

ZÖLLNER

ZÖLLNER Symposium 2023 – Europe’s Think Tank for Worksite Safety on Railways



The ZÖLLNER Symposium was held on 13 and 14 September in Kiel, Germany

On 13 and 14 September ZÖLLNER hosted its annual symposium. The two-day event is held in Kiel, Germany, where we are headquartered. We are so delighted that 170 participants from 10 different countries made the journey in order to join us this year!

The symposium has a long tradition in our company’s history. As manufacturer of automatic warning systems and infrastructure solutions, we have always had an interest in meeting with different people from the industry to develop and make products that don’t just work on paper but make real-life worksites safer. What started as a small event held in one of our meeting rooms has turned into an international conference with far over 100 participants and speakers from around the world.

A Platform for Decision Makers from the Railway Sector

The conference days were structured around 22 podium presentations on a multitude of topics surrounding this year’s guiding theme “the future of worksite safety on railways”. With climate change, the growing mobility revolution and changes in the availability of qualified personnel, the industry is facing quite a few challenges in the near and far future. We are proud to have created a platform that brings together rail infrastructure companies, railway authorities, accident insurance carriers, rail construction companies and worksite safety teams in order to face these challenges hand in hand. The discussions surrounding the presentations were not only incredibly thought-provoking but led to important decisions being made right there and then.

One achievement is the founding of a round table initiated by the representatives of Deutsche Bahn who invited everyone present at the event to join together regularly in order to overcome current problems in the German rail worksite safety market. What an incredible result!

An International Think Tank

As mentioned before, the symposium has become quite international. We believe that there is great potential in learning from one another. In Germany, for example, Deutsche Bahn is just introducing the ElBa, an electronic qualification card. Having representatives from Network Rail, who have been working with their electronic qualification card, Sentinel, for more than 10 years, led to a valuable exchange of experiences. Looking to one another for support is the most effective way we can propel the industry forward! We are very grateful that so many experts were willing to share their experiences, their ideas and their struggles in order to work as a team.

In the words of Emir Mensi from Ferroway France, one of our participants, “Europe met in Kiel” as so many of the rail infrastructure companies or related authorities were represented at this year’s event:

A team from SFERIS (France) shared their innovative idea for using a small train that can go on the tracks as well as on the road with the goal of reactivating old track routes and connecting more rural areas to the transportation network. In Germany, too, being able to supply residents of less urban areas with opportunities to use public transport is a big conversation topic at the moment and one that will only grow more prevalent as we move deeper into the mobility revolution.

170 participants from 10 different countries attended the conference programme including 22 podium presentations and discussions with experts from the railway sector

Also from France, Sages du Rail reported on new use cases for existing technology thus creating innovation without the need to develop anything new. This was a big topic among German safety companies as creative heads use warning system technologies in ways that make it possible to secure worksites more efficiently.

Representatives from Network Rail explained their safety hierarchy and selection process for safety requirements regarding different types of worksites. Across Europe, the selection process can look quite different from country to country. No process is ever truly perfect so listening to one another and being open to changing our own ways is instrumental in continuously improving the safety for all people working on or near tracks!

Infrabel presented on their future strategy for worksite safety in Belgium and the Federal Ministry for Labour and Economy from Austria shared insights into their current safety hierarchy for worksite safety. The SCWS-S Signal Controlled Warning System with Stop function is on the top of the hierarchy. Thales Austria presented the new solution for SCWS-S which is currently in development with Zöllner Signal GmbH.

Teams from Denmark and Germany gave a presentation about the Fehmarnbelt Fixed Link, a project that will connect the two countries by railway tunnel.

News from ZÖLLNER

While the many presentations and discussions were the focus of the symposium, it also gave our guests the opportunity to see what ZÖLLNER has been working on.

We too have been working hard to make our contribution to a safer future for everyone working on



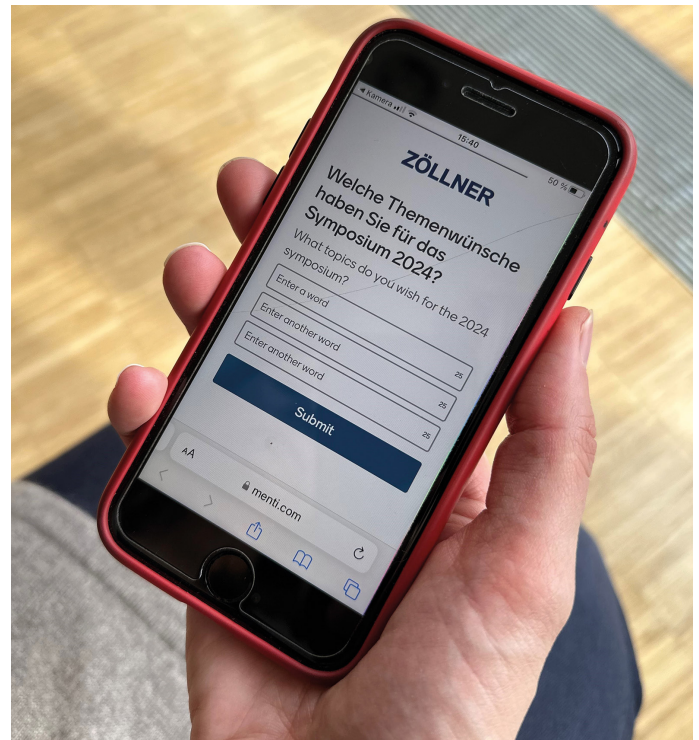
or near the tracks. As mentioned above, we do believe in using existing technology in innovative ways. We have therefore developed the ZRT-30, a device that connects our radio-based warning system with the hardwired system. It allows both systems to be used in new ways. Innovation through the addition of just one small device!

An exhibition along with live demonstrations on the outside perimeter of the event location offered an important opportunity to connect the podium presentations and discussions with the real-life situation of a railway worksite. While we believe it is incredibly valuable to offer space for creative brainstorming and theoretical discussions, we also think that it is essential to keep in mind the current reality of people on track worksites.

Our ZCloud (ZÖLLNER Cloud), for example, was developed based on feedback from our customers to develop a tool that helps them with their everyday challenges when planning and executing the safety measures for track worksites. It revolutionises the way our customers can manage their warning systems:



The exhibition offered hands-on opportunities to get to know the ZÖLLNER product portfolio



Participants got directly involved in the presentations via Mentimeter, an online tool for polls and statistics

components can be assigned into systems digitally and the individual status of each component can be viewed at any time. Besides providing a continuous overview of all operations the ZCloud also serves as an aid for remote diagnosis, allowing us necessary insights immediately, should a customer need our help.

A Shared Promise

In summary, the ZÖLLNER symposium was a great success. It showed us that bringing different stakeholders to one table and allowing for open, honest, and productive discussion, results in immediate action that changes the future. We are proud to share a common goal with so many competent, innovative people, always working toward more safety for worksites on railways. In short: keeping people safe!!

We love hearing from people about their ideas and invite all readers to get in touch! Find out more about our products and about how to get in touch [here](#).

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