



“I am so proud of our industry. We kept people and goods moving despite the risks, restrictions and operational challenges of the pandemic.”

Radu Dinescu
President

Stronger together

The pandemic brought our industry, and IRU, together as never before.

The year 2020 was like no other in our history. For some, the pandemic presented unique opportunities, for some it threatened bankruptcy, for almost all it meant an abrupt and fundamental change in the way transport companies work. Revenue losses for the global road transport sector alone, both passenger and goods, were almost one trillion USD.

With IRU, we have faced the pandemic's impacts together: new and sudden border restrictions, huge shifts in supply chain patterns for logistics, passenger mobility dramatically curtailed, and tourism stopped dead in its tracks.

The “to deal with” list for any company running buses, coaches, taxis, trucks or vans in 2020 was a very long one. But IRU was there 24 hours a day, seven days a week, providing regular updates from the ground, and lobbying international organisations and governments on critical support and coordination measures.

However while the intensity of the crisis, and its profoundly global nature, brought into sharper focus the many challenges we as an industry face every day, it also shone a positive light on our work.

The trials and tribulations of the hero-driver – putting the health of others above their own to get people and goods to the places they need to be – featured regularly in the media. More than ever before, people recognise the essential service that our drivers, workers and companies perform in keeping the world's economies and communities moving.

For IRU itself, COVID-19 brought mixed blessings. After the strategic work of the two previous years, 2020 was a year of implementation in the organisation's membership service offering, business lines, governance, internal processes, and financial sustainability.

The pandemic accelerated a downward trend in TIR carnet volumes in some parts of the world,

yet boosted volumes in others. TIR went live in several key Gulf States and digitalisation advanced significantly on many fronts.

Membership expansion efforts suffered from travel restrictions, yet interest in joining IRU grew, especially among multinational companies. Lobbying success in key areas and a greater focus on demonstrating concrete membership value bore fruit, with 11 new members

The uncertainty ushered in by the pandemic will be with us for some time. But amidst the challenge of uncertainty lies the potential of opportunity. Our work over recent years to sharpen IRU's mission, services and organisation, and our results in 2020, stand us in good stead for the future.

The pandemic has, in many ways, brought out the best in the IRU family and in the industry as a whole. As IRU, we are stronger together in opportunity, as much as we are in crisis. ■

Summary



The year 2020 was a unique year for IRU and the commercial road transport industry. Almost everything IRU did was in some way impacted by the pandemic. It was not all about COVID-19 of course, but the pandemic showed IRU and our industry at its finest.

iru.org/covid19

Shaping the agenda

IRU drives change on the issues that matter most to companies that run transport networks for passenger mobility and supply chain logistics.



Avoiding the collapse of supply chains and mobility networks was one of IRU's main priorities during the pandemic – especially keeping borders open for vital commercial road transport services.

Standing up for our industry

IRU advances the interests of commercial road transport, working closely with members, as well as governments, regulators and international organisations.

Road transport is increasingly turning to digitalisation to cut costs, improve services and reduce emissions, however data sharing, ownership and access present both challenges and opportunities.



Understanding the future

Advanced research, partners and grassroots knowledge from millions of transport operating companies around the world allow IRU to provide unique business and market intelligence on the road transport sector.

57%

Forecast drop in 2020 revenue for scheduled and tourist coach, urban bus and taxi services.



IRU launched a new Intelligence Platform for its members in 2020, providing round-the-clock updates.

iru.org/intelligence

Keeping trade moving

IRU runs the TIR system in more than 60 countries worldwide, lowering transport costs and making trade more secure and efficient.



TIR countries approved the formal adoption of Annex 11 to the TIR convention in 2020, providing the legal basis for eTIR. It will enter into force in May 2021.

92%

Time saving using TIR to transport goods from Saudi Arabia to the United Arab Emirates

Mixing in the right circles

IRU is a global community of road transport professionals, helping members access and network with the right people, companies, authorities and organisations in more than 120 countries worldwide.

3,000+

participants attended IRU virtual webinars in 2020

Find out more at iru.org/events

Driving standards and performance

IRU's certification and standards team drives professional excellence in road transport through training, certification and capacity building.

Working with accredited institutes around the globe, IRU certifies thousands of drivers and transport operators every year to boost safety, efficiency and sustainability.



"I thank you for your continuous efforts to promote sustainable transport globally, including your call for countries to keep their borders open in these trying times."

António Guterres,
UN Secretary General



Financial overview

Despite the severe impacts and uncertainty of COVID-19, IRU drew on key strengths in 2020 to continue its strategic development, providing value for the road transport industry, while containing costs.

Road transport was one of the sectors most seriously impacted by the pandemic. IRU and its members played a crucial role throughout the year to keep drivers, workers and transport users safe, supply chains and mobility networks operational, and road transport operators in business.

Alongside IRU's COVID-19 response, the year saw significant progress in each IRU business line: expanding the membership base and providing clearer value for members based on successful advocacy results; facilitating trade and cross-border transport cooperation, especially with the TIR system; finalising the IRU Academy transition; and launching the RoadMasters assessment and certification solution.

Organisationally, after IRU's strategic work of the two previous years, 2020 was also a year of focus on our core activities: advocating for a safer, greener and more efficient industry while supporting the essential work of

our sector during this critical period, supporting the digital transition of the TIR carnet, developing the IRU RoadMasters solution aimed at driving professional excellence and launching our new intelligence platform to help our members better understand the challenges and opportunities of logistics and mobility and make better operational decisions.

Financially, despite intense efforts in existing TIR regions and encouraging progress in new territories, the number of TIR carnets issued in 2020 was 680,000, down from 860,000 in 2019, primarily due to the pandemic.

However, in parallel, IRU continued to rigorously review operations and adapt costs, reducing overall expenses by 18.5% compared to the previous year. Taken together with performance in financial markets, the overall result for the year was positive, allowing IRU to generate a net surplus before allocation to restricted funds.

The financial and operational environment will remain challenging going forward. This will require a continued management focus on income and expenditure in 2021 and beyond, while continuing to focus on value for our members and the industry.

IRU continued to allocate funds to support the road transport industry through its Innovation and Development Fund, launched in 2018. With a total value of at CHF 30 million, the Fund saw CHF 6.6 million granted to projects by the end of 2020.

IRU also continued to maintain a strong and robust asset base to manage the TIR system, in particular the financial guarantees for unpaid customs taxes and duties on TIR shipments, and the insurance scheme that underwrites them. ■

Income and expenditure account for the financial year ended 31 December in kCHF	2020	2019
Total net operating revenue	28,136	32,048
Direct operating expenses	-10,425	-11,513
Salaries, social charges and other staff expenses	-19,401	-23,333
Other operating expenses	-10,447	-13,280
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	-12,137	-16,078
Surplus from financial activities	8,284	20,486
Surplus from non-operating activities	1,054	5,908
Usage of restricted funds	3,418	3,988
NET SURPLUS BEFORE ALLOCATION	619	14,303
Allocation to restricted funds	-619	-14,303
NET SURPLUS AFTER ALLOCATION	-	-
Balance sheet as at 31 December in kCHF	2020	2019
Cash, short-term investments and term deposits	317,655	313,930
Short-term financial assets	175	1,125
Receivables and inventories	21,455	31,203
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	339,285	346,259
Long-term financial assets	91,345	91,345
Intangible assets and property, plant and equipment	1,503	1,986
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	92,849	93,331
TOTAL ASSETS	432,134	439,589
Short-term liabilities	28,552	29,908
Other long-term liabilities	1,629	2,764
Provision for risks and charges	326,228	326,228
TOTAL LIABILITIES	356,409	358,900
Unrestricted funds	-	-
Restricted funds	75,725	80,690
Net surplus of the year	-	-
TOTAL FUNDS	75,725	80,690
TOTAL FUNDS & LIABILITIES	432,134	439,589

Our members



IRU serves, represents, defends and works with our members every day. Our members are national and regional passenger and goods transport associations and leading multinational companies in mobility and logistics from all corners of the world. They are at the heart of everything we do.



Roads, recovery, rebuilding

Road transport is a positive force for rebuilding our world better in the years ahead. We are part of the solution, not the problem.

The crisis is far from over, but we are beginning to see a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel. Although millions of transport operators are still dealing with the pandemic and its vicious impacts on their workers, clients and communities, we are starting to look ahead with hope and plans.

Our first priority remains the needs of our members to get through the pandemic. Our advocacy efforts will continue to push for targeted financial support and easing of restrictions for operators, as well as a greater focus on digital tools such as TIR and better global and regional coordination on virus-related measures that affect transport.

Beyond COVID-19 however, our thoughts turn increasingly to how our industry can, and will, be a positive force in recovering from the pandemic and rebuilding for a better future.

The intricate fabric of commercial road transport services – stitching

together everything from friends and family to global supply chains – is crucial to all aspects of our lives.

Our industry, and our work at IRU, is therefore at the heart of the solution to our most pressing social, economic and environmental challenges. These challenges are encapsulated in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which cannot be achieved without efficient commercial passenger and goods road transport.

We are helping mobility and logistics companies attract talent and build skills with our new RoadMasters programme. Our charter to improve driver treatment is gaining traction, alongside efforts on safe parking, driver shortages and harmonising driving age to encourage young people and more women into the sector and help mitigate youth unemployment.

TIR remains at the heart of our work to keep trade moving swiftly across borders and prosperity advancing into all corners of the world. We are

driving digitalisation in this area, as well as global standards and best practice to digitalise mobility and logistics in a broader sense.

Decarbonising the planet's road transport networks is a huge challenge, and we are making sure that incentives target CO₂ emissions across the whole energy chain. Millions of operators, who are already masters in efficiency, will innovate to decarbonise transport effectively. We must meet CO₂ targets and increasing transport demand at the same time.

With our members, IRU is putting solutions to these issues onto political agendas, providing market insights, and helping bring together operators, as well as their suppliers, users and regulators.

Together, we will drive the recovery, solve these challenges, and rebuild better. ■



“Our industry, and our work at IRU, is at the heart of the solution to our most pressing social, economic and environmental challenges.”

Umberto de Pretto
Secretary General

