



## The Association of European Vehicle Logistics

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### PRESS RELEASE

#### **ECG delegation holds “encouraging” talks with EC vice-president Kallas**

#### **Truck weights and dimensions, marine sulphur rules, driver security, and scrapping incentives high on the agenda**

EUROPE’s outbound logistics sector can look to Brussels with renewed confidence after a high-level ECG delegation met with European Commission vice president in charge of transport Siim Kallas last week to discuss issues vital to Europe’s logistics services providers.

Speaking after what he described as “a highly encouraging meeting”, ECG president Costantino Baldissara said: “We are very grateful to Mr Kallas and his staff for granting us the time to present our views on a range of issues that are critical to our members, to the automotive industry as a whole, and to the wider European economy.

Just as importantly, we were reassured to find Mr Kallas sympathetic to a number of proposals that are at the core of our legislative agenda, particularly in such areas as loaded weights and dimensions and security for drivers on Europe’s roads.

“We were also able to present our case on other issues, notably the likely negative impact of tough new limits on the sulphur content of marine fuels and our support for fresh incentives to remove older vehicles from Europe’s roads.”

Truck weights and dimensions has long been a key issue for ECG, with the current patchwork of rules across Europe an active impediment to the creation of a single market. ECG argues for harmonisation of loaded lengths at 20.75m, compared with a current maximum of 18.75m set by EU law. This measure would not increase truck lengths but would allow more cars to be loaded per truck as is customary in most member states for national transport, thereby improving efficiency while reducing total emissions.

With DG MOVE currently reviewing Directive 96/53 on weights and dimensions, ECG was pleased to find Mr Kallas open to this proposal, noting that, since it involves no increase in

the length of trucks – a separate, and highly charged debate - it chimes with the directorate's efforts to promote efficient yet sustainable transport. "He urged ECG to participate fully in the consultation process as this debate gets underway, an invitation we will certainly take up," Mr Baldissara said.

On the equally problematic issue of pending limits on the sulphur content of marine fuels, - a 0.1% limit is due to come into effect in the Baltic Sea, the North Sea and the English Channel from 2015 - Mr Kallas conceded that it will be difficult to effect changes to the pending regulations. ECG is particularly concerned that the high price of such fuel will drive up the cost of marine transport and power a modal shift from sea to road, contradicting decades of European environmental and transport policy.

Mr Kallas noted that the issue is now being debated in the European Parliament, with the environment committee taking the lead, and in the Council of Ministers, where member state environment ministers are involved. He suggested that ECG engage with these institutions on this issue. "It is a suggestion we will follow," Mr Baldissara said, "not least because we understand that some previously supportive member states are rethinking their commitment to the new limits within the impossibly tight current deadline."

ECG vice president Wolfgang Goebel raised the issue of driver security, and specifically the lack of secure parking areas for trucks on Europe's roads. This not only puts both truck and driver in danger – with shootings and arson attacks dramatically on the rise – but makes it difficult for those same drivers to follow EU rules on driving and rest time. Mr Kallas was understanding of the problem and said he would consider it as he looks at targeted initiatives for improving transport efficiency.

Cabotage also came up for discussion, and here Mr Kallas noted that a "High-Level Group" of eight experts was expected to make recommendations on the opening up of road transport markets, including the further liberalisation of cabotage, in May, and that legislation could well follow in 2013.

As for incentives for the scrapping of older cars, he said this was not currently in the EC's remit and suggested that ECG work with member states on this issue. As Mr Baldissara noted, "when carefully crafted, such measures have worked in the past and could yet provide an invaluable boost for our hard-pressed members and for wider economic growth while reducing the higher emissions that derive from older transport assets.

"On this issue, as on those others discussed in our meeting with Mr Kallas, we will continue to look to the European Commission for insight and direction, and we will continue to put our case in the belief that a more efficient, sustainable transport system is in the interest of all."

ECG's delegation to the meeting comprised: president Costantino Baldissara; vice-president Wolfgang Goebel; executive director Mike Sturgeon; Antoine Redier, board member responsible for EU Affairs; Bjorn Svenningsen, board member responsible for maritime and ports; and Tom Antonissen, EU Affairs manager.

**Background for the Editors**

*ECG, the Association of European Vehicle Logistics, has been the voice of the Finished Vehicle Logistics industry in Europe since 1997. ECG represents the interests of almost 100 member companies, from family owned SMEs to multi-nationals, and is the major champion of the European vehicle logistics sector. We represent all transport modes at EU level.*

*ECG Members provide transport, distribution, storage, preparation and post-production services to manufacturers, importers, car rental companies and vehicle leasing operators in 25 Member States, Turkey and Russia. They own or operate more than 373 car-carrying ships, 13,000 purpose built railway wagons, 22 river barges and 17,600 road transporters. As a major employer, the industry plays an important role in contributing to the economic success of the European Union. Today, ECG members have an aggregate turnover of €16.2 billion and their economic impact on companies associated with the sector is estimated at €34 billion. More than 64,700 people are employed directly by the vehicle logistics industry and an additional 160,000 are indirectly employed in this sector.*

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