



The Association of European Vehicle Logistics

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PRESS RELEASE

Europe's vehicle logistics providers press case for positive change as transport policy debate intensifies

“Europe's vehicle logistics providers have a real chance to shape the future of transport in the European Union, with benefits in efficiency and environmental performance that will impact the entire community,” according to ECG president Costantino Baldissara.

Speaking after ECG's annual General Assembly in Ghent, Mr Baldissara said “there are signs of a new willingness among policymakers to address issues critical to the vehicle logistics sector, including vehicle dimensions and loading standards, and the importance of co-modality.

“This is highly encouraging,” he said. “Now we must work hard to ensure that we seize this opportunity to help forge a sustainable future for the European transport sector.”

He cited a speech to the General Assembly by Pawel Stelmaszczyk, Head of Unit at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport with special responsibility for logistics, co-modality, motorways of the sea and the Marco Polo programme.

Mr Stelmaszczyk, who is currently at work on the White Paper on Transport due to be published by the EC in November, said there was now an acceptance that demand for transport could not be decoupled from wider economic growth. He added that, as the economic crisis drew to an end “demand for transport will come back and we should be ready.”

He said ECG had a vital part to play in the process: “You are in a position to tell us as policymakers what is the right approach,” he said.

The White Paper, which will set the EU's transport agenda for the next decade, “will include much more focus on cross border connections and how to finance them” he said. “It will also include co-modality, using all modes, and optimising the economic and environmental effects of transport.”

He described transshipment facilities that will allow for speedy modal shifts as critical to these efforts, adding that “we at DG Move are pressing for the inclusion of these transshipment points in the network.”

On the sensitive question of vehicle dimensions and loading standards, he said “we take this issue very seriously and we are conscious of your needs and concerns.” ECG has long argued that standardising truck length and weight at a higher level than generally prevails in Europe will improve efficiency and reduce the sector’s carbon footprint by allowing more vehicles to be carried per truck.

Describing this as potentially “a very important argument”, Mr Stelmaszczyk suggested that a viable compromise position, backed by a comprehensive analysis of the benefits of larger trucks, could find favour in Brussels. He also urged the sector to forge alliances with like-minded industry groups, the better to make its views count.

He said consideration was now being given to the future of the Marco Polo programme, which provides financial incentives for modal shifts, notably from road to sea or rail. The programme “has not been an astonishing success,” Mr Stelmaszczyk said, citing difficulties in spending the funds available.

As debate continues on the programme’s future, Mr Stelmaszczyk welcomed an ECG suggestion that funding be based on reductions in emissions levels through technology or efficiency gains. He asked ECG members “to work with us on the relentless hunt for inefficiencies in the transport system.”

Among other issues of interest to ECG, he said DG Move was focussing on the development of “Green Corridors” backed by innovation in such areas as “new fuels, engines, aerodynamics”. It was also interested in developing a single liability regime for combined transport. And Mr Stelmaszczyk described as “an absolute priority” the creation of “one digitised version of a European transport document for all modes.”

Background for the Editors

Established in 1997 in Brussels, ECG represents more than 2/3rds of the European Finished Vehicles Logistics industry. ECG Members operate in the field of outbound logistics for the Automotive sector, including quality control at the end of the assembly line, storage in special compounds, transport in all modalities – rail, road and sea – de-waxing Pre-Delivery Inspections (PDI), customising, workshop activities and the refurbishing of former fleet vehicles

ECG has 90 members from 24 countries, which last year recorded an aggregate turnover in excess of 15 billion Euros. With a Global turnover generated in around 40 billion Euros. Members handle about 40 million cars per year with over 64,000 direct employees and up to 162,000 indirect people involved. In terms of equipment, the ECG members operate 20,000 trucks, 20,000 rail wagons, about 337 ships; 42 river barges; 462 compounds; 146 port terminals; more than 58 million square metres of Car parks; about one million square metres of workshops.

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