



**1st IRU/EU Presidency Road Transport Conference & Ministerial Meeting**  
**“Efficient, Safe and Sustainable Road Transport for the Future”**  
**Brussels, Belgium, 1 December 2010**  
**Ministerial Meeting**

**Martin Marmy**, Secretary General, International Road Transport Union (IRU)

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The IRU's participation in this informal EU Ministerial Meeting, in the framework of the first ever IRU/EU Presidency Road Transport Conference, is not only a privilege but the realisation of the IRU motto “working together for a better future”.

I am delighted to be able to confirm to the honourable Ministers and their distinguished representatives present here today, the readiness and commitment of the IRU and of all the IRU Member Associations to work hand-in-hand, in a true Public-Private-Partnership, to achieve together more efficient, safer and sustainable road transport for the future.

Excellencies, we should realise that “change is life” and the major change resulting from increased competition, due to the liberalisation of economies and globalisation of markets, has created new challenges and opportunities everywhere – also in the EU. To remain competitive, the modern economy certainly requires the free movement of people, goods, services and capital, which are the basic principles of EU policy, but this is not enough!

Indeed, even if the current virtual economy is increasingly the centre of our attention, the return to prosperity requires that much more be invested in the production and distribution of goods, that is, invested in the real economy!

In a modern global economy such as the EU, road transport – of which 95% of companies are SMEs – is not only a transport mode but, due to the outsourcing of production, has become a vital and irreplaceable production and distribution tool of the real economy which interconnects door-to-door all companies to every market all over the world. In addition, it is the only mode which complements all others, everywhere.

Without road transport, which carries more than 85% of goods in volume and over 90% in value, the real economy of the European Union would simply grind to a halt.

In fact, we should not forget that the efficiency of the road transport industry strongly depends on governmental decisions. Indeed, road transport is and will most likely remain the most regulated mode of transport.

This is why we need to work together to ensure that all the numerous regulations and directives are not only necessary but relevant, properly implemented and enforced in a harmonised way across the European Union.

We need to improve the effectiveness and productivity of road transport by eliminating all the counterproductive burdens and by ensuring a level playing-field for all, including the free choice of transport mode and itinerary.

Without this, it will not be possible for the road transport industry to reach its highest efficiency to better serve and ensure the competitiveness of the European real economy.

Excellencies, dear representatives of the EU Transport Ministries, on behalf of all the IRU Member Associations in all 27 EU Countries, in the name of their member taxi, bus, coach and truck fleet operators, allow me to reiterate our commitment and call on you to achieve our common goals namely:

- to identify the ways and means, on the one hand, to have more effective legislation and, on the other hand, to achieve further at source reductions of road transport's environmental footprint, for instance, by finally standardising the Modular Concept to allow its use in and between EU Member States in order to have better transport rather than more transport;
- to promote the Smart Move campaign which aims to double the use of collective passenger transport by bus, coach and taxis in the EU in the next decade through the implementation of the appropriate action plans;
- to ensure that any potential additional revenues collected by the revised Eurovignette directive are no longer used to cover the financial deficit of the other modes but are earmarked to improve the road transport of passengers and goods by reducing externalities at source, notably by ensuring good quality and sufficient road infrastructure;

- to improve and safeguard the security of commercial EU road transport, and notably of professional drivers as 1 in 6 professional drivers has been attacked over a period of five years. To achieve this goal, it is necessary for the competent authorities to systematically provide the location of existing truck parking areas to the IRU/ITF TRANSPark information system and to undertake, if so required, the construction of additional secure parking areas for commercial vehicles;
- and finally, to promote the effective training of all drivers and managers, notably through the IRU Academy, and to train private car users on how best to share the roads with commercial vehicles by stimulating the introduction of road safety awareness programmes.

In this framework and in conclusion, allow me to request the support of each of the Ministers and public authorities here today to create the much needed increased cooperation with our industry, which is everywhere directly connected to the real economy, to achieve our common goals, namely to make the European economy more competitive by making road transport more efficient, safer and more sustainable!

Alone we can do nothing! Help us to help you!

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