

## **The Need for Cooperation on Road Safety**

Speech by HRH Prince Michael of Kent GCVO,  
Patron of the Commission for Global Road Safety

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(Check against delivery)

On behalf of the Commission for Global Road Safety I would like to thank you for joining us tonight and in particular to thank Mr Sergey Mironov and General Victor Kiryanov for the welcome and hospitality you have shown to the Commission for Global Road Safety here in St. Petersburg this week.

The Commission met today at the Tavricheskiy Palace to review progress in our efforts to press for a greater international response to the appalling global epidemic of road traffic deaths and injuries.

We are encouraged that momentum is growing for committed international action. The Russian Federation has shown great leadership and has played a key role in building this momentum by generously offering to host the first UN Ministerial Conference on global road safety in Moscow in November 2009.

I am delighted that the Russian Federation is taking road safety, internationally and domestically, very seriously indeed – it was this commitment and leadership which earned the Federation's Traffic Inspectorate my international award last year.

I am also pleased that so many of the countries within the Confederation of Independent States represented at this Congress also share an ambition to make their roads safer still.

The first step in tackling road deaths and injuries is to recognise that there is a problem, to assess the available data, and to resolve to act.

We see time and again that high profile political support, coordination and cooperation are vital ingredients for successfully reducing road casualties.

With your International Road Safety Congress, bringing together the countries of the CIS, exchanging experiences and good practice, we can see that all important cooperation and high level political engagement in road safety in action.

This cooperation is needed at many levels - from government, from industry, from civil society and at local level too. And we need to work to evolve a systematic approach to improving road safety embracing safe vehicles, safe road users and safe roads.

In the United Kingdom we have learnt many hard lessons about how to safely manage the roads, and we are still learning. Last year saw the lowest ever number of deaths on our roads since we began keeping records in the 1920s, dropping below three thousand for the first time.

This has been achieved by decades of sustained coordinated enforcement, campaigning, education and technical innovation, for which there has been a strong level of both political consensus and public support. But there remain two key areas where much more needs to be done and where I believe that we can cooperate much more closely – first young drivers and secondly those who are employed to drive.

Newly qualified drivers are some three to four times more likely to have crashes than those with more experience – some excellent new programmes are now available and I ask that you take advantage of these.

It is estimated that between a third and a quarter of all road traffic crashes involve someone who was at work at the time. Many top companies now recognise that by improving the management of their drivers they can not just reduce accidents but significantly cut costs too. The delegation from Great Britain will be at the Congress and I urge you to learn more from them.

There is, of course, no room for complacency. By sharing ideas and experiences with other countries, as you are doing this week, we can become still more effective and save more lives.

I wish you every success for your Road Safety Congress tomorrow. On behalf of the Commission for Global Road Safety, we look forward to working with you to make the Moscow Ministerial in 2009 a success and a breakthrough for our collective efforts to make road safe.