

Towards vehicle e-logistics

ECG, the Association of European Vehicle Logistics, is working on the digitalisation of the supply chain with car manufacturers through the Finished Vehicle Logistics industry group (FVL), which has both OEMs and their LSPs as members. Clearly, said ECG, the automotive industry must embrace digitalised processes and e-commerce, in order to meet changing customer expect-

tations, and ultimately to survive.

However, legal uncertainty and a lack of uniform implementation of existing European and international legislation is hampering innovation. At ECG's annual conference, held in Hamburg during October, executive director Mike Sturgeon made the point that a lack of standardisation at European level regarding multimodal transport e-docu-

ments is providing an unnecessary barrier to the seamless and flexible transport logistics that ECG's members wish to provide.

The legislative framework for digitalising logistics processes in the EU is already in place. The United Nations' e-CMR Protocol (2011) provides for the use of electronic consignment notes for international road transport, and allows for a more efficient and

competitive alternative to the current paper-based practice.

However, e-CMR can only eliminate paper processes if it is adopted by all countries through which goods pass. To date, only Switzerland and nine EU member states – the latest being France – have ratified the treaty. The most notable absentee is Germany, the EU's largest vehicle producer and automotive market and a major logistics transit country.

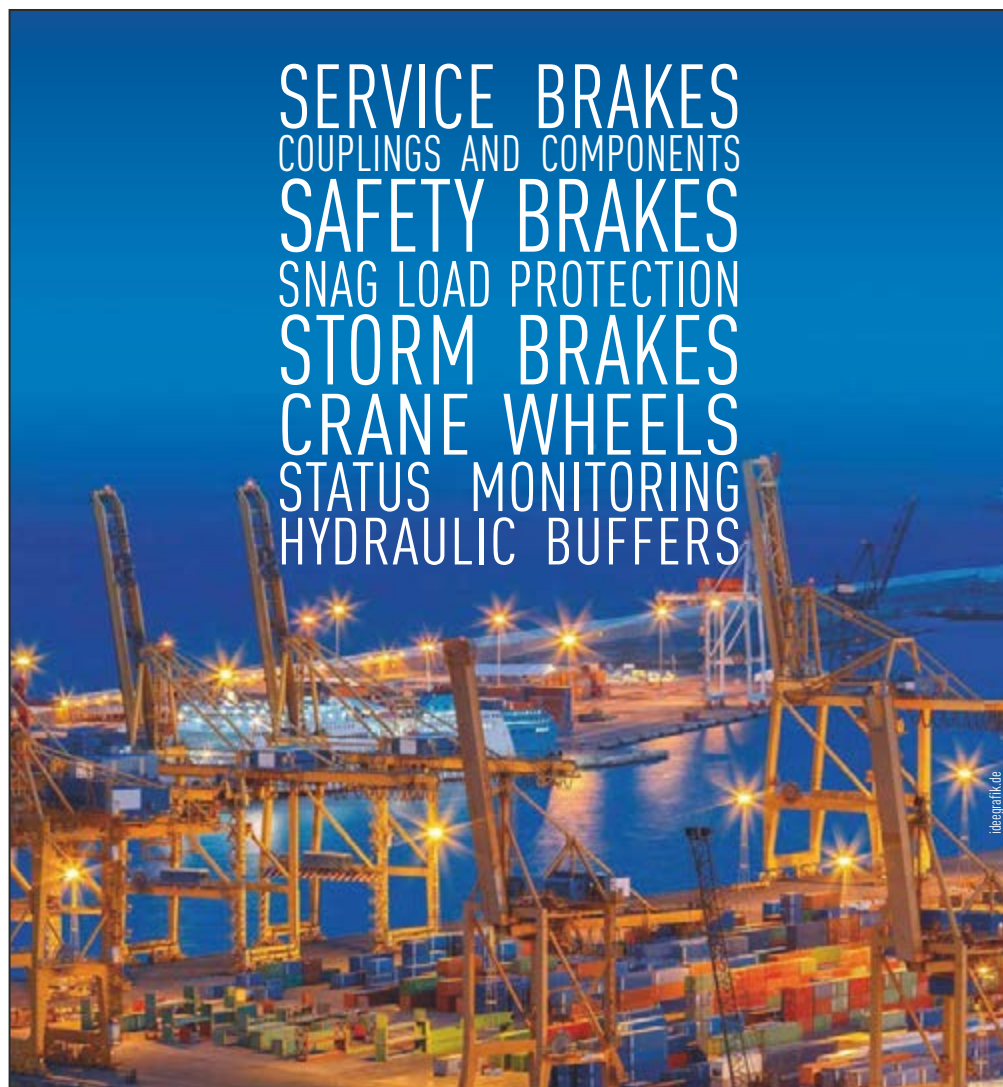
The shift towards digital processes and documentation, in particular electronic proof of delivery (ePOD), is equally a priority for car manufacturers. Speaking at the EGM confer-



Vehicle logistics in Europe is still not paperless

ence, Chris Godfrey, general manager for outbound engineering at Renault Nissan's Alliance Logistics Europe, urged LSPs to meet changing customer expect-

tations through the effective use of telematics in the supply chain. "I want to run the entire Alliance Logistics business without paper," he stated.



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TEUbooker for Rotterdam

Containers moving between different deepsea terminals at the Maasvlakte complex and between the Maasvlakte and Waalhaven/Eemhaven can now be booked fully automatically online. Forwarders, local ship agents and even shippers can enter them in a new portal, TEUbooker.com, for associated barge and rail operators to accept the booking. Analogous to booking.com for the hotel business, the new portal offers them an additional way to increase their load factors.

TEUbooker.com was initially set up for the large number of transshipment containers entering and leaving Rotterdam at different terminals. The longest haul possible, from the far end of MVI to the far end of MVII, does not exceed around 10 km by barge, and is less by rail. Containers uploaded into the booking platform will automatically be planned onto a scheduled trip of one of the participating operators, depending on timing and capacity.

"Our system can also handle truck hauls when these are needed or wanted. In this case, the Kramer Group will perform the truck trip," Frans Swarttouw, the founder and MD of TEUbooker, told *WorldCargo News*. Swarttouw is an independent marketing advisor, with Kramer as one client.

For shippers to use the new booking platform, they can open a free account. TEUbooker generates its income from the participating carriers, which include Danser, DistriRail, Pro-Log and Port Shuttle. As the new platform enters the scene, the planned Container Exchange Route internal road has yet to be built.

Initially established for the Maasvlakte complex, TEUbooker has already had its first shipments between the Maasvlakte area and the Waalhaven/Eemhaven basin, nearer the city, where Uniport and Rotterdam Shortsea Terminals are the key container terminals. "Adding a new destination involves only a software

adjustment," said Swarttouw.

In due course, TEUbooker could be extended to the Rotterdam hinterland where Danser, for example, operates a barge and rail network linking five countries along the Rhine corridor. Other inland carriers are on the point of joining the system.

"We plan to add hinterland destinations one at a time, and to have the first, Germany, online as the first hinterland destination by mid-2017," said Swarttouw. "One potential new participant is aiming to use TEUbooker to launch a service to a destination not yet on the Rotterdam inter-modal map."

Hans Nagtegaal, head of containers at the Port of Rotterdam Authority, said: "By matching supply and demand in this innovative fashion, TEUbooker is another step towards optimisation of the logistical process within Rotterdam, which is a positive development to all parties in the chain."

Jade Software plays host

Jade Software has implemented the first SaaS application of its Jade Master Terminal TOS running on the cloud using Amazon Web Services (AWS). The system is operating at the Port of Everett in Washington State, a long-standing customer of Jade.

Speaking with *WorldCargo News*, Kaustubh Dalvi, Jade's president of global sales, said

he believes the time is right for terminals, particularly smaller facilities, to embrace SaaS for TOS delivery. "There can be a 40% reduction in cost – there is no two ways about it," he said in an interview. Most of this is generated from savings in purchasing and supporting hardware.

A hosted TOS is certainly not a new concept, but *WorldCargo News* has noted several times that terminals have been reluctant to embrace the concept. Dalvi said one of the reasons it made sense for Everett was that Jade was already managing the TOS for the port onsite, including performing upgrades. "They have been comfortable with us for many years," said Dalvi. While AWS will host the software on its servers, Jade will still manage the TOS fully for Everett.

Jade is now putting forward the SaaS option for customers to consider, but Dalvi stressed that they have to be comfortable with the concept, and some facilities want to see it proven elsewhere first. TOS applications, he added, are actually quite demanding in terms of their transactional load.

Another big concern is that putting software on the cloud leaves the terminal vulnerable to an interruption in internet service. Dalvi said this is a very real concern, with ports often at the edge of infrastructure networks, in areas where there is regular construction and redevelopment. The contractor that makes a mistake with a backhoe and cuts service, he added, is not just a hypothetical situation – real terminals have actually encountered this problem.

Redundancy is important, and how this is managed depends on the particular terminal, and its ability to access redundant connections. Dalvi noted that back-up options can include cellular networks to send data, something Jade has experience with, as some of its customers use cellular services, rather than WiFi, to send information to the TOS at the terminal.

Depending on the size of the terminal, one option might be a hybrid system, where some aspects of the TOS are hosted locally to allow it to keep running in the event of a disruption.

The Port of Everett is now running on the cloud



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