



Time will tell...

President Costantino Baldissara (right) and vice-president Wolfgang Göbel (left) reflect on ECG's activity over the past 12 months and look forward to the continued distinction of its members in 2015

“ **W**hile each New Year brings fresh opportunity and new challenges, in many ways the journey simply continues.

January 1st will see the Sulphur Emission Control Areas (SECAs) that encompass the English Channel, North Sea and Baltic Sea finally coming into effect. From this date, maritime fuel used in this zone will be restricted to 0.1% sulphur content or equivalent. As I write this, a few weeks short of the deadline, there is still a lack of clarity on practical issues such as low-sulphur fuel supply, exhaust scrubber efficiency and longevity, and LNG supply infrastructure. One thing is certain – the maritime industry will be dramatically affected by the demands of this legislation. Only time will tell whether there will be a modal shift away from short-sea shipping as a result (see shipping section on p40 for more).

Another challenge that we are likely to carry over to 2015 is the legislative process surrounding the revision of the Weights and Dimensions Directive (Directive 96/53/EC). Those of you with good memories may recall that my New Year's wish in this column at the beginning of 2014 was a satisfactory resolution to this long-standing issue. This wish has not yet been granted. 'Triologue' negotiations between the EU institutions, although underway for some time, have not, as yet, been fruitful. At the time of going to press, the European Council is still struggling to reach consensus among the 28 EU members and it is looking increasingly likely that the issue will roll into 2015 and the remit of the Latvian EU presidency.

Our lobbying campaign continues determinedly with ECG members in close contact with transport representatives from their member state permanent representations to the EU. Our association and our members as a whole are now more aware how essential national support is to get one's voice heard at the European level. We will continue to ensure that the voice of the vehicle logistics sector is heard, on this and other issues.

We have not only been active on the lobbying front at ECG. The last quarter has been a busy and productive period for our association. Our annual conference, which took place in Amsterdam in October, was one of our best attended to date and underlined its significance for the vehicle logistics industry anywhere in Europe (see p12 for more). The broad range of expert speakers and panelists, from sector associations such as ECSA, CER and ACEA, the European

Commission and the automotive industry, reflected not only the multimodal focus of ECG but also the recognition and respect of industry-related partners for ECG's pivotal role in European automotive logistics.

The autumn also saw the launch of the latest edition of the ECG Survey of Vehicle Logistics in Europe 2014/2015. Published every two years, this is the only publication covering the European vehicle logistics sector, including Russia, Turkey, Georgia and Ukraine. Copies are available from the ECG Secretariat.

The ECG Academy also commenced its ninth course with another group of young logistics managers coming together to hone the skills and knowledge necessary to maximise their potential in the industry. Registrations are open now for the 2015-2016 course (see www.ecgassociation.eu for details).

One of the issues discussed at the Academy is the need for managers to consistently strive for quality and excellence in the industry, a hallmark of both ECG and its membership. It is no coincidence that ECG members made up over two thirds of the winners in recent logistics awards, including the Daimler European Carrier Awards 2014 and the Fiat Chrysler Qualitas Awards 2014. These highlight outstanding achievement in the automotive industry's logistics and supply chain and outbound services sector, and this year saw ECG member companies winning in fields like the Daimler Award for Best Partner in the Commercial Vehicles segment (ECM) and Fiat Chrysler Supplier of the Year (Mosolf). Several ECG members received individual awards, including Horst Mosolf for the Daimler European Carrier Awards Lifetime Achievement.

This committed search for excellence and constant quality improvement is further reflected in ECG's strategy for 2015, which involves significant emphasis on quality standards, standardisation and efficiency. Through its Quality Working Group and in close collaboration with AIAG (the Automotive Industry Action Group), ECG is committed to the provision of guidance and best practice to improve core tools and business process quality.

ECG is proud of its winners and indeed of all its members who continually strive for quality and distinction within the sector. Industry recognition of their accomplishment is a satisfying way to round off the year and we look forward to further achievements in 2015. ◻ ”