



New Year, New Programs

For the IRF, the end of the year 2004 was marked with heavy activity to boost the presence of the International Road Federation and set the groundwork for the ambitious working program of the IRF in 2005.

IRF Director General and CEO Washington Patrick Sankey paid a visit to Argentina, while Director General Geneva/Brussels Tony Pearce marked the end of the year with visits to Moscow, Iran and Turkey.

A new role in Argentina

Mr. Sankey, working to further increase IRF's presence in South America, met with Argentina Road Association (ARA) President Miguel Salvia and his executive committee. Through discussions with Salvia, the IRF and ARA agreed to work together to advance the road development industry in Argentina and throughout South America. The ARA Executive Board said that there were four main areas of concern that need to be addressed in order to move the industry forward.

Roadway safety audits: Both the IRF and ARA recognize the need to have an advanced audit program to determine the needs of the current infrastructure in the South American road industry. "This is a crucial next step," Mr. Sankey said and added that the IRF will collaborate with the Argentina Road Association to advance this objective.

Inter-modal planning: Mr. Salvia explained Argentina's current problem that the transportation infrastructure needs further planning to maximize the movement of goods, both in and out of the docks as well as through truck cargo. IRF pledged its support through its network of members and their expertise to develop an implementation plan for all modes of transportation into one fluid infrastructure system.

Cohesion in the region: The ARA invited the IRF to participate in the development of an up-to-date manual on uniform traffic control devices for the region. Some of the problem areas in South

America include the lack of a uniform system in place for traffic control devices and in some areas there is no standard for signage at all.

The financing of roads: In Argentina, Mr. Salvia said, there is a considerable amount of money appropriated for the funding of road projects. However, debt and a struggling economy have kept the funds from being spent. Mr. Sankey proposed public private partnership training seminars to help initiate innovative ideas about the funding of roads.

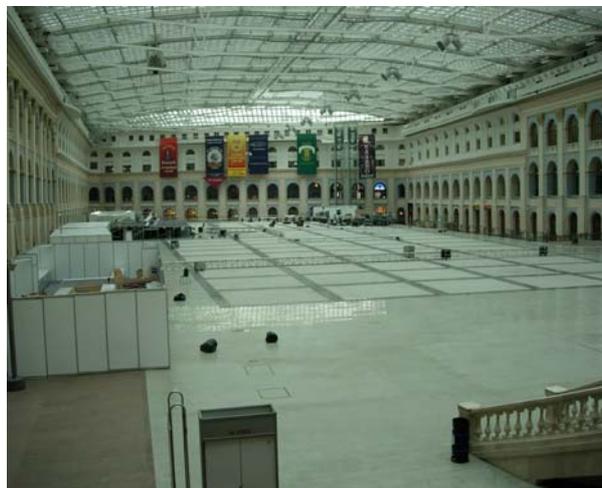
More in Moscow

Mr. Pearce, who was in Moscow December 14-15, focused on the IRF program in Russia in 2005.

IRF Geneva / Brussels will hold its Spring Statutory meeting on May 23 in Moscow. The next day, the Federation will co-sponsor a one day conference on the subject of Russian roads and financing. This would be in association with the Dorkomexpo exhibition near Red Square.

Pearce has also explored further the IRF patronage of Dorkomexpo, which is by far the most important construction equipment and trade show in Russia. It takes place in the "Gostiniy Dvor" exhibition and cultural centre near Red Square.

The plant exhibition is also in Red Square between St Basil's Cathedral and the Kremlin.



For details of IRF events see www.irfnet.org

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It is sponsored by the Government of Moscow and the Ministry of Transport. IRF members would get reduced price exhibition space.

The business mission to Russia would take place on the week commencing 16 May and would probably include Moscow, St Petersburg and Kaliningrad. A fourth venue of Nizhny Novgorod has also been suggested.

Seminars in Iran



In Iran, Mr Pearce has met both with the officials of the Ministry of Road and Transport, and specifically the Road Maintenance and Transit Organization. The Iranian road authorities are particularly concerned with road deaths, which claim 27,000 lives annually, and are aiming to reduce the number of deaths by identifying black spots, looking at roadway systems, signs, lighting and ventilation in tunnels.

Both the RMTO and the Ministry expressed interest in further ties with the IRF, both for the purposes of technology-development and cooperating in hosting seminars in Iran. Mr Khansahi, the deputy minister for transport, repeated Iran's intention of hosting the 4th International Silk Road Conference in 2006 and two seminars in 2005, one on transit and the other on road maintenance.

Black Sea and Turkey

Mr Pearce has addressed the executive board of the Turkish Road Association, which consists of representatives of the Turkish public and private sector. The topics of discussion came under three main headlines:

The Black Sea Ring Program: The Turkish Road Association is willing to help IRF organize the First Black Sea Ring Conference in Istanbul in November 2005. The conference aims to bring together the public and private sector around the region, now an immediate neighbour of the European Union. Thus, the need for overcoming the bottlenecks is even larger, as the failure to do so would choke the anticipated growth in the region.

Turkish-Greek engineers: The sides also discussed the possibility of launching a platform of Turkish and Greek engineers, which was regarded favourably by the Turkish Road Association. "Turkish and Greek engineers have similar challenges, similar education and a comparable business environment," said Mr. Pearce.

The opening of a local office: The Turkish Road Association held the belief that the local office should be in Ankara, the capital, rather than the financial centre of Istanbul.

Upcoming activities



IRF's first challenge in 2005 will be the organization of the 4th South East Europe Conference at Dubrovnik on March 7-9. The first half of the year will witness an Afghanistan Reconstruction Conference, business development mission to Moscow and, finally, in mid-year, the World Meeting on 14-18 June in Bangkok, Thailand.

IRF staff wishes all of you a very happy and prosperous 2005.

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