



The Association of European Vehicle Logistics

Brussels, 25th March 2015

PRESS RELEASE

ECG Annual Dinner Debate

ECG urged to continue to make its voice heard on Weights and Dimensions

Speaking last night to the almost 100 strong audience at ECG's Annual Dinner Debate, MEP Wim van de Camp, EPP Co-ordinator for the Transport Committee and Rapporteur of the Committee's own-initiative report on the implementation of the 2011 White Paper, urged ECG members to continue their long standing efforts regarding the Weights & Dimensions Directive. For more than 15 years ECG has relentlessly called for a harmonisation of maximum loaded length of car transporters across Europe to at least 20.75m. Harmonisation means a difference of up to 3 cars loaded, resulting in increased efficiency, less trucks on the roads, less costs for consumers and less CO₂ emissions.

Van de Camp praised ECG's efforts so far on making its voice heard and called on ECG not to wait until the review clause of the revised Directive 96/53 to continue its lobbying campaign but to seize the opportunities ahead, such as the upcoming road package in spring 2016. Furthermore he cautioned ECG members to "start your lobby in your own capitals", stressing the importance of addressing this issue at national level. "We need to find a new equilibrium between regional approaches and the 28 Member States" he said, stating that current fragmentation leads to too much compromise and hampers decision making in the Council.

Jon Kuiper, CEO of Koopman Logistics Group called for a level playing field in the transport sector, citing the problems of social dumping and lack of harmonisation of national regulations as a real impediment to the business of logistics. "We are operating on a European basis in an environment of national laws" he stated and called for harmonised European legislation with fair and consistent enforcement to prevent cumbersome national initiatives. He stressed that what the industry needs is social standards, quality jobs and legal enforcement. ECG Executive Director Mike Sturgeon put forward that "we are operating less and less in a single market and increasingly in a group of 28 individual Member States". Participants agreed that transport logistics requires an integrated policy approach, across modes and sectors and with European harmonisation.

Kuiper also addressed the issue of administrative burden and called for less bureaucracy through digitalisation. This was echoed by Sandro Santamato, Head of Unit Maritime Transport & Logistics at DG MOVE who stated that the "transport sector can benefit the most from digitalisation". He further clarified "We can eliminate the paperwork if we can move to electronic documentation accepted by national administrations". He also informed the audience on a soon to be organised

Digital Transport and Logistics Forum which will bring together industry players and aim for optimal utilisation of existing infrastructure and making logistics more efficient.

Also speaking, Dr. Jörg Mosolf, CEO of Horst Mosolf GmbH & Co. KG referred to the Combined Transport (CT) Directive and called for the inclusion of Finished Vehicle Logistics into the current definition of CT as a category of loading unit. He also addressed the current issue of the German minimum wage and its challenges for the European transport industry, questioning how companies could be expected to meet the requirements of the legislation when there was a significant lack of clarity on its application and enforcement even in Germany. MEP van de Camp reminded the audience, which included prominent Members of the European Parliament, as well Commission and Council Officials and logistics company executives, that “the German Minimum wage is a social progress” but conceded that its impact on road transport was challenging and the issue needed to be handled. Speaking from the floor, Michael Nielsen of the IRU agreed, stating that its application to “highly mobile workers such as drivers is questionable”.

The need for pragmatism and practical solutions was consistently called for by MEP van de Camp affirming that in these “pragmatic times” industry and lawmakers needed to work together to achieve better regulation and better implementation. “The optimum can be the enemy of the maximum” he declared. “Sometimes the optimum just takes too much time – let’s be practical and go on in a faster way”. ECG President Costantino Baldissara agreed, voicing his confidence that European lawmakers had an increasingly better understanding of the needs of the logistics industry and his belief that “we are in good hands”.

Note to editors:

ECG holds its Dinner Debate each March to debate subjects of current interest to the sector. Normally held in the European Parliament, due to recent security restrictions the Dinner Debate took place on Tuesday 24th March exceptionally in the Stanhope Hotel, Brussels. It was hosted by MEP van de Camp, EPP Co-ordinator for the Transport Committee. This press release is also available in German and Italian.

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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.