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NATO calls European car logisticians to the rescue

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Roel Jacobus 22 Oct 2025 om 08:19



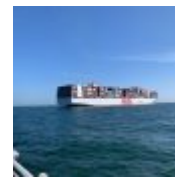
Amerikaanse legervoertuigen op de terminal van Wallenius
Wilhelmsen © US Army

NATO is asking vehicle logistics specialists to support military transports across Europe. The sector federation ECG will facilitate contacts and is starting a working group on military and other 'high & heavy' transport.

The [autumn congress of the European automotive logistics federation ECG](#) in Amsterdam opened with a first. For the first time, a military man stood behind the speakers' podium, and not just the first. Major General Ulf Häussler, director of operations and planning at NATO, explained the European defence

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explained the opportunities this could create for service providers in vehicle logistics.

Military transports with logistics support are not new. Armies have long relied on private service providers to move troops and equipment. US Army divisions regularly pass through the quays in [Antwerp](#), [Zeebrugge](#) and [Vlissingen](#) to the European interior. Swedish-Norwegian roro group Wallenius Wilhelmsen has a US government procurement subsidiary ARC. European armies also charter roro ships for military transports, for example the [Danish army with DFDS](#).

Protecting one billion citizens

With geopolitical changes, military activities and budgets are now increasing hand over fist. “The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) protects the territory, democracy and legal system of one billion citizens in the 32 member states,” Häussler outlines the societal importance. “With the Russian invasion of Ukraine in early 2022, a new era started. We made a basic plan for the biggest technological modernisation since the end of the Cold War (the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, ed.). This year in The Hague, all member states agreed to increase their military budgets to 5% of their gross national product as soon as possible. By doing so, we are aiming for more investment in both infrastructure, ‘quick response’ or capacity to respond quickly in case of threat and ‘resilience’ or long-term resilience.”

“Russia is the biggest threat, but we also have to consider other forms of terrorism. The best response to threat is deterrence by demonstrating a credible military capability in unison. On Europe’s eastern flank we established hundreds of thousands of

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cooperate in [Operation Baltic Sentry to protect shipping and undersea infrastructure](#) such as pipelines and cables for electricity and telecommunications.”



Ulf Häussler © 2025 NATO

Logistics hub for Ukraine

“Military operations sometimes take on huge proportions,” says Häussler. “For example, we recently had the largest air operation since 1988. This involved 90,000 troops, 15 ships and numerous aircraft. Such operations always have a double challenge: physical for transport via ports, roads, tracks and inland waterways on the one hand, and functional for legal regulation and administration on the other. NATO can only succeed in this if we do it together: with national governments, the European Union and logistics companies. So for this massive strengthening of our defence, we need you.”

The major general underlines the urgency of his appeal by referring to Ukraine. “For three years Russia has been bringing death and destruction there.



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why NATO member states are supporting Ukraine both financially and operationally. This is done with a command and logistics hub in Germany.”

Different and more complicated

“The military needs us for their transport and logistics, which creates opportunities for our members,” says ECG chairman Wolfgang Göbel. He completes his presidency this winter after 10 years. He is also managing director of Germany’s Mosolf Logistics & Services in daily life. “From my own experience, I know that military tenders are different and more complicated than commercial discussions with carmakers. This is unfamiliar territory for most of our members. That is why we are starting a new working group around high & heavy and military vehicles. Conversely, we also thank the military for protecting our shipping lanes, ports, land transport and logistics infrastructure.”

During the networking moments of the congress, Major General Häussler was frequently but often discreetly addressed by ro-ro shipping companies, terminal operators and transporters. “I came to this congress especially for the first time to get to know him,” confides a project cargo specialist. “NATO and member states clearly have a very high need for knowledge, infrastructure and equipment that they do not have in-house. We can provide those.”

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