



ASECAP DAYS 2022

Brussels, 24th November 2022

Opening remarks

Mr Anouar BENZAOUZ

President of the International Road Federation (IRF)

Distinguished colleagues,

It is truly a pleasure to be able to meet you again in person just a month after the IRF annual conference we hosted in Marrakech in October. A sincere thank you goes to ASECAP President Antonio Nunes de Sousa and to Malika Seddi, ASECAP Secretary General for this kind invitation which has become now over the years - since the signature of the MoU between our organisations – a nice tradition and an effective way to coordinate action.

A few days after COP27 in Egypt, this event offers us the opportunity to reflect together on what's next.

The message that came out of our Marrakech conference was very clear: Going forward the role of infrastructure planners, designers and contractors will fundamentally change. To be able to embrace new technologies as they emerge, countries around the world and lending institutions will **need to have the proper processes and regulatory frameworks in place** and infrastructure providers will need to ensure that they have the **skills, knowledge and systems** in place to build the associated infrastructure.

My message and the call from IRF has been equally clear: **We need to learn system thinking. We need to build true partnerships to deliver** on these critical issues.

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In line with this belief we have worked over the past weeks hand in hand with ASECAP and other leading organisations from the road sector and have been able to deliver together - last week during the transport day at the COP - a joint statement called “**Road Sector for COP27**” that you certainly have seen buzzing over social media last week.

The value of that statement should NOT be underestimated. It has allowed our sector to speak for once with a unified voice. It has allowed our sector to come back on the agenda. It has allowed our sector to articulate in clear and straightforward messages our vision and our needs going forward.

The joint statement is a collective call to all parties to **act with pragmatism, ensure a just transition and embrace innovation.**

Pragmatism, because roads move people and goods, over short and long distances, with light and heavy loads, in urban and rural areas. Almost every journey for people or goods involves interaction with roads and some element of road transport. **We need to decarbonise without compromising the services we provide and without undermining a network that serves all other transport modes**, including active mobility and public transport.

A just transition, because all countries have different transport and energy landscapes, with widely different challenges. Those **regional and local specificities need to be taken into consideration** when drafting pathways for transport decarbonisation. **Local context does matter.** And this is true also in Europe and not just when we look at the divide between developed and developing countries.



Finally Innovation, because the challenge requires us to adopt **a holistic approach** that will translate in investments in **hard infrastructure** (such as missing links, network upgrades, underground transport and border crossings) but also **soft measures** (such as regulations, ICTs, standards, and the exchange of information). They **are both needed in order to ensure sustainable and efficient carbon-free multi-modal journeys** that can serve a global population set to increase to 9.7 billion people in 2050 and a freight transport demand that will more than double by 2050.

Data and new technologies are crucial, but they are not enough. Developing the institutional capacity to plan and deliver change requires embracing innovation also at the level of systems, processes, and people. **We must invest in developing the skills of people at all levels.**

Finally, traditional **funding and financing instruments** have not been designed to address the high-risk and uncertain investments required to decarbonise the transport sector. **This means creative financial approaches are needed**, with different instruments and sources.

Together we can build a conducive environment for the road sector to deliver on the Paris Agreement.

IRF looks forward to working with all of you for that to happen.

Thank you.