

## IRU VISION AND ACTION PLAN ON IMPROVING ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE DRIVERS' PROFESSION IN THE EU

### I. VISION

We firmly believe that the professional road transport industry will remain the backbone of modern mobility and supply chains, serving citizens and customers efficiently, anytime, anywhere, and moving our societies and economies to a sustainable, green and prosperous future.

We, therefore, propose the following Action Plan, based on four pillars:

- Contribute to raising awareness about the essential contribution of professional drivers to our societies' mobility and supply chains, leading to **their recognition as “essential workers”**, in particular, in legislation and other initiatives taken at the EU level. To achieve that, we believe that a **mandatory “attractiveness of the profession” criterion** should be introduced in the impact assessment, leading to and proposing relevant EU road transport-related legislative and funding initiatives. Proposals and initiatives having adverse effect on the attractiveness of the profession will be resolutely opposed by the industry and its partners.
- **Establish a solid culture of respect, including in public speaking, of road transport companies and professional drivers**, by engaging with EU policy decision-makers and opinion makers, such as the media, as well as with our public and private partners, including social partners, shippers, the enforcement community and educational institutions. Our objective is to jointly contribute to a shift, already by mid-2023, in the way road transport, logistics and the travel and group tourism industries are perceived and portrayed in policy discourse and in the media.
- Make use of the opportunities offered by the ongoing technological and societal revolution to **shift the public perception of our industry**, starting from policy decision-makers, media and educational institutions, whilst accompanying the transition, including of the driver's profession, to a connected and digital future.
- **Simplify and streamline the path to becoming a professional driver**, by adapting both legislation and training to the specificities of the road transport profession, and removing, in the medium-term, the legal, administrative and financial barriers, including from school to wheel. Meanwhile, we will focus our efforts on attracting increasingly diverse populations, in particular, young people, women, and immigrants legally residing in EU Member States. By 2030, we aim to achieve the objective of 10% of professional drivers in the EU being below 25 years old and another 10% being women.

### II. PROPOSED PRIORITY AREAS AND ACTIONS

The proposals below identify actions and measures that should be implemented collectively by the IRU and its members at the international and EU level.

At the same time, IRU Member Associations in the EU Member States are invited to develop, already in 2022, a national SWOT analysis of the current situation in their

country, to identify challenges and opportunities. On that basis, they are invited to establish a dedicated national Action Plan with short, medium and long-term measures to address the issue of the attractiveness of the driver's profession - possibly in a common public-private effort with the relevant national authorities and partners from the private sector, including trade unions, shippers and educational institutions.

In addition, bearing in mind the urgency and the gravity of the situation, it is proposed to invite the European Commission to propose a dedicated Communication, coupled with an Action Plan and targeted funding, to address the issue of driver shortage, including the image and attractiveness of the drivers' profession, the facilitated access to the drivers' profession and the improvement in of training quality, in particular for young people, women and legally residing immigrants.

## **1. Removing legal barriers and facilitating access to profession**

### *1.1. Short term*

1.1.1. Within the upcoming revision of the EU Driving Licence Directive, supplement the [current IRU position](#) aiming at opening new opportunities for young people, bridging the gap between school and wheel and adapting the general professional drivers' minimum age to 18 years, by:

- Advocating the introduction of a common special regime at the EU level for the recognition of third country C and D professional driving licences by EU Member States, on the condition that their holders meet the same professional qualification standards as those applicable to EU resident drivers.
- To this end, underline that the industry must at all times ensure that road goods transport drivers are adequately trained, as this is closely linked with efficiency, professional satisfaction and the image of the profession.
- In this respect, advocate that such third -country holders of C and D professional licences, must have been trained to EU standard levels, corresponding to the requirements of the EU Driver Training Directive, whilst allowing EU Member States to establish stricter regimes at national level regarding the recognition of third-country driver licences.
- As regards the training of young driver apprentices by older and more experienced professional drivers, this should only take place on the condition that these driver tutors have completed a programme that gives them the necessary competences to train younger driver apprentices.
- In this respect, also consider options, which would allow a “decoupling” of drivers' professional and private driving licence rights, in particular, in terms of registering infringements incurred separately in one or the other domain, to avoid the loss of driving rights for infringements incurred in another domain.

1.1.2. To facilitate access to temporary driver (tachograph) cards for third-country drivers in EU Member States, initiate a discussion with the European Commission on how to allow third-country drivers to drive a truck or a coach before establishing their normal residence in an EU Member State (for a period of less than 185 days).

1.1.3. Organise a public event, with the participation of industry, authorities, training institutions and other relevant core stakeholders, to address issues related to professional drivers' training and its adaptation to current and future technological and behavioural patterns and challenges.

## 1.2. *Medium and long-term*

- 1.2.1. Following the public event, initiate a discussion among the IRU EU members (and subsequently, partners, including from the vocational training community) on progressively adapting and modernising the EU Driver Training Directive, to better reflect the specificity and the dynamic nature of the profession of bus, coach and truck drivers, and prepare for the challenges of the future (digitalisation, automation, alternative powertrains, specific subsectors, specific local needs, etc.).
- 1.2.2. Reflect on driving and rest time rules to consider their potential future adaptation to economic, societal, behavioural (including for young and old drivers) and technological developments. In this context, also address the issue of older drivers and make proposals on how to retain them longer in the profession, and attract/reinstate professional drivers who have left the profession for various reasons.

## 2. **Improving working conditions and respect of drivers**

### 2.1. *Short-term*

- 2.1.1. Establish a dedicated mandate and engage in a discussion with trade unions and, potentially, shippers at the EU level with the objective of achieving a joint position (statement) on handling palettes and waiting times at loading/unloading sites, as well as on loading and unloading activities carried out by professional drivers<sup>1</sup>, to ensure the respect of drivers and their rights at loading/unloading sites.
- 2.1.2. Continue the promotion of the IRU-initiated global Drivers' Charter on improving the treatment of drivers at loading and unloading sites, with an emphasis on launching massive national promotional campaigns to adhere and respect its provisions, under the leadership of IRU Member Associations in the various EU Member States.

### 2.2. *Medium- and long-term*

- 2.2.1. Negotiate a model Service Level Agreement on fair and efficient roadside checks with enforcers and potentially trade unions, to be adapted at the national level, under the leadership of IRU Member Associations.
- 2.2.2. Launch a dialogue with border and customs authorities with the objective of reducing waiting times at border crossings and improving facilities available for professional drivers at borders.
- 2.2.3. Support the promotion of the EU safe and secure truck parking standards and funding of safe and secure parking areas across Europe, with the objective of doubling, by the end of 2025, the number of available certified safe and secure parking places for trucks in Europe.

## 3. **Fostering the exchange of good practices**

### 3.1. *Short-term*

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<sup>1</sup> By taking into account the experience of the recent laws introduced in Portugal and Spain, whilst paying special attention to the required exemptions, to be decided at national level.

- 3.1.1. Collect from and share with members a set (Guidebook) of good practices on addressing the issue of the attractiveness of the profession.
- 3.1.2. Launch a regular (as a minimum, 4 times per year<sup>2</sup>) exchange of good practices among IRU member associations and other relevant public and private partners and stakeholders on improving the attractiveness of the driver's profession.

### *3.2. Medium- and long-term*

- 3.2.1. Establish a platform to exchange good practices in the field of talent management and reducing skills' shortages.

## **4. Improving the image of the profession**

### *4.1. Short-term*

- 4.1.1. Establish alliances at the EU (IRU) and national level (IRU Member Associations) with like-minded industry partners, such as shippers, vehicle manufacturers, insurance companies, educational institutions, training and driving academies, relevant NGOs etc., to improve the image of the driver's profession and promote its attractiveness, including by co-funding/sponsoring relevant studies and campaigns.
- 4.1.2. Detail a dedicated IRU approach and launch a campaign (to culminate in a large EU public event in October 2022) focusing on young drivers and their path to enter the profession, including potential barriers related to their training and difficulties to obtain insurance. Simultaneously, create synergies with and making use of the opportunities (communications, funding etc.) provided by the 2022 European Year of Youth.

### *4.2. Medium- and long-term*

- 4.2.1. Develop and propose an IRU strategy, at the EU (IRU) and national level (member associations), to address and improve, in the long-term, the visibility and attractiveness of driver's profession, with a special emphasis on young people and women.
- 4.2.2. Invite the European Labour Authority (ELA) to stage (already in 2023) a dedicated full-year campaign on improving the image, facilitating access to the drivers' profession and exchange of good practices, with the participation of all key private and public stakeholders.

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<sup>2</sup> Starting with a reflection on the likely form, content and accompanying conditions of what the proposed special regime for recognising third-country C and D driving licences in the EU.