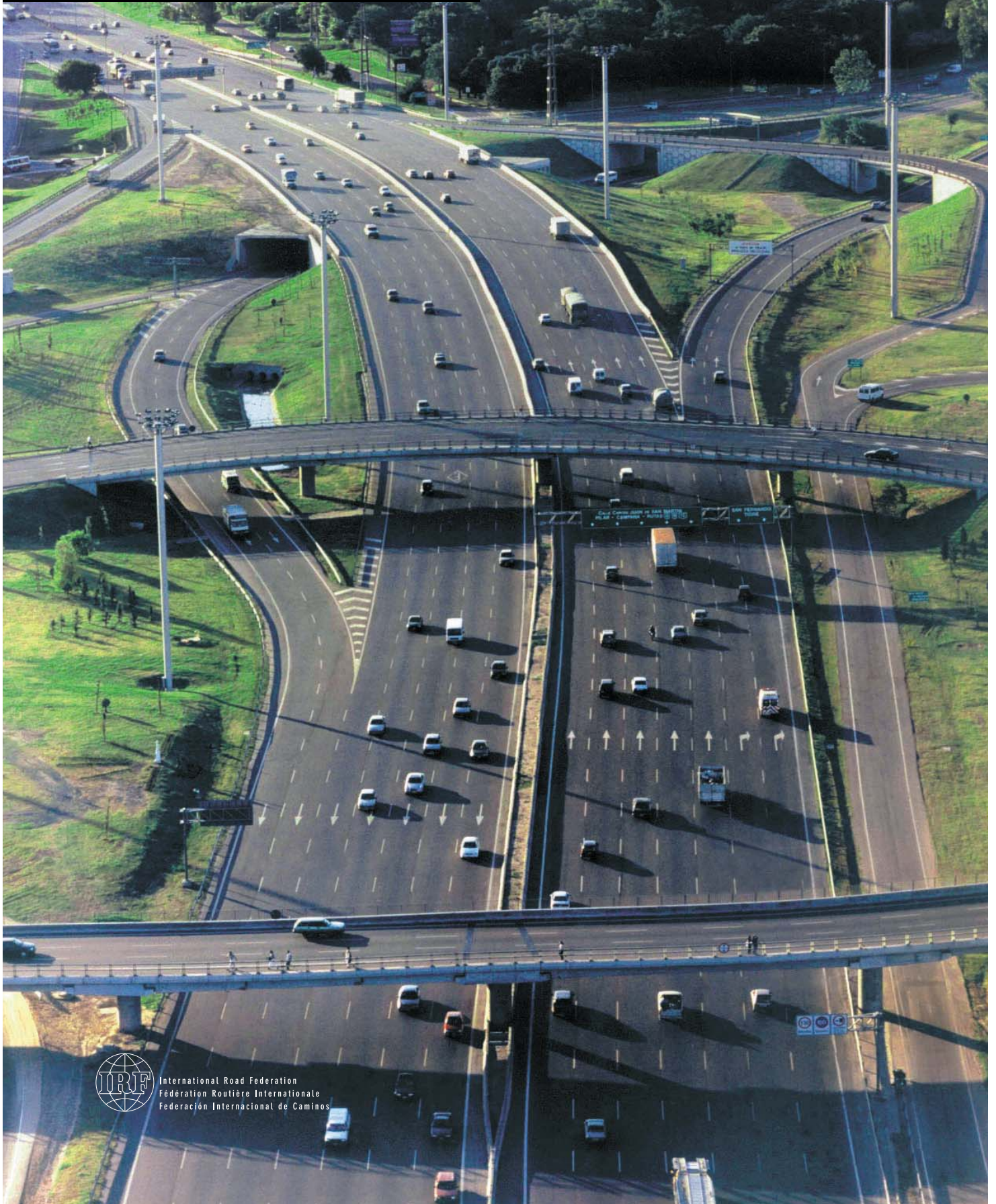


The IRF Bulletin

WINTER 2005



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 2 234 66 30
fax: + 32 2 230 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

Publisher:
International Road Federation

Cover photo:
Acceso Norte – Intercambiador
Av. Márquez in the area of San Isidro, Buenos
Aires, Argentina.
Courtesy of Autopistas del Sol S.A.

Other photos:
Caterpillar Sarl, Colas, Compagnie Signature,
Delcan, International Corporation, Dromex Joint
Stock Company, FaberMaunsell, Kinki Kensetsu,
Michelin, ScottWilson, Swarco.

Graphic design and layout:
Hémisphère
5, rue Richard Wagner
CH - 1202 Genève, Switzerland
tel: + 41 22 919 63 23
www.hemisphere.ch

Printing:
Mönch Türkiye Yayıncılık
Hoşdere Cad. Halit Ziya Sk. No.: 26/9, Çankaya
06540 Ankara, Turkey
tel: + 90 312 441 93 54 • fax: + 90 312 439 57 24
www.monch.com.tr

Letter from the IRF 03

**Interview with former Turkish
President Süleyman Demirel** 04

**The IRF and China,
a growing partnership** 05

Silk Road Feature 06-07

Crossroads 08

IRF Events 09

Road Impressions 10



International Road Federation
Fédération Routière Internationale
Federación Internacional de Caminos

Letter from the IRF

Welcome to the first issue of this new, remodelled IRF Bulletin. The history of the Bulletin stretches back to the earliest days of the IRF—originally as a few typed sheets. Nowadays with instant communications via e-mail and our website at www.irfnet.org, we can keep you informed faster and more comprehensively. News from our industry comes from World Highways, and so we have redesigned the IRF Bulletin to feature the big stories in much more detail.

In October the IRF gathered in Xi'an, China for the Third IRF International Silk Road Conference. Our hosts, the Ministry of Communications of the People's Republic of China put on a magnificent conference attended by around 700 people. This issue of IRF Bulletin features the rehabilitation of the Silk Roads and the work that is going on to upgrade this 16,000 km network of routes across Asia and Europe.

But the rehabilitation of the Silk Roads is not the only IRF activity. The greatest strength of the IRF is in networking, and in 2005 IRF members will have many opportunities to do so with seven major meetings on five continents. We will be organising business development missions in Russia with its massive network and even greater potential, in Libya now reopening after more than a decade of isolation, and in South America where many exciting things have been happening in recent years.

We will be launching new road programmes for the Black Sea Ring and for North Africa as the economies in these regions are developing rapidly, increasing the need for good quality roads. We will be re-launching the IRF's oldest road programme, dating back more than half a century, the Pan-American Highway - the ideas are as fresh and needs at least as acute as they were in the 1940s. And we will be continuing our widely praised professional development seminars.

In addition to our conferences and meetings the IRF will be coming closer to you. As part of our policy of being "lo-



Patrick Sankey
Director General & CEO
Washington DC Office



Tony Pearce
Director General
Geneva/Brussels Office

cal everywhere" we will be opening local representations in Ankara, Beijing, Buenos Aires, Cairo, Moscow and Mumbai. Others will follow, and we hope that within a few years the IRF will have local representations everywhere. But more importantly your staff, whether they are based in one of these offices or in Brussels, Geneva or Washington, is actively promoting policies favourable to the road industry for the benefit of our members and the wider community.

Happily the Chinese Government does not need to be convinced about such policies. They recognise the vital role that modern efficient road transport has to play in the development of their

economy. They have a programme to develop 75,000 km of highways by 2020, and they have already built half of this network. These fine quality toll roads enable goods and people to get to where they need to be for the good of the Chinese economy. The effects of these market oriented policies can be seen by anyone visiting this exciting and rapidly developing country. Our role is to make sure that other people can learn from China's experience in the road sector.

Interview SÜLEYMAN DEMİREL

The Silk Road, which was the main route of transportation and communications between Asia and Europe, is just as relevant today as it was in the past, says former president of Turkey.

It is the time to overcome the bottlenecks and display the political will to restore the Silk Road, the 2000-year-old main route of trade and cultural exchange between the East and West, according to Süleyman Demirel, the ninth President of Turkey.

Demirel, a veteran politician who devoted time and energy to the renovation of the Silk Road, told the International Road Federation (IRF) that he thought that now was a good time to push for concrete projects on the Silk Road, which linked Asia to Europe for centuries, over a fast changing political landscape.

For more than 2,000 years, the Silk Road formed the basis for trade between European China, joining imperial Xi'an to imperial Rome. The history, culture and prosperity of what are now five independent central Asian republics (Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) as well as Turkey, Iran and western China, were dominated by these east-west links. But as the Roman, Byzantine and Arabian empires declined and broke up, the roads became unsafe. It was later revived during the 13th and 14th centuries, but since then these roads have been devastated by wars, blocked by politics, cut off by harsh elements and sections have fallen into disuse.

According to Demirel, the political landscape has changed once more to reinvigorate the Silk Road. With the independence of the five ex-Soviet republics in 1991, interest in reviving this ancient overland route from Europe to China has again taken hold. The WTO and UNESCO have led the way with focused programs in the region from the perspective of tourism and cultural sites.

"Developments in China, the new atmosphere in relations between Russia and Europe and the European Union looking toward enlargement eventually up to 32 members are all factors that make the Silk Road not only possible to realize but more important than ever," he said in an interview with the IRF.

Turkey's 80-year-old former president has been a vocal advocate of the Silk Road for at least a decade, writing fervently to his counterparts in

the countries along the Silk Road, organizing meetings and generally, keeping the issue on the agenda.

In a Silk Road Summit hosted by Haidar Aliyev, then President of Azerbaijan in 1998, Demirel called on the Asian and the European leaders to revitalize the Silk Road in order to create lasting links of transport and communication between Europe, the Black Sea, Caucasasia, the Caspian Sea and Asia. Looking at the practical ways of reviving this mega-road, he focused on international cooperation.



"Silk Road does not belong to the past but to the future."

"This will have a serious impact on the regional economic growth and in enhancing cooperation in those critical regions," said Demirel in the meeting, calling on the European Union programs TACIS and TRACECA to focus on the Silk Road.

Now, six years after the Summit in Baku, the veteran statesman is still hopeful. "The Silk Road is not straight line, but is in fact a concept," Demirel told IRF Director General Tony Pearce and Communications Director Nazlan Ertan on a Silk Road map.

In the ancient days, the Silk Road was a number of inter-connected caravan routes scattered ac-

ross Asia. Those caravans carried gold, precious stones and ivory to China and returned to Europe with Uzbek furs, Mediterranean corals, Chinese lacquer-ware and silk. In modern times, both the goods and the infrastructure of the roads would be different. The modern Silk Roads would aim to combine ferries, railways and highways to boost prosperity in the landlocked Central Asian republics.

Vehicle traffic thrives on segments of the Silk Roads, but one aspect is missing. So far, no organization has focused on the necessary basic, connected road infrastructure which will once again make the entire route viable for tourism and trade.

A preliminary study on the Silk Roads carried out by the IRF has indicated that a modern highway link could easily reach a potential traffic volume of between 5,000 and 15,000 vehicles per day, and eventually generate US\$2-4 billion annual turnover, based on cars paying a low fee of US\$2 per 100 kilometers, and trucks paying just US\$10 per 100 kilometers. The IRF estimates that financing the rehabilitation and extension of the 5,000-kilometer route will cost between US\$10-20 billion. This investment could more than be recovered within a concession duration of 10-20 years.

"This is not a project that would happen overnight. What is important is to keep the idea on the agenda and to make sure that the governments, the financiers and the contractors remain interested."

Demirel, who was selected as Man of the Year in 1973 by the International Road Federation for his great contributions to the road infrastructure center, sees a role for the International Road Federation: "The IRF may play a major role in the Silk Road, not only by bringing together actors but also by keeping this on the agenda and by advocating it."

The ex-President has full confidence that this role can be fulfilled by the IRF. "The IRF is a great organization that has advocated major projects, he said. Time has proven the IRF right."

The IRF and China

A GROWING PARTNERSHIP

IRF High Representative Wim Westerhuis and Director General Geneva/Brussels Tony Pearce reply to questions on the international plan to revive the Silk Road and IRF's desire for further co-operation with both the public and private sector in China:

The relationship between the International Road Federation (IRF) and China is surely not a recent one. How did this relationship start and develop?

Wim Westerhuis: The International Road Federation has taken a close interest in developing ties with China for more than a decade, although we have to admit that our attempts to establish a relationship has had its ups and downs. One of the early high-moments was when the Ministry of Communications of the People's Republic of China demonstrated its faith in IRF's expertise by asking us to prepare a fact-finding program for a Chinese delegation to Europe. A low point was when China sent only its local Ambassador to the first Silk Road Conference in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. When I think back to that moment, I cannot but note just how far we have come, by co-sponsoring the Third Silk Road Conference with the Chinese Ministry of Communications.

I have always emphasized that holding Silk Road conferences without active Chinese participation made no sense. Through our efforts, we were able to assure the participation of a major delegation from China at the Second Silk Road Conference in Tashkent, Uzbekistan in 1999. The long, informal discussions we held on ways to cooperate proved to be the first link in the extensive negotiations that finally led to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Communications of the People's Republic of China and the IRF in July 2003. The first result of this collaboration is China's commitment to host the third International Silk Road Conference in Xi'an. We are particularly appreciative of the leadership demonstrated by the Chinese Ministry of Communications in taking this significant step.

Do you think that the atmosphere in China is more conducive to foreign investment and international cooperation now than it was before?

Tony Pearce: The general perception is surely yes. In the last ten years, the level of investment in China has gone up considerably. It is also a country with an admirable market potential and we, as the IRF, are here to highlight this.

We think that there are huge opportunities for trade and not just domestic trade. Particularly, China's recent strategy of "Developing the West" has created a new wave of investment opportunities in regions along the Silk Road inside China. We wish to play a facilitating role in this new development via our international network.

Similarly, we think that the Chinese companies are increasingly interested in international business. The IRF's enormous business network can also facilitate Chinese businesses opening further to the outside.

Would your main contribution to Chinese public and private sector businesses be networking?

T.P.: As an organization whose membership extends across six continents, networking is our greatest strength. We help our members build government contacts at the highest level and meet with potential business associates. For example, a very important international company which has been based in China for more than twenty years is now joining a business mission organized by the IRF because they believe that we will provide access to higher-level contacts than they have been able to cultivate until now.

W.W.: As the IRF, we have gained a certain experience dealing with China. We are aware of some of the dos and don'ts of doing business here. Similarly, we understand the aims and needs of the Chinese firms in their path to international business. The IRF, and surely the Silk Road Conference, offers a prime opportunity for all sides not only to network but also to gain valuable insights and to build up trust and friendship.

Who are your present members and who are your potential members/targets in China?

W.W.: So far, our membership in China is exclusively the public sector: We have the Ministry of Communications, Research Institute of Highways and several local departments, such as Beijing Municipal Committee of Communications and the Communications Department of

Xingjian Uyghur Autonomous Region. I would think that prospective members would include the growing private sector, whose interest in the region and abroad is fast growing.

T.P.: Any Chinese firm related to the road sector that wants to develop its international network, its expertise and to contribute to the creation of a positive business atmosphere is a potential IRF member. Several major Chinese engineering firms are operating in Asia and Africa. China Bridge and Road Cooperation, for example, is a major enterprise with operations in Bulgaria and Romania. However, some other Chinese firms have yet to develop an international dimension and this is where the IRF can come in, with our strength in networking and in creating business opportunities. When I look at our global membership, it includes road associations, consulting engineering companies, equipment and automotive manufacturers, research institutes and universities-all sectors which have a vested interest in roads and their use.

As a world-wide, not-for-profit organization, what are your views on the development versus cultural preservation debate, particularly in the protection of the Silk Road?

W.W.: We are very clear on that. The International Road Federation advocates the construction and maintenance of roads, but we are not simply advocating construction of roads for the sake of roads. Roads are an element of economic growth and prosperity, of social development and cohesion, but, also, with specific reference to the Silk Road, a witness to our past and an essential element of our identity. We are strong believers in the preservation of the cultural and historical heritage. We do not see the Silk Road simply as an engineering issue, but also as an important historical and cultural project. In the past, roads served not only trade routes, but were just as importantly the way cultures connected and trust was built.

T.P.: The only thing I would add to this is that we are looking at the Silk Road in a holistic way, mindful of the culture and civilization that developed along those ancient routes. With goodwill and skill, we can achieve balanced development along the Silk Road. We have reached out to such organizations as UNESCO and the Getty Institute, and will be collaborating with them to expand on these cultural dimensions at the Third Silk Road Conference.

Silk Road Feature

The Silk Road: Tying the region through trade

Xi'an combines its identity of being a city with a past with a marked ambition to become a city with an important future.

The ancient cradle of the Silk Road is now the capital of the Shaanxi Province, a major tourist and trade center with a blossoming population of 5,860,000 and home to several universities.



Xi'an between the past and present:
the capital of the Shaanxi province
is a trade and tourism center.

The great lengths to which the local authority has gone for the 3rd International Silk Road Conference are clear: all the major hotels have been mobilized, help desks have been established and an army of translators have been brought in.

A sizeable portion of the Ministry of Communications, including the deputy minister himself, have closed their Beijing offices for three days to attend "the most international gathering the city has witnessed," according to one local journalist.

For the Ministry of Communications of China and the Shaanxi Province, both co-hosts with the IRF, the conference is a clear sign that China has a leading role to play in the revitalization of the Silk Road, the legendary criss-crossed paths that have remained the main artery of exchange between the East and West.

Chen Deming, managing vice governor of Shaanxi Province, is an enthusiastic supporter of the Silk Road. Chen noted that in accordance with the central government's plan to push economic growth in western China, the vast inland region needs more routes of communication with the rest of the world. "Rebuilding the Silk Road from Xi'an to Rotterdam is in the interests of both East and West," Chen told journalists during the press conference that marked the beginning of the two-day conference.

Chen's enthusiasm is matched by the Ministry of Communications. "Building a new Silk Road transportation corridor would make it easier and more convenient to cross borders," said Ju Chengzhi, director of the Ministry of Communications' International Cooperation Department.

Giving a very detailed plan of the Chinese road policy, Ju pointed out that China had this month completed its section, stretching 4,395 kilometers (2,724 miles) from Lianyungang in the east Jiangsu Province to Helgus in the northwest Xinjiang region, cutting a two-week journey to just 50 hours.

Moreover, he pointed out, Beijing is eager to help its neighbors overcome

the bottlenecks in their respective countries. China's interest in revitalizing the Silk Road has been reflected by the neighboring countries.

The ministers, or their representatives, from 11 countries, some of which have been divided by political problems until recently, agreed on the following issues during the first session of the meeting:

- the removal not only of physical, but also non-physical barriers, particularly at border crossings;
- the strengthening and restructuring road sector institutions;
- the establishment a clearer separation and distribution of tasks between the client (the public sector) and provider (the private sector);
- of utmost importance, the development of a domestic private sector;
- better needs assessment based on accurate traffic studies, tailoring roads to users' needs;
- the development of a self-financing road sector, with the right mix of public and private finance;
- necessary road safety related measures to significantly lower accident and fatality levels; and
- improving the environmental performance of roads.

The IRF Business Development Mission, chaired by Geneva Board Chairman Jerome Munro-Lafon (third from right) visited four Chinese cities and held a press conference in Beijing to underline the IRF's upcoming program in China.



Silk Road Feature



“Rebuilding the Silk Road from Xi'an to Rotterdam is in the interests of both East and West.”

As far as the IRF, a long-standing advocate of the revival of the Silk Road, is concerned, this is a beginning, rather than an end. The IRF strongly recommends going one step further, resuming the official declaration adopted by the Second International Silk Road Rehabilitation conference in September 1999 in Tashkent, where the participants proposed that a Council of Ministers of Transport and Communications/Ministers of Roads should be established in order to develop a program for the rehabilitation of the Silk Road network. “The formulation of this network and the definition of a work program should be undertaken in close cooperation with other existing initiatives,” Wim Westerhuis, the IRF High Representative, said in his concluding remarks.

The IRF is eager to involve other organizations, such as the IRU, the World Tourism Organization and the relevant bodies of the UN in this initiative.

Despite hopes for the future, there are a number of obstacles for the realization of the Silk Road.

According to Ansgar Kauf, the director of programs in the IRF and a specialist of China, the following difficulties remain in the Silk Road:

- Lack of funding for infrastructure rehabilitation and maintenance: in most countries the domestic financial resources are inadequate, international grants are too small and loans have to be paid back. Therefore, serious thought and effort should go into finding ways of financing, whether they be traditional (fuel/vehicle tax) or new (direct road user charges/tolls). However, nothing can replace domestic financing sources.
- The need for best practice in infrastructure development and operation: this should not only include technology but also the management of roads. Thus, a road sector reform that rethinks the roles between governments, (tender, and contract management), the private sector (implementation, operation) and users, is crucial.
- Removal of non-physical barriers, which undermine the efficiency of the Silk Road through long queues at borders and arbitrary custom procedures.

However, Tony Pearce, the Director General of the IRF Geneva/Brussels, thinks that overcoming the bottlenecks would be neither too difficult nor too long. Encouraged by the Chinese innovation and determination demonstrated by an IRF business deve-

lopment mission that visited four Chinese cities, Pearce predicted visible progress in a short term. “10 years is a reasonable goal,” he said. “If you look at what China has achieved in the last five years, it is an achievable goal.”

“The important thing is that this road crosses many countries, what we need is the collaboration and cooperation of these countries to realize the goal of reconstructing this road,” he said.

The IRF believes that with the spectacular economic growth in China, with the EU increasingly looking outward and with the continuing development in Central Asia the need for a road network along the Silk Road route is growing increasingly apparent.

Some countries, China included, have already made substantial progress in the construction and rehabilitation of the road links within their territories, while others lag behind, according to Westerhuis.

By Nazlan Ertan
IRF Director of Communications

Crossroads

IRF extends its presence in Japan

Patrick Sankey, Director General and CEO of IRF Washington, paid a visit to Japan to increase IRF membership and spur interest in joint ventures for the rehabilitation of the Silk Road.

During the Third Silk Road conference in Xi'an on October 26-27, Sankey met with a delegation of seven Japanese firms. After the conference, Sankey visited Japan to meet with several more firms and to review the latest developments of the conference.

One key meeting was with Japan Road Association (JRA) President Dr. Hiroshi Mitani and JRA International Committee Chairman Moriyasu Furuki. Both Mitani and Furuki expressed their members' interest in potential partnerships and joint ventures in the rehabilitation of the Silk Road.

Another important item that was discussed was the Dr. Mino Award of Excellence, whose inaugural presentation will be made at the 15th IRF World Meeting June 14-18, 2005 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Mino Award was developed to recognize and honor one outstanding graduate each year in the IRF Fellowship Program who has leveraged his or her educational experience to make outstanding achievements in roadway development around the world.

De Palacio receives IRF award

The International Road Federation has presented its Woman of the Year 2004 award to Loyola de Palacio, the outgoing Vice-President of the European Commission, for her contributions to road policy and road safety.

"It is known that Mrs. De Palacio is passionate about road safety. Road accidents kill some 50,000 people in the EU's 25 member states annually, and it was largely on her initiative that the Commission proposed the European Road Safety Charter," said Jerome Munro-Lafon, the Chairman of the Geneva Board of Directors of the International Road Federation.

"As an aside I would like to add that in the half century that this award has been presented, there has only been one previous woman recipient, Neelie Kroes, and by a happy coincidence Mrs. Kroes has been nominated as a member of the incoming European Commission," he added.

De Palacio, for her part, stressed that the IRF award was a recognition of the work undertaken by the European Commission in recent years, on a wide range of improvements in the road transport sector.

"For the whole range of areas where our analysis showed that there continue to be problems in the road transport sector – indeed, where we all see problems in our daily lives or in the daily news – the Commission has adopted or has

begun developing measures to improve the situation; to put the transport sector back on the right track," she said.

The outgoing Commissioner for Transport said that she left the Commission confident that the measures she had helped develop would be all for the good of the European road transport sector, in its competitiveness and its sustainability, as it continued to support the European economy into the future.

The IRF Award for Man/Woman of the Year, a tradition since 1951, is given to international figures that have made significant contributions to road policy and road safety.



Vice-President of the European Commission Loyola de Palacio receives the IRF Award 2004 from Mr. Munro-Lafon, the IRF chairman of the Geneva/Brussels Board of Directors

The IRF recognizes the first "European Ecological Highway"

The International Road Federation (IRF) presented its Global Road Achievement Award in the environmental mitigation category to the Junta de Andalucía for its A-381 Jerez-Los Barrios Dual-Carriageway Motorway Project.

The motorway is dubbed by the local press as the "first European ecological highway."

The award, one of six given by the IRF to innovative road projects all over the world, pays homage to the section of the highway that runs through the Los Alcornocales Natural Park, a protected area containing the richest ecology and landscapes in Andalucía.



This 78.5 kilometer dual-carriageway links two sites of strategic importance to the regional economy; Cadiz and Jerez de la Frontera Bay

and Campo de Gibraltar.

The sinuous road and narrow platform that used to connect the two locations proved insufficient due to the high number of Moroccan lorries making use of the route.

The project combined the challenge of updating and widening the connection with the potentially high environmental impact any intervention might cause. After much planning, the end result actually enhanced the ecosystem by allowing animal circulation under the road, recovered jeopardized flora and fauna, restored public spaces and removed the infrastructure elements that could have been harmful to the existing species.

On October 5 the old La Cartuja de Santa María de las Cuevas Monastery in Sevilla served as the perfect venue for the award ceremony of this impressive project. IRF World Executive Board Chairman Dana Low; the Counselor for Public Works and Transport of the Junta de Andalucía Mrs. Concepción Gutiérrez; and the Mayor of Los Barrios, Mr. Alonso Rojas, gathered together for the ceremony.

Calling the A-381 highway "authentic proof that it is possible to build roads committed to the environment and to sustainable development," Mr. Low said that it was possible, with sensitivity and commitment, to maintain traditions and preserve environmental values, while introducing the benefits of modern technology.

IRF Events

IRF Fellowship Advisory Committee

- Date: 10 January 2005,
- IRF will hold its annual luncheon meeting of the IRF Fellowship Advisory Committee,
- Place: Washington DC, US.

Afghanistan's Road Rehabilitation

- Date: February 2005,
- For the first time a seminar will be held on the rehabilitation of roads in Afghanistan,
- Place: Expected to take place in Tashkent, Uzbekistan or Islamabad, Pakistan.

4th South East Europe Conference

- Date: 7 to 9 March 2005,
- IRF program is helping to modernize infrastructure in the region where efficient road networks are crucial for economic development,
- Place: Dubrovnik, Croatia.

IRF Washington Executive Meeting

- Date: 14 to 15 March 2005,
- IRF meeting will be immediately before CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2005, the world's largest gathering in 2005 for construction and construction materials industries, displaying the latest equipment, services and technologies,
- Place: Las Vegas, Nevada, US.

Polish Highway Development Seminar

- Date: 13 to 14 April 2005,
- 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: Warsaw, Poland.

Business Development Mission in Russia

- Date: 16 to 20 May 2005,
- IRF's business development mission in Russia will visit five cities over the course of a week, meeting top level businessmen and officials.

IRF Geneva Spring statutory meeting and seminar on Russian roads

- Date: 23 to 24 May 2005,
- IRF Geneva will hold its Spring statutory meeting in Moscow on 23 May, including a one day seminar on Russian roads and future prospects on the first day of the Dorkomexpo 2005 exhibition,
- Place: Moscow, Russia.

Dorkomexpo 2005

- Date: 24 to 27 May 2005,
- One of the most important construction and construction machinery exhibitions, to be held in Moscow at the Gostiny Dvor Cultural-Business Center and in Red Square,
- Place: Moscow, Russia.

15th IRF World Meeting

- Date: 14 to 18 June 2005,
- 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.

Roadway Safety Executive Seminar

- Date: 20 to 24 June 2005,
- IRF safety training seminars provide a unique forum for education, idea-sharing and problem-solving aimed at reducing road deaths,
- Place: South East Asia.

IRF Washington Annual Meeting

- Date: August 2005,
- Details will follow on this event.

Roadway Safety Executive Seminar

- Date: 22 to 25 September 2005,
- IRF safety training seminars provide a unique forum for education, idea-sharing and problem-solving aimed at reducing road deaths,
- Place: Baltimore, Maryland, US.

Business development mission in Argentina and Chile

- Date: 17 to 21 September 2005,
- IRF's business development mission in Argentina and Chile will meet top level businessmen and officials in these countries where there are significant opportunities for developing business.

Regional meeting in Southern America

- Date: 22-23 September,
- IRF Regional meeting in Buenos Aires will be held immediately after the Argentine Road Association's XIV Road and Transit Congress. The meeting will launch a new Pan-American Highway Program,
- Place: Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Business development mission and conference in Libya

- Date: Early October 2005,
- IRF's three-day business development mission in Libya will meet top level businessmen and officials in Benghazi and Tripoli, Libya. This will be followed by the 3rd Libyan National Seminar on Road and Bridge Technologies to be held in Tripoli.

Contract Maintenance & Finance Executive Seminar

- Date: October 2005,
- Details will follow on this US-based event.

1st Black Sea Ring Conference

- Date: November 2005,
- IRF reaches out to Europe's nearest neighbors, creating the first meeting of its new program to overcome bottlenecks around the Black Sea,
- Place: Istanbul, Turkey.

Roadway Safety Executive Seminar

- Date: November 2005,
- IRF safety training seminars provide a unique forum for education, idea-sharing and problem-solving aimed at reducing road deaths,
- Place: Spain.

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

Road Impressions

RE-WEAVING THE SILK ROAD

The presence of the International Road Federation (IRF) in China, as co-organizer of the Third International Silk Road Conference on October 26-28, is the latest chapter in a long-standing engagement.

It was eight years ago, when we saw a World Tourism Organization brochure highlighting the tourist attractions along the centuries-old Silk Road, and the importance of improving the necessary infrastructure to stimulate tourism to these ancient sites. The infrastructure they had in mind concerned the upgrading of airports, hotels, restaurants and all other ser-

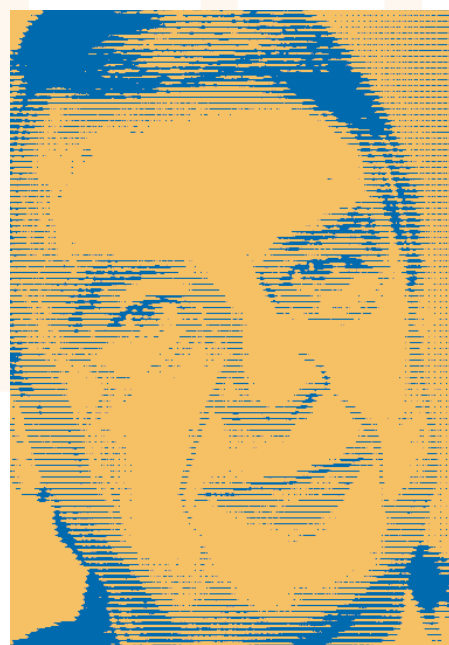
This is of course not a criticism of the World Tourism Organization. Roads are not, nor are expected to be, its primary concern. But it is an important concern to the IRF. After all, we have the geographic outreach, the weight and the expertise to consider, plan and bring together partners who can carry out this project. The IRF itself is a bit like the Silk Road - linking different cultures, different backgrounds and offering an exchange where interested parties receive what they lack, and give what they can.

We decided to help "re-weave" the Silk Road.

This is not only possible, but essential. A viable connection between East and West, trade flowing across countries and exchange of civilizations is just as important in the contemporary world as it was for the nomadic traders in ancient times.

IRF envisages a modern road link, or rather links, connecting the heart of China with the industrial centers of the Western Europe. It is not simply a highway, but a network of roads facilitating trade between two major economic powerhouses, enhancing the development of land-locked Central Asia and making its markets more accessible. Modern, environmentally friendly roads would tie the old and the new, supply and demand and the East and West from Rotterdam to Xi'an.

"We decided to help re-weave the Silk Road."



Wim Westerhuis
International Road Federation
High Representative

We have tenaciously promoted the Silk Road despite the five-year gap since the last conference in Uzbekistan. Wars and political turmoil in various regions along the route of the Silk Road project, could only temporarily delay progress.

With the spectacular economic growth in China, with the European Union looking more outward, and with the continuing development in Central Asia, the need for a road network

along the Silk Road becomes ever more apparent. Some countries have already made substantial progress in the construction and/or rehabilitation of the road links on their territory, while others lag behind. Our purpose is to promote the development of the whole, and considering the great interest in this Third International Silk Road Conference in Xi'an, the IRF feels it does not stand alone, and that its vision is shared by many.



15th International Road Federation World Meeting 2005

14 - 18 JUNE 2005, BITEC, Bangkok, Thailand

New Dates!



**Congress theme: "Roads: primary asset of nations.
Management and operations for the 21st Century."**

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN THE WORLD'S LEADERS IN DISCUSSING HOW BEST TO FINANCE, DEVELOP, MANAGE, MAINTAIN AND OPERATE TODAY'S AND TOMORROW'S ROAD NETWORKS.

A SENIOR MANAGEMENT MEETING OF AN ANTICIPATED 2,500 PARTICIPANTS IN ADDITION TO THE 150 COMPANIES ANTICIPATED TO JOIN THE EXHIBITION ALONGSIDE.

MORE THAN 300 RENOWNED SPEAKERS AND EXPERTS WORLDWIDE.

PROVIDING THE MOST ESSENTIAL INFORMATION ON CURRENT TOPICS FOR DEBATE IN THE ROAD INDUSTRY, AS WELL AS PROMOTING EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DISCUSSIONS AND INTERACTION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY, ACADEMIA AND ROAD ASSOCIATIONS.

Register before March 15, 2005 to qualify for the special early-bird rate!

Visit www.irf2005.com for Online Registration.

in conjunction with the:



Organised by:



Supporting organisations:

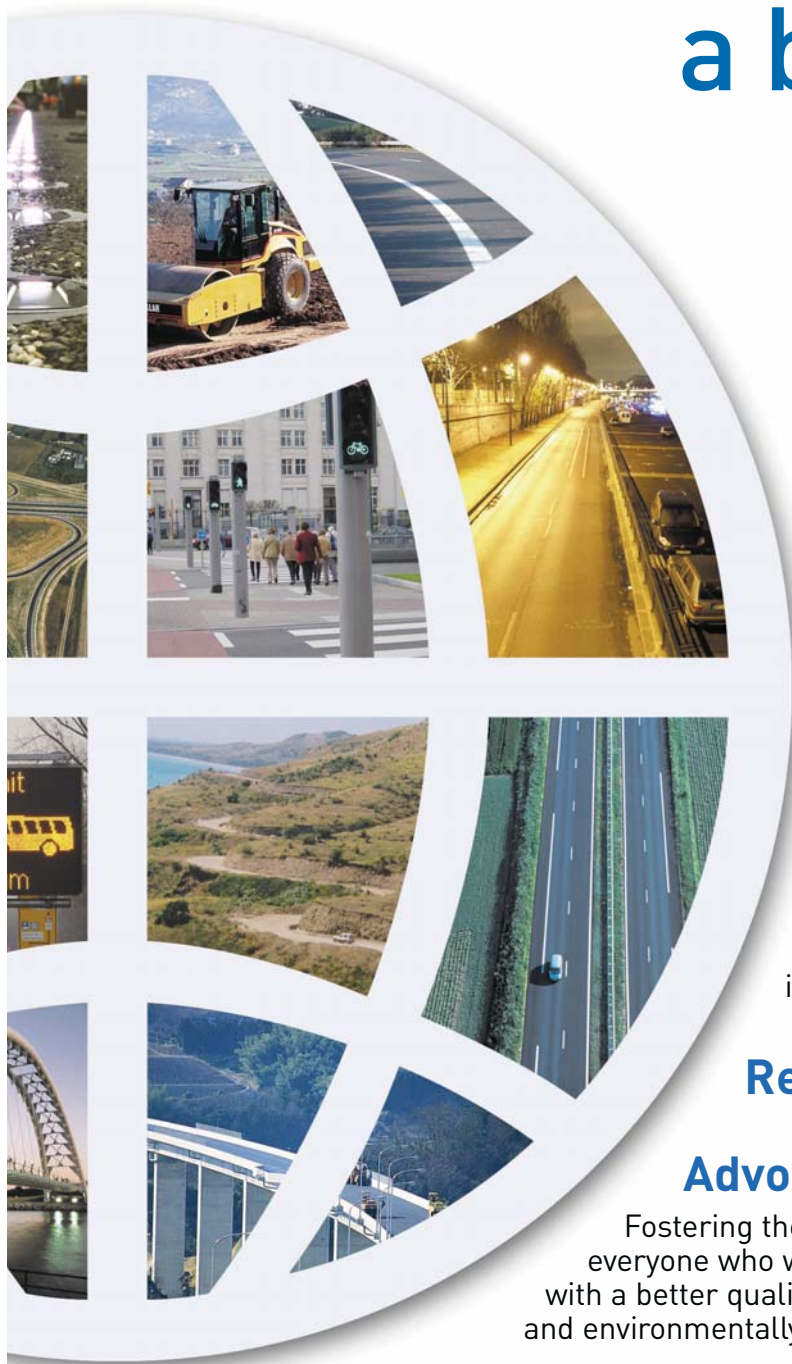


Roads Association of Thailand



The Ministry of Transport, Thailand

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 2 234 66 30
fax: + 32 2 230 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