

VILNIUS, Lithuania, September 16, 2013 /PRNewswire/ --

Discussions at the 3rd IRU/EU Road Transport Conference today centred on further improving efficiency in road transport. There was agreement that effective solutions to to day's challenges will help stimulate growth. Participants also called for international trade facilitation agreements such as the UN TIR Convention to be fully respected by all signatories.

The [3rd IRU/EU Road Transport Conference](#), "*The Road Transport Market - Competitiveness & Partnership. Transforming Challenges in to Effective Solutions for Growth*", held today in Vilnius, Lithuania, brought together some 200 political, transport and trade leaders from all 28 EU Member States and representatives from many Eastern Partnership states. The Conference, jointly organised by the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the International Road Transport Union, focused on the main challenges facing the road transport industry, and how to transform these challenges into effective solutions for growth, through coordinated action at political and industry level, and called for all signatories of the UN TIR Convention to fully respect their obligations under the agreement.

Keynote speakers included the Lithuanian Minister of Transport, Rimantas Sinkevičius, the Vice President of the European Commission responsible for transport, Siim Kallas, the IRU President,

Janusz

Lacny
and DG MOVE Director General,
Matthias Ruete
, amongst others.

There was a broad consensus among Conference participants that the establishment of increased cooperation and partnerships will be essential in order to meet the ongoing challenges that the sector faces and thereby stimulate growth in the EU, as well as ensure an even more efficient road transport sector. Participants thus affirmed, in order to deliver the economic growth and social and environmentally sustainable mobility needs of all EU companies and citizens:

- the importance of commercial road transport as a vital production tool to support growth;
- the desire to continually improve road safety and the security of the transport chain through high quality training, information systems and high quality enforcement across Europe;
- the imperative need for efficient crossing of external borders and thus for ensuring that all related international conventions are fully respected;
- the need for continuously improving traffic flows and ensure sustainable mobility through the best use of existing infrastructure, filling the missing links as well as concluding without delay international passenger transport agreements.

With the view to achieve a more efficient EU road transport sector to support growth and mobility needs, the Conference addressed the following points namely to:

- bring pressure on signatories of international trade facilitation treaties and conventions to ensure that signatories fully comply with their international obligations in order for trade to flourish thereby underpinning sustained growth and prosperity;
- focus on amending appropriate weights and dimensions rules to allow aerodynamic, efficiency gains and road safety improvements for vehicles and equipment, and to promote efficient connections between modes;
- ensure adequate social conditions in the road transport sector and the implementation of more harmonised and coordinated inspection regimes in relation to for example roadworthiness as well as a more harmonised infringements handling, including the level of fines;
- provide support for the increased use of collective passenger transport in particular by bus, coach and taxis.

Rimantas Sinkevičius, EU Transport Council President and Minister for Transport, Republic of Lithuania, said, "That countries want to have long-lasting and reliable transport and logistics policy across international borders and invited participants to further develop more effective and streamlined mechanisms for international road transport and trade facilitation."

The Vice President of the European Commission, Mr Kallas, highlighted: "More and more goods are carried on the road between the EU and our neighbours. This is a good and healthy sign of closer integration of our respective markets. It will support economic growth to the benefit of everybody."

IRU President, Janusz Lachny, noted: "It should be remembered that commercial road transport is the only transport mode which provides door-to-door service and complements all other modes and so I welcome the recognition of the need for even closer partnerships with the road transport sector in order to meet today's challenges. I can only stress how such close co-operations are necessary to challenge for instance unilateral decisions taken by countries to change their compliance with international agreements, such as the United Nations TIR Convention. Only by working together can we ensure that measures taken by individuals can be stopped and thus avoid that international trade and economic development will be curtailed. It should finally be said that the IRU expects that the increased cooperation will avoid situations where increasing restrictions and costs or limiting possibilities for innovation for road transport operators will reduce competitiveness and reduce the economic viability of the many small and medium-sized road transport enterprises."

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