



The IRF Bulletin

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International Road Federation
Fédération Routière Internationale
Federación Internacional de Caminos

IRF Geneva

2 Chemin de Blandonnet
CH-1214, Vernier
Switzerland
tel: + 41 22 306 02 60
fax: + 41 22 306 02 70

IRF Brussels

17-19 Rue de la Tourelle
B-1040, Brussels
Belgium
tel: + 32 3 234 66 30
fax: + 32 3 230 79 07

IRF Washington

1010 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Suite 410
Washington, DC 20001
USA
tel: + 1 202 371 55 44
fax: + 1 202 371 55 65

www.irfnet.org

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Letter from the IRF

In the last issue of the IRF Bulletin we mentioned that the aim of this reformatted publication is to go into more depth on issues of interest to the IRF and its members. We were very happy that members liked the new format of the IRF Bulletin. Originally we were going to publish it twice per year, but by popular demand we have increased the frequency to four issues per year.

The IRF is a truly global organisation and in the last few months many new members have joined, taking the number of countries where IRF has members to over 80. Major developments are happening in the road industry throughout the world. Partly as a result of recovery from the recession a few years ago, partly as a result of improved economic conditions in many countries, there are now major road developments worldwide. In this issue we feature developments in India, Russia, South America and South East Europe.

On pages 6 and 7 you will read about the major conference held in Dubrovnik, Croatia in March 2005 on the subject of the rehabilitation of South East Europe's roads. This is part of a programme which was launched in the late 90s to help the countries of the region develop their infrastructure following the destructive civil war earlier in the decade. We are launching new road programmes for the Black Sea Ring in December at a meeting in Istanbul and for North African roads at a meeting to be held in Cairo in October.

But the developments do not end there - in this issue we could have featured reauthorisation of the federal highway and transit programme in the United States, the development of an international road network in the Middle East, and the rapid expansion of the expressway network in China. We could also have discussed how the IRF is working with the New Zealand Ministry of Transport on asset management, incorporating a risk based approach for managing road surface friction.

In the last issue we mentioned our policy of being "local everywhere" and the opening of local representations in Ankara, Beijing, Buenos Aires, Cairo, Moscow and Delhi. The first of these in Cairo and Delhi have started operating and others will follow in the coming months and years, so that the



Patrick Sankey
Director General & CEO
Washington DC Office



Tony Pearce
Director General
Geneva / Brussels Office

IRF will have an extensive group of local representations, extending our services at a truly global level.

IRF members themselves have a global reach. Following the tragic earthquake and tsunami in December 2004 many members offered their engineers and resources to help the governments of the region to recover from the disaster. In different ways members were able to help the affected countries get back on their feet, because without adequate road and bridge infrastructure building materials could not be taken to rebuild villages. We will feature lessons to be learnt from the recovery process following this tragedy in our next issue.

Of course roads are vital to make economies work. Without good roads, freight and passengers cannot get to where they need

to be. This in turn creates a major challenge for the economies of many developing countries because of the difficulties involved in financing such large projects. In the next issue of the Bulletin we will feature the challenge of road financing.

In the coming months IRF will hold meetings and seminars in Argentina, Egypt, India, Iran, Korea, Netherlands Antilles, Russia, Spain, Thailand, Turkey and the USA. Thailand, of course, will host the IRF World Meeting in mid June, possibly the largest ever gathering of road professionals from all parts of the industry. It is a unique opportunity to meet old friends and potential business partners, and we certainly look forward to meeting you there.

Major Road Developments

As a global organization IRF is interested in helping the development of road projects worldwide. In this article Tony Pearce, Director General Geneva / Brussels, looks at some of the road programmes in which IRF is becoming involved.

Russia

Railways rather than roads provided the main means of transportation in the Soviet Union, and consequently Soviet industry placed little emphasis on the production of automobiles and other modes of personal transport. As a result, the demand for road construction was small. Over 50,000 population centres, from villages to small cities, do not have access to paved roads that can be used all year round. Russia's low road density (5.3 km per citizen, compared with 8 km in western Europe and 13 km in the United States) has caused high prices for many transported goods. Transport Minister Igor E Levitin has stated that transport costs account for 1520% of a commodity's price in Russia compared with 78% in western European countries. As Russia's economy grows, this problem can only get worse, and goods and people will not be able to get to where they have to be.

Beyond this a large part of the road network needs maintenance: half of the 47 000 km of federal public roads are in need of repair. A large number of road sections that run through developed areas do not have the required lane or shoulder width, no dividing barriers, or overpasses at railway crossings with high traffic.

The growth of Russia's economy is stimulating a higher demand for road transport, and is increasing the load on network roads, especially on those providing international and inter-regional links. There has also been an increase in the number of road sections with frequent traffic congestion entering large cities.

Clearly major investment is needed to solve these problems. Even with Russia's economic growth and the considerable achievement in the last two years in stabilising the economy and reducing foreign debt, it is unlikely that there will be enough funds for the required investment. Indeed, for more than a decade public investment in the road sector has been falling. Rosavtodor, the state highways authority, has been 30% under-funded (by \$ US 8 billion) in the last three years.

Full modernisation is a long-term task planned to be completed by 2025. The Russian Federal Government plans to spend

\$US 7.5 billion on a public-private partnership (PPP) highway linking Moscow and St Petersburg (about 700 km). It will have ten lanes near Moscow and near St Petersburg. Thirty percent of the financing will be from private providers who will be given contracts to build the roadside services, and the road is planned to continue from St Petersburg to Finland. Other toll roads are planned between the Minsk Shosse and MKAD, and another from Moscow to the northern port city of Archangelsk.

In May eleven IRF members will travel on a business development mission to Russia visiting Archangelsk, St Petersburg, Kazan, Omsk and Moscow. The authorities in these cities have been at the forefront of opening up to private sector involvement in the road sector over the last decade.

Black Sea

Road traffic around the Black Sea is developing rapidly and there is already congestion, particularly on access roads to ports. On the eastern shore of the Black Sea the mountains of Georgia come down to the coast, and the roads along the shore are inadequate. The problem here is exacerbated by the fact that the North-South Corridor from Russia through Iran to the Iranian Gulf is currently blocked because it passes through the military area of Chechnia. Traffic is therefore being redirected to the west, through Turkey and Georgia, or much further east through Turkmenistan.

With European Union enlargement, manufacturing jobs will be moving further east in the coming years. As a result the lack of infrastructure in the region will become more apparent. This has led IRF to propose the Black Sea Ring Programme which will be launched in Istanbul in late November.

South America

On 8 December 2004 the South American Presidents met in the city of Cusco and announced the launch of the South American Community of Nations, which aims to achieve physical integration of the continent through infrastructure works. They have identified 31 integration projects requiring an investment of \$US 4.3 billion over five years. Twenty of these projects within the initiative named IIRSA



(Iniciativa para la integración de la infraestructura regional suramericana) are for the construction of roads and bridges.

The IRF's involvement with South American roads goes back to the 1950s with the Pan American Highway programme. We plan to relaunch the programme in the latter part of the year.

India

There are vast and fast developments taking place in India in the road sector. Phase-I and Phase-II of the National Highway Development Programme are under execution and nearing completion. Under Phase-III it is proposed to construct 10,000 km of roads connecting state capitals to the nearest national highway. The programme is likely to cost over \$US 1 billion and will be promoted on a BOT basis. In the current budget, presented in February 2005, there is a provision of \$US 227 million. Phase-IV will widen the highway network throughout the country by upgrading 21,000 km of single lane to 2-lane roads with paved shoulders, strengthening 17,000 km of existing two lane highway and constructing paved shoulders.

IRF has been invited by the Secretary of the Indian Government's Department of Road Transportation and Highways to bring a group of IRF members to India to look at the possibility of participation in these contracts. Because of the timing of these contracts this visit should give adequate time for making proposals, which should be made by the end of September.

Elsewhere

Major developments of road infrastructure are happening throughout the world and the IRF aims to help members participate in projects in all six continents.

Interview

BOŽIDAR KALMETA

Mr Božidar Kalmeta, Croatian Minister of the Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development replies to questions about road development in South East Europe and the IRF's involvement in the region

What is the background to the IRF congress in terms of road development in South East Europe? How advanced do you think Croatia is compared to its neighbours and in Western Europe?

As a candidate for EU membership, Croatia is taking a responsible approach to the planning and implementation of programs aimed at the development of its traffic system, as an integral part of the European transport network.

Such a transport system will guarantee a prosperous, good quality and safe traffic integration of all parts of the European Union, in particular western Europe, with the area of South East Europe (SEE). This system will also end the isolation of the sensitive area of SEE. Greece has benefited from significant EU aid to develop its transport infrastructure in the 24 years it has been a member of the EU.

Croatia has either completed or is about to complete construction of border motorway sections towards Slovenia and Hungary and towards Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Croatia is encouraging its neighbours to speed up the process of planning and construction of motorways within Pan-European traffic corridors X, X-A, and V-B and the Adriatic-Ionian highway (AIH).

"Physical communication" on road networks cannot be considered without communication on a political level. Do you see real progress in this area, particularly with the countries that emerged from former Yugoslavia?

Reconstruction of physical communications was carried out alongside the normalisation of political relationships with our neighbours. In fact, transport projects were one step ahead of political agreements.

Recent cooperation on traffic projects is proceeding within working groups involved in coordination of border sections toward all neighbours. Croatian engineers are also participating in developing designs for the Corridor V-C motorway through Bosnia and Herzegovina. Cooperation has been established at expert level on the route of the Adriatic-Ionian Highway (AIH). And finally, there are preparations for joint construction of the Mura border bridge between Croatia and Hungary within Corridor V-B.

What prompted Croatia to cooperate with IRF in hosting this congress and what benefits do you expect your country to derive from the event?

The Republic of Croatia and this Ministry support all European and regional initiatives contributing to development of the European traffic system, in particular those confirming Croatia's traffic significance. This was the reason why we supported the IRF initiative. The Congress was organised in the Dubrovnik area, an area of rich history and the point of contact with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro within the Adriatic-Ionian Transport Corridor (AITC), which is intended to provide a traffic connection between the seven formerly isolated countries of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, from Trieste in Italy to Kalamata in Greece.



What are the greatest challenges facing the road sector in SEE? Are these technical issues and missing links, non-physical barriers or matters of finance and efficient operation?

Some parts of SEE are very well connected, while other areas are still isolated. It is therefore necessary to foster cooperation between the countries. Technical issues are relatively easy to solve, while non-physical barriers are being gradually removed through bilateral agreements on cross-border transport.

Finally, there is an evident lack of funding in most of the neighbouring countries, not only for construction of motorways and express roads, but also for reconstruction and maintenance of the existing roads.

How do you believe IRF road congresses can help the region to meet these challenges?

The work within eight sessions of the congress, presentations, discussions and personal contacts helped create a positive climate of cooperation and understanding, which is important for further bilateral and regional contacts and arrangements.

The Congress was also a good opportunity for official contacts between the ministers of transport and representatives of IFIs. Conclusions on joint action, in particular those related to the Adriatic-Ionian Transport Corridor prove that the greatest value of this event lies in gathering the interested countries together around a joint project.

PPPs for highways are once again on the agenda in eastern and SE Europe. Can Croatia offer any success stories in PPP type arrangements?

We have used Public Private Partnerships in the construction of the Croatian road network. Three concession companies have been founded: Bina Istra (French-Croatian company), Rijeka-Zagreb Motorway (state concession) and Zagreb-Macelj Motorway (Austrian-Croatian company). Croatia's experiences in motorway construction using the PPP model are extremely positive. Analyses on the suitability of the PPP model for certain road projects are under way.

Following the congress, what will be the next steps in the region's road development and the future priorities? Will a permanent body like a working group for South East Europe be needed?

Road network development priorities have to be in line with the guidelines of the European Commission High Level Group for Transport. On the other hand, they have to be tailored to the needs of individual countries of the region.

In my view, instead of establishing a working group priority should be given to establishing a coordinating body for SEE at the ECMT level. Following analysis of some twenty existing initiatives, this body would provide guidelines for action. With IRF support, this could be the ECMT Task Force for SEE, which was promoted after the Dubrovnik congress.

How can IRF further cooperate with Croatia to assist the country's future road development?

I think it is necessary to develop a wider cooperation between Croatian road authorities and the IRF and companies. IRF could provide support to Croatian efforts in the AITC and AIH, the development of PPP programmes, the road safety programme and in training experts.

South East Europe Feature

Roads to closer regional cooperation

A new climate for cooperation was sensed when the IRF hosted the 4th Road Congress for South East Europe in March near Dubrovnik in Croatia. This report looks at the background to the congress, and the environment for developing infrastructure in the region.

The Croatian town of Cavtat-Dubrovnik on the Adriatic Coast, once the scene of violent conflict, became a stage for cooperation and discussion on 6-9 March as host to the IRF's 4th Road Congress for South East Europe. The congress marked a high point in the IRF programme for the region, bringing together national governments, the international community and local and international representatives from the private sector.

The congress, hosted by the Croatian Ministry for the Sea, Transport, Development and Tourism, was a great success and advanced the dialogue on important issues concerning priorities in the region's road development, including the role of the international community and available methods for financing this development. It provided a platform for the exchange of views between all involved players and demonstrated that the views of these parties are not always in agreement.



Dr. Darko Mlinarić

President Croatian Road Society "Via Vita"
"The AIH project will create a climate of cooperation through highway communications."

The active support of co-organiser Via-Vita, the Croatian Road Society, headed by Dr Darko Mlinarić, was evidence of Croatia's will to take a leading role in the region's development. Attendance by eight government delegations from the region, including ministers from Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, and Serbia and

Montenegro, demonstrated the remarkable progress which has been made in regional cooperation, an essential factor for developing efficient and integrated road networks, but also to ensure the wider economic development of the region.

All countries outlined ambitious development plans for their road networks as well as presenting the joint initiative Adriatic-Ionian Highway (AIH) project, a highway stretching 1500 km from Italy to Greece. In his role as programmes advisor to the Croatian Ministry, Dr Mlinarić presented a consolidated report on the AIH, highlighting the project's key importance for the stabilisation and development of the region, with the double objective of connecting isolated regions and creating, in this former zone of conflict, a climate of cooperation through "highway communications". Despite enthusiasm from the participating countries, representatives of the international institutions have so far not been convinced, maintaining that the priority projects remain those on the previously identified core transport network.

The international community maintains a key role in developing the region's infrastructure, not purely in terms of providing funding but also voicing its opinion on the priorities for the regional road network. Initiatives such as the Infrastructure Steering Group and the European Commission's High Level group on extending trans-European networks to EU neighbours are influential in terms of identifying priority projects and allocating funding accordingly.

A key player in the development of the region has been the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. This is the first serious attempt by the international community to replace the previous, reactive crisis intervention policy in South Eastern Europe with a comprehensive, long-term conflict prevention strategy. The Stability Pact is based on experience and lessons from worldwide international crisis management. Conflict prevention and peace building can be successful only if they start in parallel in three key sectors: the creation of a secure environment, the promotion of sustainable democratic systems, and the promotion of economic and social well-being. Progress in all three sectors is necessary for sustainable peace and democracy.

An important factor for the region is the shared aspiration of the countries of South East Europe for membership of the European Union: Greece and Slovenia are members of the EU; Bulgaria and Romania have completed their negotiations for joining in 2007; Croatia and Turkey will soon start negotiations for membership; and the other countries hope to join the EU in the next decade or so. The European Union therefore acts as a pole of stability, the driver of economic integration throughout Europe, and an important source of finance for major infrastructure projects.

In their Congress presentations the European Commission as well as the international financial institutions (IFIs notably World Bank and European Investment Bank) and the Stability Pact took a firm stance on the conditions under which they are ready to provide financial support to the region's road development. Michel Peretti expressed the European Commission's firm intention to use its pre-accession strategy as leverage within a long-term strategy for the Western Balkans, particularly in terms of conditionality for loans and grants.

However, this approach has to be achieved through close cooperation between all the major players in the international community and the governments, as deputy special coordinator, Michael Mozur explained on behalf of the Stability Pact. Mozur outlined that this is a rather difficult coordination process, which may best advance through concrete cooperation projects.



Michael Mozur

"Deputy Special Coordinator, Stability Pact"

The importance of highways within the portfolio of donations from the international community is considerable. Currently 45 infrastructure projects have financing secured or under preparation, with a value

South East Europe Feature



Kauf

“the conflicting opinions expressed in Dubrovnik show the need for events such as the IRF road congress, which bring together all the necessary players to advance the dialogue on these contentious issues.”

of €3.96 billion, €2.705 billion of which are for transport, with €1.719 billion for roads. However the provision of funding from the international community comes with conditions, as representatives from the European Commission made clear during the congress, voicing recommendations for road construction to be socio-economically justified, a view echoed by the investment banks.

The country reports showed there is no shortage of road projects in the region but methods must be found to finance them. The heavy investment in road development witnessed by some countries shows the burden on national budgets and despite available funds from the international community, more private sector participation in funding future projects is needed. A session dedicated to PPPs showed that despite a general reluctance by the private sector to invest in eastern European countries, there have been some success stories. The private sector conditions seemed to coincide with that of the international community: in order for projects to be successful, they must be economically justified.

As congress organiser, the IRF viewed the event very positively. Ansgar Kauf, Director of Programmes said: “The conflicting opinions expressed in Dubrovnik show the need for events such as the IRF road congress, which bring together all the necessary players to advance the dialogue on these contentious issues.”

A project called for by participants of previous IRF SEE congresses was the creation of a regional roads association, however the IRF is conscious of the numerous initiatives already in place in the region and does not want to duplicate existing efforts or force the creation of such a body. With this in mind the IRF is currently working closely with other initiatives, contributing its knowledge of best practice

in highway development. As part of this effort, IRF's Ansgar Kauf stayed in Dubrovnik after the congress to attend meetings of the South East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO) and the task force for SEE under the auspices of the European Committee of Ministers of Transport (ECMT).

The IRF will continue to work closely with the Stability Pact for SEE, the major initiative for coordinating reconstruction efforts in the region, whose official sponsorship and active involvement in the definition of the congress programme was the start of what is hoped to be a fruitful partnership with the IRF.

A follow-up meeting to the congress, with the Stability Pact's Bernard Snoy, Director of Economic Reconstruction and Infrastructure, and Oswald Hutter, infrastructure expert, to discuss the positive outcomes of the congress and identify future areas of cooperation between the IRF and Stability Pact, consolidated this cooperation. Snoy described the Dubrovnik congress as the first step in a promising collaboration between the two organisations.

The Stability Pact appreciated the positive dialogue at the congress, particularly in the areas of PPPs, road maintenance and road safety. As Hutter had explained during the congress, PPPs were already successful in the region in all other infrastructure sectors and they should be operating successfully in the road and transport sector. Road maintenance was another vital issue discussed at the congress and a challenge for the region, which has a backlog of rehabilitation and maintenance work. The Stability Pact was particularly enthusiastic about the attention drawn to road safety, a crucial subject, but one that has frequently been neglected.

Road safety and PPPs are two areas the Stability Pact would like to further develop and where they would value the IRF's knowledge and experience. The following concrete actions for cooperation between the IRF and the Stability Pact were agreed on:

- Developing road safety: the Stability Pact would like the IRF's road safety initiatives to be integrated into its programme and would be prepared to sponsor a road safety event in the region, preferably later this year.
- Road safety briefing: the IRF should also produce a briefing for the Stability Pact Special Coordinator, Erhard Busek, outlining the priorities for promoting road safety in the region. The briefing would draw on members' expertise in road safety equipment, but take a holistic approach, integrating the three key elements: driver, vehicle and infrastructure.
- Business advisory council: the Stability Pact welcomes interested IRF members to apply to participate in its private sector arm, which provides advice on economic sectors, including infrastructure.
- PPP task force: the IRF should participate in a task force to promote PPPs in the region, and IRF's Ansgar Kauf would make a presentation on experience in PPPs in the road sector.

The IRF is already undertaking research on PPP practice in the road sector, in collaboration with the World Bank, with the objective of assessing current trends and identifying measures to help mobilise private sector participation in road financing. The Stability Pact is also interested in this project and would appreciate receiving the findings of such a study.

Crossroads

Preparations for IRF World Meeting take shape

In a recent trip to South East Asia, Wim Westerhuis, IRF High Representative, has been finalising arrangements for the 15th World Meeting, to be held 14-18 June in Bangkok. "Interest in the World Meeting is high and we expect the event to be a real success," Westerhuis confirmed.

During his visit Westerhuis also took the opportunity to visit ministers responsible for roads in several countries in the region and discussed the IRF initiative to hold a ministerial session on road infrastructure restoration following natural disasters, which will take place on 13 June at the UNESCAP headquarters in Bangkok. Ministers from Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia have confirmed their participation in the session and those from South Korea and Singapore have expressed interest.

Furthermore the Ministry of Transport of Singapore and Ministry of Works of Malaysia were highly encouraged by the IRF's recent activity in the region and have agreed to become IRF members.

IRF launches new web training

The International Road Federation (IRF) and the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) have entered into a strategic alliance to provide online training to all IRF members worldwide. ASCE has been committed to providing top quality continuing education for civil engineers and related professionals for more than 31 years. The Society holds more than 275 seminars and computer workshops each year on a wide variety of technical, management, and regulatory topics.

IRF Washington negotiated a contract with ASCE in order to provide members worldwide with access at discounted rates to the hundreds of web seminars that ASCE provides. With more than 16,000 international members, ASCE is enthusiastic about offering its products internationally through the IRF. Patrick Sankey, Washington Director General & CEO, expressed his excitement at this great opportunity for IRF members: "This new training program is going to provide IRF members worldwide with the latest and best technology."

IRF bolsters already strong Middle East presence

Magid Elabyad, the Middle East Affairs Manager at IRF, recently returned from a month long trip to the Middle East. Elabyad paid short visits to Yemen, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to enhance IRF member relations in the region and develop membership. The trip was very helpful in identifying the needs of IRF members in the region and understanding the industry in the Gulf where a huge construction boom is taking place.

A highlight of Elabyad's trip to Saudi Arabia was meeting long-time IRF Board Member H.E. Abdullah A. Al-Mogbel, Deputy Minister for Roads. Topics discussed with Al-Mogbel included establishing a local IRF office to serve members in the region. Elabyad met most IRF members and jointly chaired a session at the Saudi Chamber of Commerce contractors' sector with Ibrahim Al-Akkas, the Director

General of the Saudi contractors sector. Topics discussed were the contractors' need for training in various fields and how to utilise the IRF worldwide network to acquire international expertise and knowledge. Ongoing road projects in Saudi Arabia require contractors to be up-to-date on the latest technologies.

In Kuwait, Elabyad met IRF's new Board member H.E. Abul Aziz Al-Kulaib, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Works. Eng Al-Kulaib underlined his intention to focus on roadway safety, which has become a major issue in Kuwait. IRF will help set up a training seminar for local Kuwaiti engineers in the United States.

In other meetings in Kuwait, Qatar, UAE and Yemen it became clear that many other road projects are in the planning or construction stages throughout the Middle East. There is a large demand for bringing IRF events to the region, for IRF help in training local engineers and for participation in the Fellowship programme which has had positive benefits for many road engineers around the world.

Elabyad sees great potential for the growth of IRF membership and the development of programmes in the region and found evidence that IRF, with its strong network of professional experts, can really make a difference.

IRF widens links in South America

In February Nahila Justo (Director of Education and Training), Susan Maher (International Director, LAC), and Scott Pearce (Director of Business Development & Member Programmes) spent a week visiting Colombia and Venezuela. In a packed programme of meetings they explored the development of links between the IRF and the governments and organisations in northern South America.

In a meeting with the Colombian Minister of Transport Andres Uriel Gallego and senior officials of the Ministry they discussed the Government's priorities. These include upgrading infrastructure on major freight

routes, maintenance of the main road system, and territorial integration ("Plan 2500" and "Plan para la Paz"). The Government is very concerned about road safety and has created a black spot programme called "Black stars" which is working successfully with the press, road police, armed forces, and others groups with the aim of reducing road accidents. The Minister argued strongly that the IMF should allow countries to raise their investment in infrastructure no matter what their debt level is in relation to GDP because, without adequate infrastructure, growth is inhibited.

Discussions with the Cámara Colombiana de la Construcción (CAMACOL) focused on Colombia's accession to NAFTA and the private sector's difficulties in getting loans from IFIs, and on the need for sustainable financial instruments and proper planning systems. There was interest in the possible contribution of the IRF in attracting investment, improving the regulatory framework and sharing best practice.

In Venezuela a large meeting was held with the President and members of the Venezuelan Colegio de Ingenieros (CIV). The Board of the College has an extensive network of relations with international organisations. The President, Ing Enzo Betancourt, proposed holding a forum with the IRF and as many as possible of their 17,000 affiliates in order to reach a substantive plan for mutual collaboration.

At the Venezuelan Ministry of Infrastructure, the General Director for Transport Strategic Planning, Ing Mercedes Sanchez and colleagues discussed their forthcoming huge investment in rural roads, their work on delivering the infrastructure elements of the national plan for economic and social development, and a wide range of other issues.

The driving force behind the development of the major infrastructure programme for South America, IIRSA (see page 4), is the Corporación Andina de Fomento (CAF). In a wide ranging meeting with the IRF team the Director, Rolando Terrazas, discussed the IIRSA proposals and CAF's priorities. CAF has considerable practical experience in making projects happen, and intends to share this experience at the forthcoming IRF Regional Seminar to be held in September.

In a week of meetings and visits the IRF team gained a clear understanding of the role the IRF can play in helping the development of good road infrastructure in South America.

IRF develops Indian links

Tony Pearce, Director General of Geneva / Brussels programme centre, spent two weeks in India in March meeting 68 people in 28 meetings and speaking to 2 conferences. The report on this visit will be in the next issue of IRF Bulletin which will focus on south and south-east Asia.

Introductions

The start of the year 2005 has seen the IRF extend its membership to new areas of the Middle East, as well as consolidating its base in Europe and North and South America. Here we introduce some of the new members that have recently joined IRF.

Attikes Diadromes is the operator of the Attiki Odos, the high-speed high quality toll motorway. This cutting edge highway forms the Athens ring road and is also part of the Trans-European road network. The cover picture on this issue is of an interchange on the motorway.

The **National Technical University of Athens (NTUA)** is Greece's oldest and most prestigious university in the field of technology, established in 1836. As the first university in Greece to offer degrees in engineering, it has played a leading role in the technical and economic development of the country. The NTUA was represented at the recent 4th IRF South East Europe Road Congress and will add to the IRF's academic membership, strengthening its intellectual base.

The **Technical Chamber of Greece**, Greece's professional association of engineers, serves as the official technical advisor to the state.

The **Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** is responsible for the development of the country's road network. The Ministry has a particular interest in the IRF programme for South East Europe.

Adige Bitumi, Italian bitumen producer, has joined the IRF through its Belgrade office. The group moved into the Serbian market in 2002, purchasing a former state owned operation. Keen to participate in IRF events, Adige Bitumi attended the 4th IRF South East Europe Road Congress in March.

STFA, a Turkish construction group providing specialised engineering and construction services rejoined IRF at the beginning of 2005. The group has carried out projects in the Middle East, Libya and Pakistan in addition to its activities in the Turkish market.

The **Ministry of Road and Transportation of Iran** has joined the IRF through two of its departments and is the IRF's first Iranian member. The Road Maintenance and Transport Organisation (RMTO) is responsible for road infrastructure, transit and border affairs. The Research, Education and Training General Directorate deals with training issues in all transport sectors. The

Ministry is keen to collaborate with the IRF and benefit from members' expertise to help tackle its current transport problems. The Ministry has also confirmed its intention to host the next IRF International Silk Road Conference in 2006.



Tony Pearce with H.E. Masoud Khansari, Deputy Minister of Roads and Transportation of Iran

The **Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture of Qatar**, is responsible for the country's road network. The Ministry is the IRF's first member in the country.

The **Ministry of Public Works and Highways of Yemen** strengthens the IRF's presence in Yemen.

The **Arab Roads Association**, based in Cairo, comprises public and private sector members from the Egyptian road sector. The Association was one of the earliest members of the IRF but left in the 1990s and has now rejoined. The Association will also host the IRF's first local representation office, due to open in the coming months.

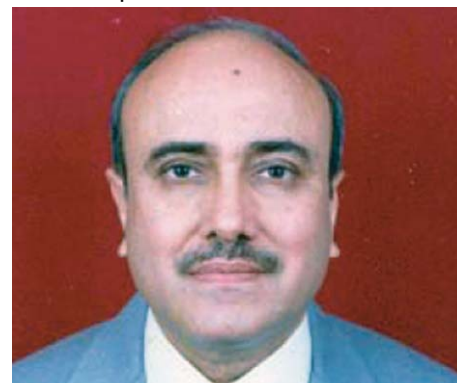
The **National Motorway Company of Slovakia** was established in January 2005 after the division of the Slovak Road Administration into two bodies. The company is responsible for the planning, construction, maintenance, operation and pricing of Slovakia's motorways and expressways.

The **Moscow State Technical University MADI** is the premier technical university in the former Soviet Union and has been responsible for establishing technical universities throughout the Commonwealth of Independent States and beyond (for example India). MADI is interested in all technological developments in the road sector, in education and training programmes, and

in IRF's programmes in the CIS and around the Black Sea.

The **Builders Association of India** is an all-India association of construction contractors incorporated in 1941. The organisation has a network of 95 centres in all the states of India. There are 8,000 Patron (lifetime) members and 30,000 Ordinary Members through various regional associations affiliated to it. The BAI is hosting IRF's Delhi office.

Intercontinental Consultants and Technocrats is an ISO-9001 certified multi-disciplinary international consultancy firm based in Delhi, India. It provides professional services including IT applications in highways, bridges, airports, urban development, water supply, power and tourism. ICT has successfully completed over 400 assignments in 24 countries in Asia and Africa with its team of over 1200 professionals.



K K Kapila, Chairman and Managing Director of Intercontinental Consultants and Technocrats

The activities of the **Instituto del Cimento Portland Argentino** include technical assistance in public works and dissemination of best practice through training seminars and technical publications.

The **Administration of Road Transport of Georgia** is responsible for overseeing the country's road network. The administration has a particular interest in the IRF's Black Sea Programme.

The **Association of Equipment Manufacturers** based in Washington DC, is the international trade and business development resource for companies that manufacture equipment, products and services used worldwide in the construction, agricultural, mining, forestry, and utility industries.

Road impressions

MANFRED SWAROVSKI

My home region of Tyrol, in Austria, is not only famous for its beautiful landscapes but also its function as a well-known and heavily transited corridor linking Germany and Italy. The growth in traffic flows that I have witnessed during my lifetime, is evidence of the attractiveness of roads, which continue to be the most travelled form of communication, linking North to South and East to West, but also all the points in between.

Just as the volume of traffic travelling on the road has changed, so too has the road itself. I only have to think back 40 years, to when I started my professional life, to recognise how much roads and driving conditions have changed.

In my early years of driving, as a frequent traveller between Tyrol and Lower Austria, where I founded my first business, I had no less than four collisions with wildlife trying to cross the road, and I was lucky to escape these accidents unhurt. Today, as I travel the familiar route, such accidents with game seem unimaginable; improved guard rails and dedicated wildlife bridges allow animals to cross the highway safely, protecting not only the wildlife, but also the drivers and users of the road.

Another near miss I encountered while travelling at speed down the highway occurred when suddenly I was dazzled by a bright light. The explanation: a family had set up their table, chairs and sunshade on the hard shoulder of the road to have a relaxing picnic! Not a situation I am keen to experience again and one which fortunately is unlikely to occur nowadays.

These are just some of my personal experiences, which demonstrate how much road infrastructure has advanced over the last four decades. Good pavements, clear road markings and signs that are visible at night have become standard features of safer roads which, I am happy to say, we have all got used to. However, as a road professional and a frequent traveller I am aware that more needs to be done, particularly at an international level, so that people around the world can benefit from the level of safety that many of us already enjoy.

As the road remains the mode of choice for ensuring private mobility and transporting goods, I am convinced that it will retain its position as the leading mode of transport. However, as road users, business and governments demand higher safety, environmental and efficiency performance from the road, it is us, the road professionals, who must continue to

“Just as the volume of traffic travelling on the road has changed, so too has the road itself.”



Manfred Swarovski
Chairman, SWARCO Holding AG
IRF Chairman

innovate and meet these demands. Roads have advanced a great deal in the last forty years. I can only imagine how roads will have developed forty years from now.

Roads are not uncontested

Roads not only ensure goods transport but are also the main carrier of private mobility. Using a car is an individual expression of free movement. The enormous traffic impact with unavoidable noise and pollution is understandably criticised by the people living along the roadways. However, all too often we forget that a substantial portion of this traffic impact is home-made. It is a fact that we have got used to driving to shopping centres with extensive parking facilities and appreciate the comfortable way of cash-and-carry shopping. Most of the employees in my group of companies depend on the car and the roads to get to work comfortably and on time.

Roads must become cleaner

Emissions from road traffic such as noise, exhaust fumes, and dust particulates are a serious problem we have to deal with constructively. Progress in car technology is

contributing to safer driving and reduces the environmental impact of individual mobility. Clean energy initiatives such as the use of hydrogen as fuel must be supported and intensified. And the switch to energy-saving LED lighting, signalling and illumination technology is still an underestimated factor in reducing public expenditure.

Roads help create progress

Using the road remains in many cases the quickest way to get from A to B. Other traffic carriers do not offer the necessary flexibility, or cannot provide this link in a competitive and justifiable time. I am convinced that roads will continue to be the number one carrier for transportation for a long time. We know the progress of society is closely linked to the quality of road networks. A Chinese peasant simplified it this way: "To be rich, build road first."

IRF Events

Business Development Mission in India

Date: 6 to 12 June

The IRF's business development mission will visit several cities in India, meeting businessmen and officials, and visiting ongoing and future road construction projects in India.

Ministerial Session

Date: 13 June

In conjunction with the 15th World Meeting, the IRF will hold a ministerial session on road restoration in the wake of natural disasters, at the UNESCAP headquarters.

Place: Bangkok, Thailand.

15th IRF World Meeting

Date: 14 to 18 June

IRF's major networking event, held every four years, will be in the dynamic city of Bangkok, giving members the opportunity to network at high levels in South East Asia. The program extends from intelligent transport systems to road management, and from financing to socio-economic aspects of transportation.

Place: Bangkok, Thailand.

IRF Washington Annual Meeting

Date: June

IRF Washington will hold its annual meeting in Bangkok, in conjunction with the 15th World Meeting.

Place: Bangkok, Thailand.

Co-operation mission to Iran

Date: 26-29 June

A group of experts will spend 4 days in Iran advising on road maintenance, signage, financing and road safety.

Place: Tehran, Iran.

Roadway Safety Executive Seminar

Date: 27 June to 1 July

IRF's safety training seminars provide a unique forum for education, idea-sharing and problem-solving aimed at reducing road deaths.

Place: Madrid, Spain.

International Road and Traffic Conference

Date: 8 to 9 July

IRF, in conjunction with the Korea Transport Institute, Korea Highway Corporation and Korea Road & Transportation Association, will host this inaugural event. The conference will focus on effective and systematic approaches on the theme of "Roads to global society".

Place: Ilsan New Town, Goyang, Gyeonggi-do, Korea.

Roadway Safety Executive Seminar

Date: 22 to 25 September

Another in the series of IRF safety training seminars focused on practical and effective ways of reducing road deaths.

Place: Baltimore, Maryland, USA.

Business Development Mission to Chile

Date: 22 to 23 September

IRF's business development mission will meet top level businessmen and officials in Chile which is already very advanced in terms of toll concessions, but opportunities still exist.

Business Development Mission to Argentina

Date: 26 to 27 September

The business development mission in Argentina will meet top level businessmen and officials in this country where there are significant business opportunities.

Regional Meeting in Southern America

Date: 27 to 28 September

IRF will join the 14th Congress of the Argentina Road Association to produce a ministerial session on "Physical integration and IIRSA" (Iniciativa para la Integración de la infraestructura Regional Sur Americana) and a second session on "Financing and Public-Private Partnerships".

Place: Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Slovakia Highway Development Seminar

Date: Mid-October

This seminar will be the first in a series examining the practicalities of developing some 40 000 km of roads in central and eastern Europe over the next decade.

Place: Bratislava, Slovakia

Contract Maintenance & Financing Executive Seminar

Date: 16 to 25 October

IRF's executive seminar will cover state of the art contract processes, financing options including public/private partnerships, innovative maintenance methods and sustainability, with speakers from lending agencies, government agencies, maintenance contractors and consulting engineers.

Place: Orlando, Florida, USA.

Regional Meeting in North Africa

Date: late October

The first regional meeting in North Africa will focus on the challenges of developing road infrastructure in this rapidly developing region.

Place: Cairo, Egypt.

IRF Geneva Board Meeting

Date: 30 November

IRF Geneva's autumn board meeting will be held in Istanbul to coincide with the 1st Black Sea Ring Conference.

Place: Istanbul, Turkey.

1st Black Sea Ring Conference

Date: 1 to 2 December

IRF reaches out to Europe's nearest neighbours, creating the first meeting of its new programme to overcome bottlenecks around the Black Sea.

Place: Istanbul, Turkey.

Roadway Safety Executive Seminar

Date: 4 to 9 December

A safety training seminar providing education, idea-sharing and problem-solving designed to help senior road executives to reduce road deaths in their countries.

Place: Curacao, Netherlands Antilles.

FOR DETAILS AND UPDATES ON ALL THESE EVENTS, VISIT WWW.IRFNET.ORG

JOIN THE IRF

to build a better future

Encircling the Black Sea

Expertise

Support and information for national road associations, advocacy groups, companies and international organizations.

Enhancing South Eastern Europe

Networking

Contact-building at highest level
in the road sector

Re-weaving the Silk Road

Advocacy

Fostering the right environment for
everyone who wants to combine economic growth
with a better quality of life through well-connected
and environmentally-sound road networks

IRF Geneva

2 Chemin de Blandonnet
CH-1214, Vernier
Switzerland
tel: + 41 22 306 02 60
fax: + 41 22 306 02 70

IRF Brussels

17-19 Rue de la Tourelle
B-1040, Brussels
Belgium
tel: + 32 3 234 66 30
fax: + 32 3 230 79 07

IRF Washington

1010 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Suite 410
Washington, DC 20001
tel: + 1 202 371 55 44
fax: + 1 202 371 55 65



International Road Federation
Fédération Routière Internationale
Federación Internacional de Caminos