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IRU POSITION ON NEW MOBILITY SOLUTIONS TO MITIGATE CO2 EMISSIONS

*Adopted by the IRU International Commission on Technical Affairs
(CIT) on 13 March 2012 in Bucharest.*

IRU Position on alternative fuel use and dedicated infrastructure to reduce the carbon footprint.

I. ANALYSIS

Nowadays it is quite common to see congestion charges, low emission zones, vehicle-free areas and restrictions for parking areas in urban areas, which force transport companies to find alternative solutions to deliver the goods or bring passengers to their final destination in the fastest and cheapest way.

The transport industry is therefore looking into solutions for efficient and environmentally-friendly delivery operations, which are becoming increasingly important in these times of climate change.

The energy developments, such as alternative fuels, will determine mobility in the near future by combining all available technologies, from fuel to a mix of fossil fuels or pure electric vehicles in order to diminish the carbon footprint of the transport sector.

New technology developments are however changing the final use of vehicles and the mobility perception of communities, as an increasing number of goods vehicles and buses and coaches are leading the way in the use of vehicles with alternative drive systems, such as e-cell, biofuel and lithium ion batteries. Many cities encourage new environmentally-friendly vehicles as there is a level of competition to be the "greenest", but currently it is impossible without an adequate refuelling infrastructure.

Technical and economic viability, efficient use of primary energy sources and market acceptance, will be decisive for a competitive acquisition of market share by the different fuels and new vehicle technologies. There is no single candidate for fuel substitution. Fuel demand and greenhouse gas challenges will likely require the use of a mix of fuels which can be produced from a large variety of primary energy sources. There is broad agreement that all sustainable fuels will be needed to fully meet the expected demand.

Different modes of transport also require different alternative fuel options. Fuels with higher energy density are more suited to longer distance operations, such as road freight transport, maritime transport and aviation. Compatibility of new fuels with current technologies and infrastructure, or the need for disruptive system changes should be taken into account as important factors, determining, in particular, the economics of the different options.

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II. IRU POSITION

In 2009, the IRU and its Member Associations called upon competent authorities through their 30 by 30 Resolution to:

- further facilitate and promote road transport and to work in partnership with the road transport sector so that it can achieve the full potential of its ambitious CO₂ emission reduction targets as part of the whole logistic chain;
- provide real business incentives to facilitate the penetration of innovative transport technologies, best practices and training;
- stop suggesting new legislation aimed at the reduction of toxic emissions but rather to focus on legislation with the aim to reduce fuel consumption;
- promote the change of fossil fuel to alternative energy/fuel sources; and
- make best use of existing infrastructure and adequately invest in new infrastructure to remove bottlenecks and missing links.

The IRU is convinced of the importance of harmonising standards for fuel and alternative fuels and therefore calls on authorities to build / implement the required infrastructure, taking into consideration the time that some fuels would need before being ready to enter the market.

The authorities should also put in place effective actions to accelerate the development of the refuelling infrastructure with the following objectives:

- to establish an EU-wide minimum coverage of refuelling infrastructure for the main alternative fuels which are technologically viable and with market potential to facilitate economies of scale for market introduction;
- to ensure the implementation of harmonised standards for the main alternative fuels; and
- to align policy and public/private funding and taxation in the field of alternative fuel infrastructure.

The road transport industry, in line with the IRU's 3 "i" strategy (innovation, incentives and infrastructure) for achieving sustainable development, is fully prepared to play its part in reducing the environmental impact of its activities by purchasing the appropriate vehicle for the work needed, but where possible and with proven solutions.

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