates on confirmed dates!

Key Events & Working Groups

◇ Youth Initiative

- 📍 10 May, Isle of Man – Dedicated session during the conference
 - 📺 Two to three online sessions leading up to the event to introduce the initiative

◇ Tramway Group

- 📍 8 May, Isle of Man – Physical meeting
- 📺 September (Date TBA) – Online session
- 📍 November, Brussels – In-person meeting

◇ Environmental Group

- 📺 29 April – Webinar
- 📍 8 May, Isle of Man – In-person meeting
- 📺 9 July – Online session
- 📺 17 September – Online session

◇ Heritage Operating Group

- 📺 20 February – Online
- 📺 19 March – Online
- 📺 16 April – Online
- 📍 8 May, Isle of Man – In-person meeting
- 📺 19 June – Online
- 📺 18 September – Online
- 📺 15 October – Online
- 📺 20 November – Online

◇ Working Industrial Mobile Heritage (WIMH)

- 📅 April (Date TBA) – First informational session
- 📅 Autumn (Date TBA) – Second informational session

More Meetings to Come!

In addition to the events listed above, you can expect further meetings and sessions throughout the year as we continue to address key topics for our members.

How to Participate

If you'd like to join any of these meetings, you can easily find the responsible person or secretary for each group on our website, where you can also register directly.

Alternatively, you can email us at contact@fedecrail.org, and we will quickly forward your request to the right person.

We look forward to your participation!

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Deadline for text and photos is April 8th

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