

Profile of an Organization

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The following article is part of an occasional series presented in TR News that profiles transportation research organizations. The organization and goals of the Permanent International Association of Road Congresses are discussed in this article.

Thirty-three countries participated in the First World Road Congress held in Paris in 1908, the first international conference on roads and road transportation. The largest delegations came from France, the United States, Germany, Belgium, and Austria. An initiative to establish the Permanent International Association of Road Congresses (PIARC) was introduced at a meeting of this congress by representatives from Russia, Germany, the United States, and Italy. Founded the following year, PIARC is the oldest international association concerned with roads and road-building techniques.

PIARC has 63 government members and more than 1,750 collective and individual members from the public and private sectors of 84 countries. Members who are representatives of governments come from the highest levels of road administration in their countries.

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Permanent International Association of Road Congresses ~ Association Internationale Permanente des Congrès de la Route

English and French are the official languages of PIARC. The central office is in Paris.

What Is the Purpose of PIARC?

Consulting PIARC is perhaps one of the surest ways to obtain information on developments in road infrastructure and operations outside one's own country. PIARC has acquired international recognition as a platform for exchange among countries through its political neutrality and competence. It fosters progress in the construction, equipment, maintenance, use, and economic development of roads and encourages the growth of road systems

worldwide. PIARC is a non-profit association financed by membership dues. It was granted a consultative status, Category II, to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in 1970.

PIARC mediates between researchers and practicing engineers. The points of view of both nations and international experts guide its endeavors.

Government members prepare reports on their nations' activities for World Road Congresses. The reports are published and are an invaluable source of information for transportation professionals. Transportation experts from around the world undertake research through committees convened by PIARC. The association has 12 permanent technical committees

composed of 500 professionals from more than 40 countries. Each committee, composed of members, corresponding members, and experts, deals with a specific field, as shown in the accompanying box.

The technical committees carry out research and analysis and prepare reports on issues of international interest. Committees present reports at the congresses and prepare reports for decision makers and for research, control, works, or design engineers between congresses. Committees are also responsible for missions entrusted to PIARC by international organizations such as the United Nations.

In addition to the permanent committees, PIARC has several specialized technical commissions with specific assignments.

For example, the Technical Commission on Winter Serviceability is responsible for the technical content of the International Winter Congress, which is organized by PIARC and takes place every four years. (The 1994 congress will be held in Seefeld, Austria.) Another technical commission was formed recently to deal with combatting natural disasters.

World Road Congresses

PIARC organizes a World Road Congress every four years for the exchange of infor-

mation between researchers and field engineers that provides a forum in which road issues and techniques in countries throughout the world can be reviewed. The national reports prepared for the congress are discussions on four to six questions that form the theme of the congress. Questions on topics such as road policies, public and private road financing, road construction methods and materials, road maintenance, traffic management, road safety, and environmental issues are composed by PIARC's Executive Committee in consultation with member countries and technical committees. National reports present local conditions and cover progress or research since the last congress. Reports are limited to 20 pages per question; between 100 and 150 national reports are presented at each congress. The reports are

also presented as a synthesis for each question. Technical committee meetings, conference discussions, workshops, and exhibitions are held concurrently with the congresses. and general reports, technical committee reports, preparatory documents, and congress proceedings. International experts prepare general policy documents, technical documents, and technical recommendations for publication between congresses.

Publications

The publications from the World Road Congresses constitute a unique source of information for road specialists throughout the world. Publications include national

Government members of PIARC as of January 1, 1991

ALGERIA, ANDORRA, ARGENTINA, AUSTRALIA, AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, BRAZIL, BULGARIA, BURKINA FASO, CAMEROON, CANADA, CANADA-QUEBEC, CHAD, CHILE, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, COLOMBIA, CUBA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, DENMARK, ECUADOR, EGYPT, FINLAND, FRANCE, GERMANY, GREECE, HUNGARY, INDIA, IRAN, IRELAND, ISRAEL, ITALY, IVORY COAST, KUWAIT, JAPAN, LUXEMBOURG, MADAGASCAR, MALAYSIA, MEXICO, MOROCCO, THE NETHERLANDS, NEW ZEALAND, NICARAGUA, NORWAY, PAKISTAN, PHILIPPINES, POLAND, PORTUGAL, RUMANIA, SAUDI ARABIA, SENEGAL, SPAIN, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND, SYRIA, TUNISIA, TURKEY, UNITED KINGDOM, USA, URUGUAY, USSR, VENEZUELA, YEMEN, YUGOSLAVIA.

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The Commission on Terminology, with the cooperation of the 12 technical committees, publishes the *Technical Dictionary of Road Terms*. The sixth edition was published in 1990 and covers 1,164 concepts. Like previous editions, the dictionary is bilingual—English and French. The fifth edition was translated into 15 other languages.

PIARC's bulletin, *Routes/Roads*, is published three times a year and covers association activities. Articles on national road networks and road techniques written by government members and on specialized topics, such as urban traffic and traffic control, by technical committees are among the features. Preliminary reports on upcoming congress questions and information on international meetings are also included.



Cooperation between PIARC and TRB is furthered by attendance at joint sessions held at TRB Annual Meeting. From left: Abdelaziz Dahbi, Centre National d'Etudes et de Recherches Routiers; Patrice Retour and Bernard Fauveau, Permanent International Association of Road Congresses, at 1991 meeting.

PIARC Permanent Technical Committees

Surface Characteristics
Testing of Road Materials
Roads in Developing Regions
Interurban Roads
Road Tunnels
Maintenance and Management
Concrete Roads
Flexible Roads
Economic and Finance
Roads in Urban Areas
Road Bridges
Earthworks, Drainage, Subgrade

the executive committee, the president, and the secretary general.

PIARC has four permanent staff persons. In addition, government members provide strong backing to the secretariat of the technical committees. Seventeen national committees provide administrative support.

PIARC and the United States

PIARC publications are listed in the International Road Research Documentation, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

How Does PIARC Function?

A Permanent International Commission, whose members are nominated by representatives of participating governments, administers PIARC. Each government member has the right, according to its membership status, to one or more delegates to the commission. The assembly of delegates meets once a year and appoints

Since 1987, two years before the United States rejoined PIARC in 1989 after a long absence, its representatives have been involved in the work of the technical committees. The United States is represented on the Permanent International Commission by Thomas D. Larson, administrator, Federal Highway Administration; Francis B. Francois, executive director, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials; Thomas B. Deen, executive director, TRB; and J. J. Henry, director, Pennsylvania

PIARC's history

can be traced by the meeting places and dates of the Congresses

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| IInd Congress : | 1910 – Brussels |
| IIIrd Congress : | 1913 – London |
| IVth Congress : | 1923 – Seville |
| Vth Congress : | 1926 – Milan |
| VIth Congress : | 1930 – Washington |
| VIIth Congress : | 1934 – Munich |
| VIIIth Congress : | 1938 – The Hague |
| IXth Congress : | 1951 – Lisbon |
| Xth Congress : | 1955 – Istanbul |
| XIth Congress : | 1959 – Rio De Janeiro |
| XIIth Congress : | 1964 – Rome |
| XIIIth Congress : | 1967 – Tokyo |
| XIVth Congress : | 1971 – Prague |
| XVth Congress : | 1975 – Mexico |
| XVIth Congress : | 1979 – Vienna |
| XVIIth Congress : | 1983 – Sydney |
| XVIIIth Congress : | 1987 – Brussels |

Transportation Institute. In November 1990 Larson was elected to PIARC's Executive Committee. Francois chairs the working group on the operation and management question for the 1991 World Road Congress and will conduct the corresponding session of the congress.

The cooperative relationship between PIARC and TRB, a collective member of PIARC, is strengthened at each TRB annual meeting at joint TRB-PIARC sessions. At the 1990 meeting a session on pervious coated macadam was conducted; in 1991 a session was held on combating urban congestion. PIARC and TRB review their exchange programs at a working meeting each year, in which FHWA, AASHTO, and Strategic Highway Research Program representatives participate.

Getting To Know PIARC Better

Transportation professionals throughout the world who are interested in roads can join PIARC. The annual fee for individual members (\$30 for 1991) includes a subscription to *Routes/Roads* and privileged

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PIARC's publication *Routes/Roads* covers association activities.