



The Association of European Vehicle Logistics

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PRESS RELEASE

ECG Conference 2014

ECG President urges re-investment in the industry to allow for growing demand

Over 220 delegates from the European automotive logistics industry met in Amsterdam last week at the annual conference of the Association of European Vehicle Logistics (ECG). The conference enjoyed a record attendance, underlining its significance as the largest gathering of professionals from the finished vehicle logistics industry anywhere in Europe. Here they heard that 'Change is the only constant' in their sector.

Speakers included Erik Jonnaert, Secretary-General of ACEA, representing the European automotive manufacturers, many of whom were present. He called for an "integrated approach" with service providers in co-operation with truck manufacturers in order to improve efficiency and tackle CO₂ and other emissions. In line with this philosophy ECG is launching an important free web platform to match demand and supply in the market, allowing its members the possibility to quickly solve capacity problems. Patrick Verhoeven of ECSA, the European Community Shipowners' Association, confirmed the challenges facing the maritime sector in Northern Europe from January 2015 when the Sulphur Emission Control Areas (SECAs) come into force. The European Sustainable Shipping Forum established by the European Commission will probably become a useful tool for the future but will deliver no solutions in time for 2015 he said.

Also speaking was Dr. Nicoletta Batini, an acclaimed international economist on sabbatical from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), who shared her personal views on the state of the global economy. She said that despite global setbacks "an uneven global recovery continues" though at European level "the overall pace of recovery has become country specific".

European vehicle logistics providers must embrace change and continue to adapt to the current challenges in order to manage growth and keep pace with growing market demands, conference participants heard last week. "Change is a word written in the DNA of every logistics player" stated ECG President Costantino Baldissara, "Investment must be carried out today in order to underpin the continuing recovery of our industry", a comment supported by Dr. Batini who said "the time to invest in logistics is now". After reaching a 20-year low in 2013, current sales and production growth is bringing much needed relief to the industry. In the first nine months of 2014, the EU market for passenger cars increased +6.1% year on year.

Other speakers included Libor Lochman of CER speaking on behalf of the rail sector and Maximilian Strotmann of the Cabinet of outgoing European Commissioner Vice-President Siim Kallas whose transport remit ends shortly. Strotmann encouraged ECG members to make sure their individual voices are heard by their Member States in calling for a single market for the loaded length of vehicle transporters.

The broad range of expert speakers and panellists reflects not only the truly multi-modal focus of ECG but also continues to firmly establish the association as the most significant platform representing the automotive logistics industry in Europe. The European supply chain is increasingly complex, driving demand for logistics volume, expertise and IT systems. ECG Members are ready and able to meet these challenges and prepared to invest in a strong future.

Note to editors:

ECG's annual conference took place at the Marriott Hotel in Amsterdam on October 17.

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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 around 100 member companies, from family owned SMEs to multi-nationals, and is the major champion of the European vehicle logistics sector. ECG represents all transport modes at EU level – road, rail, maritime and fluvial. ECG Members provide transport, distribution, storage, preparation and post-production services to manufacturers, importers, car rental companies and vehicle leasing operators in the 28 Member States of the European Union as well as Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, Russia, Ukraine and beyond. They own or operate more than 420 car-carrying ships, 18,800 purpose-built railway wagons, 84 river barges and more than 23,500 road transporters.

As a major employer, the finished vehicle logistics sector plays an important role in contributing to the economic success of the European Union. ECG members have an aggregate turnover of around €25bn and their economic impact on companies associated with the sector is estimated at €63.25bn. More than 100,000 Europeans are employed directly by the vehicle logistics industry and an additional 253,000 are indirectly employed in this sector.