

## **Press Release**

Paris, 15 April 2009

# **First Visit of the New U.S. Secretary of Transportation to Europe**

## **Joins Other Confirmed Ministers at the 2009 International Transport Forum**

“We are proud and very pleased that many Ministers of our Member countries have confirmed their presence at this year’s International Transport Forum, amongst others the U.K., France, Turkey, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Russia. And we are especially pleased that the new U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Ray LaHood, will pay his first visit to Europe on the occasion of the 2009 Forum,” announced **Jack Short**, Secretary General of the International Transport Forum (ITF) in Paris on Wednesday. The 2009 Forum on “Transport for a Global Economy: Challenges & Opportunities in the Downturn” will take place in Leipzig from 26 to 29 May.

“This Forum takes place at a critical time, as international transportation feels the impact of the global economic downturn,” said Mr. LaHood. “I look forward to discussions with both government and private sector leaders from around the world about how transportation not only can cope during these difficult times, but also how it can contribute to economic recovery.”

An autonomous body linked with the OECD, the Paris-based ITF is the world’s leading forum on transportation and serves as an international platform for transport ministers, industry and civil society to discuss and find solutions on a global level. Decision makers and key figures from the 52 Member countries of the ITF come together in the German city of Leipzig every year for the global transport summit, “a truly global and unique platform and the right place for international coordination and cooperation”, Mr. Short explained. “In the present downturn, international cooperation needs to be strengthened and transport should play a strategic key role in the economic recovery process.”

According to the Secretary General a more efficient, better funded, more interoperable and more sustainable transport system is needed to underpin growth and development. Therefore the 2009 Forum will discuss the social and environmental impacts of the present downturn as well as strategic planning and financing. “More efficient transport can contribute a significant boost to restoring growth and confidence in the world economy”, Mr. Short stressed. “This year’s Forum in Leipzig is an opportunity to lead the way, and the presence of a high-ranking member of the Obama administration is a very important signal.”

More details on the 2009 International Transport Forum at:

<http://www.internationaltransportforum.org/2009/forum2009.html>

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