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Highlights
The world’s road transport industry coming together

Plenary sessions
Moving in the 21st century

Round-table sessions
Planning our future

The Muscat Compact
World transport industry roadmap signed at IRU World Congress

Survey results
Innovation for safety

Tech is transforming the business of moving people

Content

2
8
12
22
29
31
33
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The world’s road transport industry coming together

“This is the platform for the world’s transport leaders to stay ahead of the game and to keep up with the lightning speed of innovation and technology”

3 days of discussion that will change the industry
27 ministerial delegations from around the world
1,000+ delegates from five continents
10 international organisations bringing their unique expertise

Road transport industry leaders came to Muscat, Oman from over 75 countries to discuss and debate the future of the road transport industry. The list of over 60 speakers included political leaders, technology gurus, futurists and entrepreneurs, and of course road transport and logistics experts.

The lively formal debates set the scene for wide-ranging discussions in ministerial meetings, round-table discussions and during the networking events, including the show-piece gala dinner.

The result was much-needed clarity on how the road transport industry can harness and exploit the opportunities of new technologies to build a sustainable future for road transport in the 21st century and beyond.
Road Ventures has powered its very first startup competition under the tagline “Innovation on the move” during the IRU World Congress, last November 2018 in Oman.

Around seventy startups had applied to compete during the Congress. Out of these, six finalists were selected to pitch their business ideas at the congress and win the amazing prize of USD 100,000.

The six finalists were given 10 minutes each to pitch and answer questions on day #1 in front of the jury members and audience of the innovation alley.

On day #2 the finalists were given the opportunity to perform a 90 seconds elevator pitch in front of the entire public of the congress as part of a plenary session.

Unexpectedly, the challenge ended in a draw as two teams had totalled equal scores. Road Ventures was thus very proud to announce that CargoX and Zeleros had won the Startup competition, winning the price of USD 50,000 in funding each.

Cargo X: Igor Jakomin, CCO of CargoX, Ljubljana, is an independent supplier of blockchain based smart bill of lading solutions worldwide, replacing old-style paper Bill of Lading documents. Allowing users to state and transfer cargo ownership rights digitally.

Zeleros Hyperloop: coming from Valencia, Spain, David Pistoni, CEO and Co-Founder of Zeleros convinced the jury on the ambition to develop a scalable transport system to move passengers and cargo at 1,000 km/h with reduced infrastructure cost.

This competition has led to a fantastic result. Road Ventures is looking forward to its next Start up competition, so stay tuned and follow us on our LinkedIn page to learn more.
Technology-driven innovation will be the key to meeting the challenges of tomorrow.

Therefore, the speakers at the IRU World Congress were drawn from diverse backgrounds, to give full context to what the future could look like. We asked politicians, adventurers, entrepreneurs and technologists to share their vision of the future. And we applied the learnings from them to our industry.

The theme of the IRU World Congress was ‘Innovation on the move’. To understand that fully, it’s essential to understand what innovation is out there before even starting the conversation about how the road transport industry can benefit from that innovation.
The first Plenary Session of the IRU World Congress started with a welcome speech by HE Eng. Dr Ahmed Mohammed Salem Al-Futaisi, the Omani Minister of Transport and Communications, whose message was that Middle East is becoming a hub again and Oman is at the centre of this.

Christian Labrot, IRU President, set the tone for the entire conference, making it clear that change is coming rapidly but also presents opportunities for the industry. He highlighted that the room was filled with the people who can define the right path for the road transport industry’s prosperity.

José Manuel Barroso spoke about the importance of developing trade links and removing barriers to trade.

He was President of the European Commission during the difficult years following the 2008 crash so he knows all about the value of trade.

He said, “During my time at the European Union, I spent ten challenging years resisting several crises and forcing European integration. The idea of transport and mobility was linked to this integration. Historically, they are also linked to the opening of the world, and the interconnection of economies and societies.”

He also emphasised the importance of trade in connecting people, providing economic stability and growth, and building societies that want to prosper in peace.

He ended by echoing Christian Labrot’s challenge to the industry to set the right course for the future.

This led to a panel discussion about how the industry can meet that challenge.

The political world was represented by Steffen Bilger, Secretary of State at the German Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure, and Lujaina Mohsin Darwish, CEO of the Oman State Council. Pierre Lahutte, President of IVECO and Joachim Drees, CEO of MAN, represented the industry.

The focus flowed from José Manuel Barroso’s point about the importance of trade to society as a whole, as well as to the future of the road transport industry. It has to start with the right political will. Without that, competing countries will never agree and it will be impossible to create the right regulatory environment and to break down trade barriers. Once that is in place, the industry’s role is to make the integration actually happen.

The discussion moved to the technology that is shaping our industry and has the potential to transform it. Digital infrastructure, which requires close collaboration between governments and the industry, is a central part of that. Future fuels will have a significant role to play but what will they be? There is nothing yet to replace diesel for long-haul but it will happen, particularly as electricity takes over in cities.
What will road transport look like in five, ten or another 70 years?

Jim Carroll, one of the world’s leading futurists and innovation experts made the point that, however much things have changed, road transport technology is still using internal combustion engines, air-filled rubber wheels and tarmac roads.

Things are changing fast: the combination of autonomous vehicles and data exchange is set to change everything, and that change could happen very fast. And it is unlikely to be driven by established players.

Jim Carroll made the point that market disruption often comes from small, nimble organisations. With half the world’s population under the age of 25, access to skills is the new success factor for the future.

This led to a panel discussion about evolving technologies and what they mean for the road transport industry.

Jim Carroll and moderator John Defterios were joined by Jorn Madslien, a journalist who covers entrepreneurship, technology, and the energy and automotive sectors, logistics expert Mark Millar and Alex Knowles, one of the rising generation of transport leaders.

Keeping their feet firmly on the ground, they refused to get carried away by the excitement of innovative technology. Instead they focused on finding the balance between what is technologically doable and what is commercially viable.

The panel sought to guide the industry by teasing out which innovations are likely to have a real impact and which could fade away.

In the final plenary session, Kevin Gaskell, an entrepreneur and adventurer who has led Porsche, Lamborghini and BMW, started by talking about grasping opportunities and not waiting for the perfect moment – because it never arrives.

The most successful companies create tomorrow’s markets. He invited the audience to give themselves a licence to fail, learn from those mistakes and succeed next time.

Nick Earle, who was integrally involved in the rapid development of hyperloop technology with Virgin, made the point that the technology itself is often not the critical thing. What matters more is the impact it has on businesses.

He said transport is the last area to digitise, with the implication that it will happen very fast, using learnings from other industries.

Dr Rand Hindi, an artificial intelligence and deep machine learning engineer, talked about the impact artificial intelligence will have. Connected self-driving vehicles will find the best route based on current and predicted traffic, weather conditions, and whatever else can impact a journey. Trucks will communicate with infrastructure and borders, other transport modes and maintenance crews, all to minimise delays.

It’s about jobs changing, not jobs disappearing: Dr Hindi sees an important role for humans, because emotional intelligence has to be an integral part of decision-making.

Finally, Fabien Nestmann talked about the autonomous air taxi he is developing at Volocopter. Unsurprisingly, he raised the issue of the complexity of regulating technological innovations, and the challenge of bringing something totally new to market.
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Oman Aviation Services was established in January 2017 as a subsidiary to the state-owned Oman Aviation Group. The group businesses are growing and our intention is to attract and develop national talent and leaders.

**Our Purpose**

“We make everyone happier everyday”

- **OAS** provides ground handling services through its subsidiary Oman Ground Handling L.L.C. Oman Ground Handling is an IATA ISAGO certified Ground Handler and has successfully completed the RAS certification on May 2018. It provides its ground handling services to all the Airports in the Sultanate of Oman; Muscat (MCT), Salalah (SLL), Sohar (OHS), Duqm (DQM), Khaoi (KHS) and desert Airports.

- **OMAN AIR**
  - It is the primarily and premium Cargo Operations Handler in Muscat. With the New Muscat International Airport Operations and the new state of art the Cargo Building, there is a huge potential for the airfreight businesses in Muscat, and in the other parts of Sultanate of Oman. OAS is the largest shareholder by 67% while SATS has 33%.

- **OAC** was established in 2002, and the New Catering Facility is planned to open soon. OAC provides catering services to twenty-four (24) different airlines, Royal Flights, Presidential & State of Heads Flights, also to Charter and Adhoc Flights that operate from Muscat. It has a huge staff canteen facility, also caters OAS Trainings across all other subsidiaries and offers catering for outdoor events.

- **Oman Sales & Services** was established in 2003 as ‘First Class Member Company’ with Chamber of Commerce in Sultanate of Oman. It has related activities in Departures and Arrivals at Muscat International Airport, Oman Air In-flight Duty Free, Oman Air Staff Shop, Sultan Qaboos Port and at the National Museum.

- **Golden Tulip Hotel** is strategically located near the new Muscat International Airport and the Oman International Exhibition & Convention Centre. The hotel offers ball rooms, meeting rooms, restaurants, in-house bar, wide open space for outdoor events and a recreational facility with a large outdoor swimming pool. Although the hotel was built in 1982, it is fully equipped with modern technology.

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The lines between industries are blurring. You could have technology companies entering the transport industry or vice versa. As a result of this blurring it is important to understand which industry you are in to better prepare for competition.

“We need to be better prepared for the significant rise in the quantity of data from multiple sources, while establishing how to aggregate and assess it.”

“The sector needs to be better prepared for the significant rise in the quantity of data from multiple sources, while establishing how to aggregate and assess it.”

The round-table sessions at the IRU World Congress were where detailed discussions around a series of important questions facing the road transport industry happened. There were nine roundtables in total, covering the three key themes of future proofing your business, embracing innovation and governing road transport. Add all these together and you have the right ingredients to plan the future of the industry. What were the learnings?

Future proofing your business is, arguably, the most important discussion. At its most fundamental level, it is about survival. The threats come from all directions. What matters most is the ability to recognise the threats and have the vision to see the resulting opportunities.

As cities grow but real estate is limited, how will people and goods move around? The current set-up is not viable even today in many cities; we’ve all suffered endless traffic jams. The round-table investigated what the future could look like. Environmental sustainability is as big a consideration as financial stability. In fact, the two are inextricably linked. What is the fuel of the future? What will replace diesel for long-haul journeys? What is the best way of encouraging the industry to be more efficient, without creating barriers to growth?

The discussions covered how to reap the benefits of new business models and not be taken down by emerging companies that do things very differently. It’s important to react fast but it’s even better to identify the trends and act first.

What will employees of the future be doing? We might need drivers now but in five or ten years, we could be looking for captains who have remote control over a fleet of vehicles.

Planning our future

The round-table sessions

The sector needs to be better prepared for the significant rise in the quantity of data from multiple sources, while establishing how to aggregate and assess it.”
Don’t put digital development in the hands of the IT guys. Technology drives everything. Be ready and join the new developments

It is essential to embrace innovation because the right innovations serve the dual purpose of cutting your costs and increasing your potential income.

Autonomous vehicles are constantly in the headlines. There’s something sci-fi about them. And, because it is still new technology, people like seeing the failures. But be in no doubt autonomous vehicles are the future.

When they are combined with fully digital platforms and the right physical infrastructure, road transport will become highly efficient. Imagine a truck driving itself across a continent. It picks the best route, it communicates with the customs system so there are no delays, and it tells headquarters when it needs a new headlight bulb. And all of that will be automated.

The third element is data. The key lies in capturing, collating and analysing it efficiently and effectively, and then sharing the results. Done well, it can reveal a lot of information about your operations. But if you’re clumsy, it can cause problems. The key lies in the analysis.

The final round-table discussions were around governing road transport. The focus was on enabling trade facilitation. As the plenary sessions showed, trade is essential for the generation of wealth and the promotion of peace. The first requirement is the political will. The second is the industry’s ability to deliver.

Because the World Congress was in Oman, there was a strong focus on building towards higher competitiveness in the Middle East, providing useful lessons for the rest of the world.

“We need new, comprehensive and universal traffic rules and traffic signs as a basic provision, which is being driven by dedicated UN working parties”
The industry has a lot to learn from newcomers. We are seeing larger companies tapping into or even buying these start-ups with all their knowledge about innovation, artificial intelligence and blockchain. They want to use these companies to become more agile.

“In Afghanistan, all trade facilitation efforts have the primary purpose of supporting private sector expansion.”

“How do we change the perception of the driver profession to attract more young people, including women?”

“Infrastructure development and new intermodal connections are reshaping traditional trade corridors and the way transport operators work across the world.”
27 Ministerial delegations attended the World Congress and sat with business industry around a table to discuss the Muscat Compact.

The Muscat Compact is a principle-based framework for cooperation, bringing the industry together to take control of its future by using innovation to overcome current challenges and uncertainty. It focuses on four key elements: talent, trade, environment and innovation.

The aim is to drive collective action and guide public-private collaboration at local, national, regional and global levels, and to share harmonised global best practices.

The industry is facing accelerated change and significant opportunities. The Muscat Compact will help us act together to design our future and we start building it. We can't predict the future, but we can forge our own destiny within it. The survival of the industry, and therefore of global prosperity, depends on it.

“It is essential to talk, regardless of differing interests and animosities, because talking is what leads to deals, which in turn means trade and global prosperity.”

The Muscat Compact was signed at the IRU World Congress.
At Saud Bahwan Group, excellence is a way of life. A philosophy that guides us to serve customers with quality products and services in diverse areas including Automobiles & Allied Businesses, Heavy Vehicles, Construction Equipment, Turnkey Projects, Industrial Equipment, Municipal & Civic Services, Manufacturing, Property & Real Estate and Travel & Tourism. Over the years, we have made massive investments in infrastructure and facilities only for the benefit of our customers. Today, our Group serves customers with a nationwide network of branches, well-appointed showrooms, state-of-the-art parts & service operations coupled with sophisticated warehousing facilities. These generate the highest levels of satisfaction, motivating us to do even better than yesterday. Everyday.

The IRU survey of transport companies across Europe, the GCC and Asia has found that the industry is united about opportunities and threats. Transport companies recognise that developments in technology and innovation will be key to building a safe, successful and sustainable industry. Improving safety is the biggest opportunity, followed by the introduction of automation. And automation is going to happen quickly. Two thirds of respondents expect autonomous trucks to become a viable option within the next decade, with nearly a third thinking we could reach the tipping point in three years. The key benefits, the survey found, will be better productivity and reduced costs. The biggest threat to road transport is geopolitical uncertainty. It is this what politicians have to address to promote trade, prosperity and, ultimately, peace.

“Alongside automation, safety is the biggest innovation opportunity for transport companies around the world”

Biggest innovation opportunities for transport companies globally:

- Safety: 33%
- Automation: 21%
- Telematics: 21%
- Sustainability: 13%

Innovations in safety will help to drive multiple enhancements for transport companies globally:

- Boost productivity: 22%
- Create competitive edge: 18%
- Meet customer demand: 12%
Road transport is about moving people as moving goods. The IRU World Congress brought together leading international figures to examine the challenges facing passenger transport operators, with participants looking at the solutions offered by technology and innovation.

One of the key differences between goods and people is that you need to keep people informed about what is happening. Part of the discussion was about the need to have a digitally driven relationship with customers, keeping passengers’ needs in mind. There was also a robust debate about new technology and business models, and how the traditional bus and coach transport industry is being disrupted by the combination of automation, the sharing economy and decarbonisation. The emergence of digital platforms and new business models have changed the landscape across the world.

“The imminent arrival of vehicle to vehicle communications, 5G infrastructure and connected fleets will be a game-changer”

Philippe Méda, CEO of Innovation Pilots; Hugo Osula, Chairman of Mootor Grupp; Ahmed Al Bulushi, CEO of Mwasalat; Jos Sales, Associate partner at Sales-Lentz Group; Dr. Raed Alsalhi, General Manager of Land Transport Development at the Saudi Arabia Public Transport Authority.
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