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IRU Declaration on the IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS ON EU ROAD FREIGHT TRANSPORT

*adopted unanimously by the IRU Goods Transport Liaison Committee
(CLTM) in Brussels on 19 February 2009*

IRU Declaration on the impact of the economic crisis on EU road freight transport.

In today's globalised economy, professional road freight transport is no longer merely a mode of transport but a vital production tool, interconnecting every business to all world markets. Due to the financial crisis which has turned into an economic crisis, the demand for these vital transport services has slowed down dramatically.

Compared to the situation at the end of 2007, recent data for the last quarter of 2008 obtained from road freight transport associations and government sources point to:

- a decrease in road freight transport activity of up to 50%, depending on the country and/or sector of activity;
- an increase in the number of bankruptcies by up to 110%.

Costs for the road freight transport sector are expected to rise by at least 3-4% in comparison with 2008. Higher user charges are a key driving force behind this rise. Unstable oil prices could exacerbate this situation.

140,000 jobs in EU road freight transport have already been lost or are at risk.

Forecasts are not optimistic. The IRU Road Transport Indices, which are based on GDP forecasts for the OECD (Western Europe) countries for 2009, show a decrease in GDP by more than 1% compared to 2008.

Based on this situation, the IRU and its Members call on the EU Institutions and governments to:

- stop creating new taxes and charges, and especially to stop the decision on the third Eurovignette Directive as it threatens European economic development and competitiveness in this time of economic crisis;
- reassess and reduce current taxes and charges;
- provide business incentives to transport operators to allow them to continue to invest in innovative and clean vehicles;
- use economic stimulus packages to invest in lacking road infrastructure to remove bottlenecks and unnecessary related costs;
- induce financial institutions to provide adequate credit lines so that transport operators can finance their investments and operations;

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- induce suppliers of products and services to work in cooperation with the sector to ensure the best possible conditions to continue business activities;
- create a social 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.

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