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PRESS RELEASE

President Erdogan Opens the IRF World Congress 2024 in Istanbul

The IRF World Congress 2024, organised by the International Road Federation (IRF) in collaboration with the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Türkiye, officially opened today in Istanbul, with H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Türkiye, delivering the inaugural address.

In his speech, President Erdoğan underscored the vital role of infrastructure in shaping a nation's development, highlighting its alignment with this year's Congress theme, *Connecting to Empower Mobility: Roads as Enablers of a Sustainable Future for All*. "Road is civilisation" said President Erdogan. "Roads mean transportation, industry, production, tourism, trade, safety, development, and integration with the world. With this understanding, we have elevated Türkiye to a new level in transportation and infrastructure."

The Congress, which runs from 15 to 18 October, is attracting over 2,000 participants from more than 80 countries, including over 30 ministers, high-level international organisations, and key public and private stakeholders. Discussions and presentations will focus on reimagining transport systems to build a greener, safer, and more inclusive future.

In his opening address, IRF President, Dimitris Mandalozis, stressed the urgency of sustainability and coming together as a collective voice. "For over seven decades, the IRF has united public and private sector, fostering partnerships that deliver meaningful impact. This is the core of who we are and what we do as a Federation" he said. "Today, amidst global challenges our collective voice as a transport community and not just as a federation is more important than ever". "Sustainability is not a choice – it is an imperative" he continued. "Let us seize this moment to raise a strong, united voice that says NO to road deaths and injuries and YES to a decarbonised, resilient and sustainable transport that leaves no one behind" Mr Mandalozis concluded.

Welcoming the international and the local guests, H.E. Mr Abdulkadir Uraloğlu, Minister of Transport and Infrastructure of Türkiye, said "Türkiye has witnessed an impressive infrastructure development in recent twenty years. It has managed to increase investment resulting in some of the highest values of PPP infrastructure deals and private infrastructure investment globally". Emphasising in his speech the importance of sustainable infrastructure within national transport strategies.

The opening plenary continued with a high-level panel discussion featuring remarks from prominent international organisations, including the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe



(UNECE), the International Transport Forum (ITF), the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the European Investment Bank (EIB), and Turkish technology leader TOGG.

A **Ministerial Meeting** hosted by the Turkish Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure followed bringing together over 30 ministers from across the globe to explore practical strategies for decarbonisation and resilience in transport. The meeting focused on strengthening international cooperation, advancing intelligent transport systems, and investing in sustainable infrastructure as key pathways to building more resilient societies.

The Congress foresees a wide programme, including daily plenary sessions, special sessions, trainings, and five parallel technical tracks, accompanied by an exhibition spanning 5,000 square metres. Attendees will also visit on Friday key infrastructure sites in Türkiye, showcasing its commitment to sustainable transport solutions.

For more information about the IRF World Congress 2024 and upcoming sessions, visit irf2024.irfofficial.org.

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About IRF

The [International Road Federation \(IRF\)](http://www.irfofficial.org) is a global, independent, not-for-profit organisation with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. Active since 1948, IRF is a membership-based organisation, representing leading corporate and institutional players drawn from the road and mobility sectors worldwide. Its mission is to promote the development of roads and road networks that enable access and sustainable mobility for all. Its approach is centred on key strategic components of knowledge transfer & information sharing, connecting people, businesses, and organisations, and working on policy & advocacy.

www.irfofficial.org

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