



**Speech by Enrico Grillo
Pasquarelli to IRU
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Panel Session 1
Efficient and Safe Road
Transport**

Ladies and gentlemen,

I wish to begin by thanking the International Road Transport Union, IRU, for inviting me to address this conference on the important topic of using public/private partnerships to achieve more efficient and safer road transport. This conference is another good example of the Commission and the IRU coming together to establish common ground on areas important to both of us.

And safe road transport is certainly one of those areas. I have no doubt that the road transport sector is fully aware of its special role to improve road safety. I am happy to tell you that figures of fatal accidents involving trucks have decreased very much in parallel with those of accident involving cars, and that there were 34% less fatalities in 2008 than in 2001. But I am sure the road transport community realises that 5000 fatalities in accident involving trucks (even if “involvement” does not mean “responsibility”), as we had in 2009, is still an unacceptable figure.



As Director of Inland Transport at the Directorate General for Mobility and Transport, I witness on a daily basis how the Commission and stakeholders such as the IRU work together.

Let me give you six concrete examples of areas that we are currently working on together. In these specific areas we can see clear, measurable benefits from public/private cooperation. And in the forthcoming White Paper on transport policy I am sure you will read how we want to promote this relationship even further.

1. **The first example concerns promotion of high professional standards.** Central to this is the establishment of an European Register of Road transport Undertakings (ERRU). In the coming days the Commission will adopt a Decision which clarifies structure and contents of the register and the next practical steps so that the national registers of individual Member States are fully interconnected between them as from 31 December 2012 . It will be a key tool for operators and enforcement authorities and this is why we have made sure that their views were fully taken into consideration throughout the development of this register.
2. **The second example concerns the enforcement of social rules.** It is important for safer roads and the protection of workers. But it is also a crucial element for the development of the internal market because it is a powerful instrument to ensure fair competition between operators. IRU is a member of the Committee on Social



Rules in road transport. And although it is not allowed to vote, it plays an active role in the discussions leading to the votes by which Member States express their opinion on Commission draft implementing measures. Let me recall the good work we have done together in drafting Guidance Notes on an agreed interpretation and the correct enforcement of social rules. The Commission considers it essential that stakeholders and experts from the field, such as IRU representatives, should be involved when discussing this important subject.

Another area of growing cooperation between us, again through this Committee, is the definition of harmonised categories of serious infringements as required by the recently adopted Regulation on the admission to the occupation. In future, as we will explain in the White Paper, we will also work on sanctions since the Lisbon Treaty has given the Union powers to introduce some harmonisation in this area, where the need is indeed great. At present sanctions can vary greatly across the 27 Member States and it is clear that transport operators could benefit from greater harmonisation.

The third example concerns tachographs

As you all know, the tachograph is an essential tool to ensure compliance with social rules and road safety. We are unfortunately aware that some unscrupulous individuals, based either inside or



outside of the Union, are deliberately mishandling digital tachographs in order to evade their legal responsibilities.

The Commission has responded by carrying out a full review of the regulations concerning tachographs to see whether they need to be updated in order to combat fraud. Before making a proposal, however, the Commission convened an expert panel with industry representatives and experts, including from IRU and enforcement associations, to ensure that all stages of this process, starting from its inception, benefit from the closest possible cooperation between all concerned. The result will be a proposal to the European Parliament and to Council to review or replace the tachograph regulation by a new law opening the way to a new generation of tachographs fully integrated with other ITS applications. The plan is to adopt this proposal in a wider "electronic mobility" package before the summer of next year.

3. **A fourth example concerns roadside technical inspections.**

Operating poorly maintained vehicles is bad for road safety, bad for the environment and bad for competition. Vehicles that create a risk to road safety should be identified and forced to be repaired before they may continue their transport activities.

To reach a more harmonized approach to roadside technical inspection and roadworthiness testing in general we have started this year the process of revising the roadworthiness legislation in



order to adapt it to technical progress. We also intend to set the principle of mutual recognition of vehicle inspections throughout Europe. The aim is to allow transport operators to go for a technical inspection wherever they are operating at the moment the inspection is due, without having to come back to the country of registration.

5. A fifth example of close co-operation is on training, an area where IRU has shown leadership.

The Commission noted the resolution passed at your conference last month expressing concern about the acute shortage in skilled drivers. Here again, with close cooperation between the Commission and stakeholders we should be able to address this issue.

The Commission supports the IRU's objectives of developing a diverse recruitment strategy creating attractive working conditions also with the support of professional driver training. The Directive on the training of professional drivers contributes to this goal.

Training as prescribed by this Directive contributes to improving the image and the attractiveness of the profession. It gives drivers the opportunity to get to learn different aspects of road transport such as the main regulations, the obligations under standard contracts, the management of international transport permits and the role of the road transport sector in the economy.



We should jointly work towards offering better training for all those who apply to get a Certificate of Professional Competence or who want to be aware of the latest developments as foreseen in the rules on the admission to the occupation.

To this end there is close cooperation and dialogue between my Directorate and the IRU Academy. This has been a particularly fruitful area of cooperation, and long may that continue.

6. The sixth example concerns truck parking areas.

This is perhaps the most successful area of cooperation. We all know that a major problem for transport operators is the lack of safe and secure parking areas. This problem puts cargo at risk of theft, makes it harder for operators to comply with social legislation and overall makes the life of drivers more difficult and transportation less safe and secure. Tackling this problem has been difficult; Member States often do not have all the necessary resources to supply safe and secure parking areas in adequate numbers, but at the end of the day the costs needed to construct these truck parks must be borne by somebody.

A significant step forward however is the cooperation that the Commission has established with IRU regarding the very successful LABEL project, which developed a European label which rates truck parks based on quality and security.



The success of the programme is the direct result of the involvement of stakeholders such as the IRU, who worked closely with the Commission during the project. Their involvement was so successful that, at a conference on the issue last month, I had the pleasure of handing over to Mr Janusz Laczny, the IRU President, full responsibility for operation of this programme. Of course, this does not mark the end of our cooperation on this matter.

The Commission is now looking forward to actively participate in the international committee that IRU will establish to update and implement the labelling scheme developed by the project.

Before I conclude, I would like to address our joint responsibility to project the "best European practices" in terms of workers dignity and sustainable transport outside the EU. IRU is an international organisation, with operations in states close to the EU's borders. It is worldwide but we all know that its heart has remained in Europe. This organisation is therefore in a unique position and can assist in two ways. Firstly it can politically support the extension of adequate social and safety regulations to countries bordering the Union. The EU should not be an island of high standards of workplace safety, and it should be our common objective to spread these standards to neighbouring countries. Secondly IRU can work to ensure that operators based outside the Union, and especially those in countries which have applied to join the EU, have the resources and capability to comply with the relevant Union regulations.



In conclusion, the Commission and the IRU will always agree on more issues than the issues on which we may legitimately disagree. We both share a common vision of road transport that is safe, effective and competitive and we both recognise the crucial role that it plays in the EU's economy. I hope we continue to work together to achieve this shared vision.