



## IRF takes up the Russian challenge

*In May the IRF Geneva/ Brussels held its Annual Meeting in Moscow during a two week series of events in Russia, a country where there is a chronic gap between available funds and need for investment in road infrastructure.*

### **IRF Geneva/Brussels Annual Meeting:**

IRF delegates assembled in Moscow on 23 May for the 2005 Annual Meeting.

#### **IRF Activity Report**

The IRF secretariat presented an activity report of the events and achievements of the past year and looked ahead to a busy programme of events for the second half of 2005, which includes several major conferences in North Africa, South America and Turkey and a number of smaller seminars in Uzbekistan, Iran and Slovakia.

Director General, Tony Pearce, described the progress made in recruiting new IRF members; around 30 new members have already joined the IRF in 2005, with particularly high interest coming from Greece, India and Russia. The extension of the membership gives the IRF a wider global presence, now with members in 81 countries.

Sibylle Rupprecht, Director of Membership, also highlighted the importance of member retention and described the IRF's efforts to provide a wider range of services to its members. She introduced a survey of the IRF membership, which will be carried out by telephone to assess current and past members' needs.

Progress has also been made in IRF's effort to be 'local everywhere', one of the objectives set out in the New Start plan. Local representation offices have been established in Egypt, under the Arab Road Association and in India, hosted by the Builders' Association of India (BAI).

Several successful IRF conferences took place in the past year, notably the 3<sup>rd</sup> Silk Road Conference, held in Xi'an China in October 2004 and the 4<sup>th</sup> Roads Congress for South East Europe, hosted in Dubrovnik, Croatia earlier this year.



At the European level, the Brussels team described some of the

contact that has taken place with the EU institutions and efforts to increase the IRF's visibility in Brussels. They also highlighted the forthcoming issues on the EU agenda of interest to the road sector.

Nahila Justo, responsible for Education and Training also launched proposals to introduce a new range of activities in the field of education and training and recent efforts to increase cooperation between the IRF and the academic community.

#### **Working Groups**

Prior to the general meeting the PCTRS, the IRF's working group on road safety, had met as well as the CRENRA group of national road associations. The need for a further working group to cover a range of policy issues was also discussed and Patrick Lepercq of Michelin has agreed to chair a policy committee.

#### **Elections**

A number of board members had reached the end of their terms and new nominations were put forward.

Richard Harris of AECOM FaberMaunsell, UK, KK Kapila of ICT, India, Marjan Reza-Alikhani

**For details of IRF events see [www.irfnet.org](http://www.irfnet.org)**

#### **INTERNATIONAL ROAD FEDERATION**

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of the Ministry of Road and Transportation, Iran and Philippe Gresset of USIRF, France were all accepted by the assembly as new board members. The re-election of Samir Hassan, Jaakko Rahja and Daniel Roffet was also approved.

Manfred Buck of DaimlerChrysler Services will replace Alfred-Herwig Fischer and Matija Vilhar of DRC-Slovenian Road Association will replace Igar Zajec. Gert van de Beld had retired and it was accepted that his seat be left open until a replacement from Philips is proposed in the coming weeks.

### **Exchange of views**

Following the meeting an exchange of views with new IRF member MADI, the State Technical University, was held. Professors from MADI discussed the extent of the funding gap in the Russian road sector and the large amount of maintenance work required on the network, as well as the government's decision to develop concrete roads.

### **Russian roads seminar:**

The Annual Meeting was followed by a seminar on the funding of Russia's roads, held at the Gostiniy Dvor exhibition centre on 24 May.

Officials from Rosavtodor, the Federal Highway Administration and from the State Duma described the current funding shortage in the Russian road sector and efforts underway to try and encourage private sector involvement and PPP projects. New legislation relating to competitive bidding and tolling and concessions is hoped will provide a more favourable environment for private sector investment.

Representatives of the IRF membership presented methods and requirements for

engaging the private sector, including performance based maintenance contracts and the factors influencing the success of PPP projects.



The seminar was followed by the opening of Dorkomexpo, Russia's major plant and machinery exhibition. IRF was an official sponsor of the event and also hosted a stand in the exhibition aiming to boost awareness of the IRF among the Russian road sector.

### **Business Development Mission:**

Several delegates from the IRF membership took part in a Business Development Mission in Russia from 16-21 May. Delegates met high level officials in Archangelsk, St Petersburg, Kazan, Ekaterinburg, Perm and Moscow.

Participants, some of which have been established in Russia for a number of years, expressed their satisfaction with the mission, confirming that the contacts introduced by the IRF were not ones they could have established alone.

In the future the IRF plans to hold further Business development Missions in countries of interest to the membership.

### **IRF 15<sup>th</sup> World Meeting:**

There are less than two weeks to go before what looks to be a very promising 15<sup>th</sup> IRF World Meeting. The meeting in Bangkok, Thailand from 14-18 June will be a major opportunity for networking in South East Asia, with particularly large delegations registered from Japan and China.

The accompanying exhibition will also be the biggest ever seen at an IRF event, with a broad range of exhibitors from around the world. Registration remains open via the internet at [www.irf2005.com](http://www.irf2005.com). The IRF team looks forward to seeing you there.

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