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## IRU Resolution on driver shortages and strategies for better recruitment and retention

*Adopted by the IRU General Assembly in Geneva on 5 November  
2010*

**IRU Resolution on the persistence of driver shortages within road transport worldwide  
and the need for concerted actions to avert a future personnel crisis in the sector.**

**The International Road Transport Union (IRU) representing truck, bus, coach and taxi  
operators through its 180 Members in 74 countries on 5 continents,**

### **Considering that:**

- for the foreseeable future, transport of passengers and goods by road will remain 100% dependent on the services of skilled and motivated drivers;
- commercial road transport undertakings around the world have suffered persistently from shortages of skilled drivers; most acutely during periods of economic growth and low unemployment;
- driver shortages have only been temporarily alleviated by the financial crisis and the recession that has followed, and have, in fact, already been noted as a resurgent threat in countries where sustained economic recoveries are underway;
- as economic recovery becomes deeper and more widespread, increased transport demand will make efficient freight distribution and mobility services provided by collective passenger transport increasingly constrained and disrupted by driver shortages, across the world's economies<sup>1</sup>;
- the vulnerability of commercial road transport to driver shortages is due to systemic, long-term problems, such as: a shrinking pool of available skilled labour; increasingly complex technical and regulatory requirements; sub-optimal working conditions; the often negative and biased campaigns against road transport by certain political forces and authorities damaging its image and, hence, recruitment; insufficient public awareness of the possibilities and benefits of road transport employment; limited cross border employment mobility and a looming demographic imbalance stemming from a large section of the driver population approaching retirement and a severe lack of younger entrants to replace them;
- in order to avert an impending driver crisis in commercial road transport, which is not only a mode of transport but an essential production tool and a vital pillar of

<sup>1</sup> A 2010 Manpower survey of 36 countries worldwide found that 'drivers' represented the 9<sup>th</sup> most difficult position to fill across all employment classifications

collective/public passenger transport, concerted action must be taken by governments, industry associations and road transport enterprises to lay the foundations for a more skilled and sustainable road transport workforce and in particular its drivers.

**The road transport industry, represented by the IRU and its Member Associations, thus calls upon:**

**Governments to:**

- recognise road transport as a strategic area of economic activity, prone to skills shortages and thus promote positive awareness of the road transport industry, its role in society and its employment possibilities, by supporting and leading communication campaigns and by ensuring a structure of state run employment centres and advisors with adequate knowledge of the qualifications required to be a driver; support the entry of new drivers into the occupation by ensuring that access rules - such driver training legislation in the European Union - are implemented efficiently without imposing unnecessary administrative or financial burdens on companies and drivers;
- provide concrete support to Accredited Training Institutes such as IRU Academy Accredited Training Institutes notably by recognising diplomas and certificates issued, thereby proving that they offer the highest quality training in full compliance with international rules and standards;
- provide financial incentives to companies and first time job applicants prepared to invest in acquiring entrance level skills through training and finance the retraining of older workers to become drivers;
- reduce occupational dangers and threats to drivers' personal safety resulting from increasing transport crime, by providing information to the IRU and the ITF on the location of existing secure parking areas and by building an adequate network of secure and well situated motorway rest areas and parking areas / terminals in cities for buses and coaches, the consequence of which will be a dramatic improvement in working conditions and thus also the recruitment and retention of drivers;
- assist the recruitment and retention of drivers by actions to improve working conditions including: applying international legislation - from driving and rest time rules to harmonised border crossings - in a correct, harmonised and efficient manner and by training their agents to treat drivers fairly and correctly; only issuing penalties where necessary, in a proportionate and transparent manner;
- support the entry into the road transport sector of unemployed citizens of that country.

**Road Transport Associations to:**

- continue to promote road transport's role in society and the employment opportunities available, as well as ensuring that potential recruits are well supplied with information about entrance requirements and possible routes to become a driver via training schemes, apprenticeships and other programmes;
- promote the use by national training institutes of high quality training materials and programmes, developed by the IRU Academy or similar organisations, to ensure that drivers only receive the best level of instruction for the money invested;
- work wherever possible with their trade union partners to jointly develop strategies, lead campaigns and tackle problems that will improve the recruitment and retention of drivers;
- carry out a study on national working conditions for drivers to enable the prioritisation of tasks for improving the working conditions of drivers and the attractiveness of the sector;

- ensure legal protection for all drivers in their country of work, irrespective of their country of origin.

**Road Transport Companies to:**

- diversify their recruitment focus to include social groups not traditionally associated with road transport, such as women, migrant and older workers;
- plan recruitment and training strategies carefully, mindful of all legal requirements and allocating adequate time and funds for drivers to pass entrance level and refresher training, so that they can be deployed exactly when their services are required;
- establish an employee's skills development path that will help keep drivers, competent, confident and content in their jobs and thus less likely to leave their positions;
- plan transport operations to ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, drivers are able to enjoy a good work/ life balance by spending their off duty rest times at a place of their own choosing, rather than at locations determined by the vehicle operation;
- only transport at a profit, so that ultimately the revenues of road transport companies will rise sufficiently to attract new drivers through an improved remuneration and benefits package.

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