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Geneva, 27 April 2012

IRU RESOLUTION ON DRIVING THE EUROPE 2020 GROWTH STRATEGY

*Unanimously adopted by the IRU General Assembly in Geneva on
Friday 27 April 2012*

IRU Resolution on Driving the Europe 2020 Growth Strategy.

The International Road Transport Union (IRU), representing truck, bus, coach and taxi operators through its national Member Associations in 73 countries on 5 continents,

Considering that:

- Commercial road freight by truck and collective passenger transport by bus, coach and taxi:
 - Accounts for the majority of transport services, 4.6% share of the EU's GDP and up to 10% of total fiscal income. Commercial road transport contributes more than EUR 370 billion to the EU's economy annually. As such road transport brings major revenue to the state, contrary to other modes which are heavily subsidised;
 - Is the only mode connecting every individual and every business, in particular SMEs which employ over 85% of EU citizens, to all markets, be it on a local, national, European or global scale, complementing every other mode and providing a unique door-to-door service;
 - Is the most used mode due to its high-quality and flexibility and other modes of transport are not inherently more environmentally-friendly than pure road transport.
- The EU's 2020 Growth Strategy aims to create a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. Commercial road freight and collective passenger transport by road have a vital role to play in each of these mutually reinforcing principles.
- Commercial road transport, despite being a vital production and mobility tool for all citizens and companies involved in the "real economy", is a highly regulated mode of transport. While the road transport industry favours regulations, over-regulation or ineffective regulations, as recognised by the Lisbon strategy for competitiveness, impede EU growth. This is particularly true of the road transport industry, as any penalty on road transport is an even greater penalty on the EU's mobility and economy as a whole. Indeed, any penalty on road transport's irreplaceable services provides a strong incentive for EU road freight transport companies, hence EU employment, to delocalise, whilst customers of collective passenger transport by road will switch to another less sustainable mode of transport.
- A change in the EU regulatory framework would allow road transport's attributes to drive the EU's Growth Agenda and expedite economic recovery.

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Thus calls on the European Union Institutions to include commercial road transport as a key strategic priority in the EU 2020 Growth Strategy and to work actively to:

- Block the indexation, increase and introduction of new taxes, charges and duties on commercial road transport and earmark revenues to support investments in road services, infrastructure, innovation and training;
- Adapt the legal framework to provide legal certainty on investments made by road transport operators in innovative, efficient, clean and safe technologies to ensure they provide a return on investment and sufficient means to allow further innovation, greening at source and productivity;
- Create a level regulatory playing field between the modes, including with regards taxation, excise duty, VAT, etc.
- Provide a coherent strategy on research and development for road transport to improve further efficiency, safety and sustainability.

For road freight transport, to:

- Modify, without delay, the EU Customs Code, to allow the 12 million EU trucks to be authorised to transport the EU's trade through the full benefits offered by the TIR System. Today EU trade is run by a few hundred freight forwarders, who, through the financial guarantee provided, control 99% of all goods transport carried out under the T System. Allowing the use of the TIR System in parallel to the T System would immediately benefit growth by releasing more than 600,000 road transport companies from this constraint;
- Stop discriminating in favour of specific modes, stop distortion of competition and instead ensure equal opportunities for all modes of transport;
- Facilitate access for road transport operators to investment funds for the greening at source and innovation of their services and create a public-private Clean Freight Partnership to this end;
- Increase the efficiency and capacity of the EU transport system by standardising vehicles and transport units of the European Modular System (EMS) and by promoting its use for all inter- and intramodal applications;
- Link any further liberalisation in road freight cabotage with concomitant harmonisation measures.

For collective passenger transport, to:

- Establish and promote an EU policy based on the Smart Move objectives to double the use of collective road transport by buses, coaches and taxis. This would create 4 million new green jobs (drivers, managers, high skilled employees, manufacturing workers, mechanics, tourism professionals etc.) in the EU while, at the same time, significantly reduce congestion and accidents and open new social and economic opportunities for all citizens;
- Remove the heavy and unfair tax burdens applicable to passenger transport by bus, coach and taxi, and create a level playing-field with other passenger transport modes in the areas of subsidies, taxes, charges and duties, notably vis-à-vis low-cost airlines for an industry that pollutes ten times more than buses, coaches and taxis;
- Provide incentives to radically increase the use of the cleanest competitor to the private car, namely buses, coaches and taxis, to reach the objectives of the Smart Move campaign and the EU Growth Agenda;

- Encourage the adoption of new mobility solutions for growth in the EU by promoting intercity bus and coach express travel, which in many cases is forbidden, and city bus rapid transit with dedicated infrastructure, all of which have proven their economic, social and environmental cost-effectiveness in various markets around the world (USA, Brazil, China, Turkey, etc.), as bus and coach companies, being in the private sector, react immediately to governmental and EU incentives and do not need massive public subsidies as do other collective transport modes;
- Institutionalise the policy preference for collective passenger transport at EU level, by defining, in a genuine public-private partnership, an EU vision, action plan, timetable and measures to achieve the objective of doubling the use of collective passenger transport by road by 2025.

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