

**2<sup>nd</sup> IRU/EU Presidency Road Transport Conference**  
**“Efficient solutions for making road transport greener”**  
**Brussels, Belgium, 29 February 2012**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Panel Discussion**

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*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

This morning, IRU President Janusz Lacny talked about the need to include road transport in the European Union’s Growth Agenda, which should be the main vehicle to drive the real economy and get us out of the current economic crisis. I would like to recall the important role which road transport played in previous decades and increasingly plays around the world in the development of modern supply chain management, the creation of growth, prosperity and the distribution of wealth. Sustainable growth cannot be achieved without promoting and further facilitating trade and thus road transport, which is currently the most taxed and most regulated mode of transport.

To achieve this objective, we will have to tackle a number of important challenges which have been set forward in the Commission’s Transport Policy White Paper. Notably we will have to make our transport system more resource efficient.

Ladies and gentlemen, road transport does not compete with the other modes. It is the only mode capable to transport door to door and that can complement any other mode, guaranteeing a seamless service. As such, any penalty on road transport is an even greater penalty on the economy as a whole. Replacing road transport by another mode is an illusion, and my fellow panellists know that.

I can reassure everyone in the audience today that the road transport industry is fully committed to greening. One and half years ago, I had the pleasure to present the industry’s voluntary commitment to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 30% by 2030. Since then, the operators have not stood still and, in many countries, initiatives at association and company level have been taken to bring down emissions even further.

However, one thing is important for the transport operators: investments made in reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions should bring concrete benefits in terms of fuel consumption and a reduction of operating costs. If we are to drive growth, we cannot have greener vehicles which are more expensive and at the same time do not give operational benefits.

In this respect, I wish to challenge the vehicle and component manufacturers to meet the new challenge of growth by ensuring that our trucks, which are vital production tools for the European real economy, allow not only greening but also allow transport companies and their clients to obtain operational benefits, at a competitive price.

Everyone knows that in order to further green, companies will have to invest in existing or new fleets, in training, in technology and operations. The European Commission can play a leading role, together with the European Parliament and the Member States, in establishing a “Clean Freight Partnership” with the transport industry which rewards all freight transport

modes for their efforts to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, instead of only the non-road modes which, in current EU funded programmes, are rewarded based on the shift of insignificant amounts of goods from road to other modes. I would also like to be very clear towards shippers and forwarders who should not use the greening of the transport agenda to put additional requirements on transport operators without sharing their burden of the costs. Greening is a shared responsibility.

Of course, today we also still have legal constraints to green road freight transport and they need to be addressed urgently. One of those constraints relates to the improvements of aerodynamics of trucks which could contribute to CO<sub>2</sub> reductions but are limited in scope due to EU legislation on weights and dimensions. Another constraint is the lack of transparency in CO<sub>2</sub> and fuel consumption reduction targets. Despite all the beautiful statistics which we have today, we simply do not know what the CO<sub>2</sub> impact of the different truck operations are because we do not have an EU recognised methodology to capture and report CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and fuel consumption of heavy goods vehicles. Such a methodology is needed and should also be made available for use by the transport operators.

Fortunately there is also some good news in removing barriers, with the announcement by the European Commission that a legal interpretation is on the way, looking at possibly allowing cross-border use of the European Modular System vehicle combinations, and the IRU hopes that cooperation between Member States will soon materialise to see the first green road and intermodal corridors using EMS being put in use.

Of course, our colleagues in the rail and combined transport industry will most likely unfortunately not share in our joy about the possible future cross border use of EMS, because contrary to road transport operators, the rail and combined transport industry stubbornly refuse to see the benefits which the Modular System can bring in multi-modal transport. Instead of thinking constructively in terms of innovative transshipment techniques for containers, swap bodies and other loading units, and making terminals accessible to EMS, they prefer to continue to put complete truck combinations on trains, thus carrying an enormous amount of dead weight. The IRU regrets this attitude, as it does not encourage an atmosphere of cooperation.

When the current Commission took office, representatives of all transport modes, under the initiative of the IRU, sat together to address a letter to Commission President Barosso asking him not to neglect the economy, jobs and the role of transport in economic growth while implementing his greening agenda. Unfortunately, the only representatives from the transport sector that did not join this cooperation were those representing combined road/rail transport who, once again, missed an opportunity to play a role in bridging the different transport modes and in particular road and rail.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I have so far not touched on one aspect: infrastructure. We cannot have a resource efficient transport system without good quality infrastructure. We have new TEN-T guidelines without road projects in the Core Network. We have EU projects on green freight transport corridors without noticeable consideration of road freight transport. How can you achieve a resource efficient EU transport system and infrastructure network without including road?

This said, the IRU calls on the Commission, the Members of the European Parliament and Member States to include road freight transports in all initiatives on green freight transport corridors and not to neglect investments in existing and new road infrastructure in order to allow road transport to fully play its role in the co-modal transport chain, and moreover, to drive growth.

To conclude, I can ensure you that the IRU is constantly driving towards improving the entire transport system that today and tomorrow will have road transport as its backbone. However, such improvements cannot be done by continuing to claim that one transport mode is by nature better, greener or more beautiful than another. Let's abandon this path and work towards improving all transport modes' environmental performance at-source and ensure the best possible interaction between modes – then, and only then, will we see the entire transport system becoming even more sustainable and, dare I say, even greener.

The IRU is here to continue to work constructively together with the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission to ensure that our – the road transport sector's - major role in making the transport system better is carried out. We look forward to working together on implementing only the realistic objectives of the White Paper over the years to come.

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