

**International Transport Forum 2009
Leipzig, 27 May 2009**

IRU Workshop

**Road Transport:
Promoting Global Trade, Travel and Development**

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

- Road transport is no longer merely a mode of transport, but a vital production tool. Thus any penalty on road transport is an even bigger penalty on the economy as a whole!
- Road transport today already carries more than 90% of goods in value and 80% of inland freight volumes. Moreover, 85% of freight tonnage is carried over distances below 150km where no transport alternative exists. Furthermore, less than 1% of freight tonnage is carried over 1000km.
- Travel by coach and bus is the most efficient and environment-friendly collective mode of transport which deserves special attention by authorities by doing away with artificial barriers, like unjustified bans on entering touristic cities, unfounded driving and rest time restrictions, etc.
- Road transport, in this time of economic crisis, can help drive economic recovery. But to do this, road transport needs to be promoted and further facilitated by appropriate governmental measures to be taken urgently – as has been done for the banks – at national and international level.
- In order not to repeat the historical errors of the Great Depression of the 1930s, where the economic crisis was exacerbated by the halt in transport and trade, all governments should, as a priority:
 - (1) introduce real business incentives, such as a significant increase of the ECMT quota permits for safer and cleaner vehicles;
 - (2) stop and/or reassess unnecessary and restrictive environmental legislation which penalises road transport;
 - (3) change insolvency legislation to strengthen the rights of road transport companies in economic distress allowing them to apply the instruments of the insolvency legislation for the reduction of transport capacity and the continuation of profitable business operations instead of liquidating the entire company;

(4) induce financial institutions to provide adequate credit lines so that transport operators can finance their investments and operations and, through national central banks, introduce a moratorium on interest on debts and leasing contracts to allow transport operators to continue to invest in innovative and clean vehicles;

(5) reassess and reduce current taxes;

(6) stop creating new taxes and charges and, in particular, stop the decision on the third Eurovignette Directive and the implementation of any discriminatory road user charges anywhere as they threaten economic development and competitiveness;

(7) create a legal and administrative framework which would allow the road transport industry to place skilled personnel temporarily on inactive status, without having to lay them off, in order to maintain skilled professionals in the sector;

(8) ensure open markets and strive for the completion of the WTO Doha round;

(9) intensify efforts to eliminate neo-protectionist barriers to international road transport.

- These “remedies” to the present crisis, unanimously adopted by the IRU General Assembly, are fully supported by the leaders of the G20, who set the path for further facilitation of trade and road transport at the recent London summit. All governments are thus urged to follow this lead and “*open the world economy based on market principles, effective regulation, and strong global institutions*”, and to “restore lending; promote global trade and investment and reject protectionism” and “*minimize any negative impact on trade and investment of ... domestic policy actions including fiscal policy*”, as well as “*remaining committed to reaching an ambitious and balanced conclusion to the Doha Development Round*”.

- To put in place the decision of the G20 to promote and further facilitate trade and road transport, governments must imperatively implement Annex 8 of the UN International Convention the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods.
- UN Conventions which facilitate road transport should be acceded to and properly implemented (ADR, AETR, CMR, Harmonization of Frontier Controls, TIR, Vienna Convention, etc.), and applied globally.
- Customs and business, including road transport operators, should work in PPP to facilitate trade and transport as well as increase the security of the international supply chain, using existing multilateral instruments, such as the WCO Safe Framework, which can be implemented through the TIR Convention.
- To meet their EU and UN obligations, governments should use the modern, free of charge, internet tools developed by IRU, such as the TIR Electronic Pre-Declaration (IRU TIR-EPD), the IRU Real-Time SafeTIR (RTS) and the IRU Border Waiting Times Observatory (BWTO) applications.
- The IRU New Euro-Asian Land Transport Initiative (NELTI) which aims to reopen the Silk Road to create new business opportunities between Europe and Asia, by linking the region of the globe where two-thirds of the world's population lives, works and wants to raise their standard of living, has demonstrated that no country is landlocked to road transport. Moreover, only road transport can interconnect every business in every region to all major world markets.

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