



Celebrate the past, look to the future

ECG president Wolfgang Göbel looks at the history of *Automotive Logistics* while looking ahead to the importance of training the next generation

“ Let me start by congratulating *Automotive Logistics* and the team at Ultima Media on reaching their 20th year of publication (see adjoining edition). It is a significant milestone. We had the great pleasure of working closely together over this time and especially during the six years when they managed the ECG Conference for us. This period saw a dramatic increase in attendance and helped us create a much more professional and polished event, which we continue to build upon today. Given that this was also the most difficult economic period in recent memory, the results were particularly impressive and we are especially grateful for their support and achievements.

Today, *Automotive Logistics* works across the world from Europe to the USA to China and it would be hard to imagine the industry without them, as many of us depend on the information they provide. We look forward to seeing this professional team behind the magazines and conferences, many of whom are largely unseen, continuing to support and inform our industry at a global level for many years to come.

Speaking of conferences, if you are reading this soon after publication, the annual ECG Conference is just days away on October 19th-20th. We are following a record year at our 2016 Hamburg conference where we welcomed more than 270 delegates and, judging from the feedback we received afterwards, you liked it very much. This year, we will strive to do better. Despite a number of conflicting customer events around the same dates, the indications are that attendance will be up again. Our delegates are coming to discuss ‘Digital revolutions in political turmoil’ and, for the first time, we are holding this annual event in our home town of Brussels at the Tanga Hotel, not far from the main airport. This will enable us to bring together a number of interesting speakers to talk about the changing political landscape and we hope that you will find it informative. You can find all the details, including the latest agenda and speakers, on our conference website at www.ecgconference.org.

Ahead of the ECG Conference, we will once again host an ‘Industry Meeting’ with the OEMs who form this steering group, together with the ECG board. This collaboration has become a vital part of what we do, as it includes the activities of our Digitalisation and Capacity working groups as well as the lobbying task force working on loaded truck lengths, all of which is developing rapidly.

Now, I would like to focus this time on training and personal development. There is nothing so important as investing in our people, the future of our industry. I am personally especially proud of the ECG Academy, which I have frequently heard described as the ‘jewel in our crown’, as this October sees the start of Course 12. Not only should we be proud of the longevity of this course, for 12 years is a long time for such training to continue, but also the process of continuous improvement that we apply to it to ensure that the content of each course is better than the one before. In close co-operation with our colleagues at KPMG, whom we entrust with the delivery of this course, together we ensure it stays focused, relevant and good value. However, better still is the fact that, for the first time, Course 12 is a ‘sell out’ having reached the maximum of 24 students.

I should add that, since we have several disappointed candidates this time, you may already register for Course 13, which will run from October 2018. This may seem a long way off but the ECG Secretariat will already accept your bookings.

At ECG, we have considered for some time how we can build on the success of the existing ECG Academy and extend our training offer, and so the board has spent time looking into developing a new course on negotiation. This was a result of our existing alumni telling us that this was the area on which they would most like to see additional focus. We hope to announce something very soon so keep an eye on the ECG website for more information. I hope that this could be the start of a small ECG training portfolio.

In addition to negotiation skills, we believe that there may also be demand for formal training in European competition law compliance. This is not because we feel that companies working in European vehicle logistics are not compliant, nor even that people do not understand how to be compliant – it is, after all, mostly common sense. This is more of a recognition of the need to demonstrate that, on behalf of the sector, we are proactive and taking every possible precaution to ensure the industry is fully compliant. The board will study this in more detail in due course.

In closing, I hope once again to see many of our readers in Brussels at the ECG Conference – but if you are reading this too late, *Finished Vehicle Logistics* will be reporting on the event in full and you can read more about it online and in the next issue. ◻ ”