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News from Brussels

DIGITALISATION & INNOVATION DAYS

CLECAT will participate on Wednesday next week to the Digital Transport and Logistics Forum (DTLF), an expert group for the coordination and cooperation between public and private stakeholders in the transport sector. Its aim is to support digitalisation of freight transport and logistics in Europe and “to identify challenges and areas where common action in the EU is needed, to provide recommendations, and to work on the implementation of these recommendations where appropriate. Within these objectives the DTLF has established subgroups on the digitalisation of transport documents (SG1) and a subgroup 2 (SG2) whose main focus is to improve interoperability in logistics and freight transport across Europe and to establish concepts for digital corridor information and management systems. Specifically, the Subgroup’s objective is to develop a concept for an open ecosystem for data sharing among service providers and customers that meet authorities’ expectations. In the past years, the European Commission supported a number of projects concerning digital transparency and digital inter-operability within and between different modes of transport.

These projects and the synergies that can be developed with them will also be discussed on the 25th April at the Collaborative Innovation Days on Digitalization, data sharing and trust enabling efficient and sustainable freight transport and logistics. The meeting is organised by the European Commission in cooperation with ALICE.

More information www.collaborativeinnovationdays.eu

Maritime

SHIPPERS' (DIS)SATISFACTION WITH OCEAN CARRIERS

Drewry Supply Chain Advisors partnered with the European Shippers' Council (ESC) to survey shippers and forwarders from all over the world in March, asking them how satisfied they were with the services provided by ocean carriers. The answers were not great from a carrier stand-point. On a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied), customers (based on 126 responses) on average did not rate carriers higher than 3.3 for any of the 16 surveyed service attributes, the review showed.

The three areas of service or price in which shippers and forwarders were the most dissatisfied with were "carrier financial stability", "quality of customer service" and "reliability of booking/cargo shipped as booked". At the other end of the spectrum, the three areas where they were the most satisfied were "price of service", "accurate documentation" and "quality of equipment (containers)".

But despite enjoying some very low prices last year shippers were still less satisfied than they were in 2015. Problems in getting cargo loaded and discharged as a result of Hanjin's bankruptcy and fears over reduced competition from waves of carrier M&A activity appear to be weighing heavily on shippers' minds.

"Shippers and forwarders clearly see the necessity for the carrier industry to invest in IT and to balance the needs for cost competitiveness and for more predictability and reliability," said Philip Damas, head of the logistics practice of Drewry.

Source: [Drewry](#), 16 April

STRONG GROWTH OF MED TO ASIA FREIGHT DEMAND

Eastbound shipments on the Asia-Mediterranean trade increased by 16% year-on-year in the first two months of 2017, massively overshadowing a 3% drop in the westbound leg, container shipping analyst Drewry reported this week based on the latest Container Trade Statistics (CTS) data.

It said westbound Asia to Mediterranean volumes had been "disappointing" thus far in 2017, but shipments heading in the opposite direction are surging, adding: "Similar to the Asia-North Europe trade, the backhaul market is currently on top in the Asia-Mediterranean/North Africa route."

However, total volumes and vessel utilisation remained far stronger on the westbound headhaul leg than the eastbound backhaul leg, even if in February eastbound ship utilisation rose to 58% and westbound dropped to 64%. That compares with 54% and 93%, respectively, in January, and 52% and 90% in December.

Source: [Lloyd's Loading List](#), 19 April



Road

TOLL4EUROPE WANTS A SINGLE BOX FOR EUROPE IN 2018

T-Systems International GmbH, Daimler AG and DKV EURO SERVICE GmbH + Co. KG have founded their joint venture company for the development and provision of the European Electronic Toll Service (EETS) for vehicles weighing more than 3.5t.

The joint venture operates under the name Toll4Europe GmbH. The objective of Toll4Europe GmbH is to reduce the complexity between the national toll chargers and the service providers. Through the Toll4Europe GmbH platform, it will be possible for service providers of all sizes to act as sales partners and offer their customers the EETS service. T-Systems owns 55 % of Toll4Europe, Daimler 30 % and DKV 15 %.

The conditions for the technical implementation of the planned toll box in toll systems across Europe have now been created. The introduction of a single toll box that can be used across Europe is planned for 2018 onwards. In time for the market launch, the box is intended to cover Belgium, Germany, France, Austria and Poland. Italy, Portugal, Spain and Hungary shall be integrated into the system also from the start or very soon afterwards. In the medium-term, the aim is for all present and future road, bridge and tunnel tolls to be collected using the same, single device.

Source: [Daimler](#), 14 April

Rail

ALLIANCE OF RAIL NEW ENTRANTS

The Alliance for Rail New Entrants (ALLRAIL) was launched on April 20 to bring together non-incumbent passenger and freight operators who are 'committed to fair competition and open markets as the only way to shift freight and passengers from road to rail by offering attractive and additional choices'.

ALLRAIL has been established in Brussels by the European Rail Freight Association which represents non-incumbent freight operators, and open access passenger operators LEO Express and Regiojet of the Czech Republic, Sweden's MTR Nordic, Italy's NTV, Austria's Westbahn and independent ticket retailer Trainline. More members are expected to join in the coming months.

ALLRAIL said it supports 'real change' to remove barriers to accessing rail infrastructure, in the belief that more competition would save money for customers as well as the authorities procuring public services. Key topics it will focus on include fully opening of the rail markets in all EU member states, non-discriminatory infrastructure access including competitive track access charges, financing for rolling stock and an open approach to data and ticketing.

Source: [Railway Gazette](#), 20 April



Air

UNITED AIRLINES & LUFTHANSA CARGO - CARGO JOINT VENTURE

United Airlines and Lufthansa Cargo have signed a joint venture (JV) agreement for “extensive cargo cooperation” on routes between the US and Europe, claiming customers will benefit from a wider network, coordinated handling processes, and transit-time savings. The cargo joint venture partners – whose parent airline groups are both members of the 28-member ‘Star Alliance’ of passenger airlines – said the companies would provide a wide range of new benefits to customers by cooperating on the availability of their capacity and aligning booking and handling processes.

They said: “The carriers’ joint venture route network will provide greater flexibility and time savings to customers with thousands of new weekly route combinations and more than 600 direct connections per week between the US and Europe. The combined network offering creates additional benefits through access from either partner’s booking channels along with coordinated handling processes and transfers at numerous stations.” The contract signing initiates the implementation phase of the joint venture project, during which the carriers will align their cargo IT systems and business processes with the goal to implement ‘Business Day 1’ later this year

Source: [Lloyd’s Loading List](#), 20 April

AIR FREIGHT SHIPPERS EXPECT HIGHER PRICES

Forwarders are warning shippers to expect a raise in air freight rates as the market remains strong, reports The Loadstar. “Customers have experienced low rates for so long that these have become the norm. But they are no longer realistic or acceptable, as carriers seek to maintain positive balance sheets,” said one senior air freight forwarder. Another added that the strength of the market was giving carriers the confidence to increase pricing, but that it wasn’t a certainty.

Airlines are reporting higher yields, with fixed space contracts growing “significantly”, while one forwarder told The Loadstar: “We are not seeing the lows in spot rates we did this time last year. It is expected to remain buoyant until the May holidays, with perhaps another little spike just before.”

Source: [The Loadstar](#), 19 April

SINGAPORE ‘ECOMMERCE AIRHUB’ UNVEILED

Singapore airport cargo handling and ground handling specialist SATS has unveiled a S\$21 million (US\$15m) ‘eCommerce AirHub’ at Singapore’s Changi airport. The new 6,000sqm facility was co-funded by the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) and is intended to enhance Changi’s e-commerce mail sorting capability to support the growing e-commerce market. The company said new features and innovations would also improve productivity and enable airport workers to acquire new skills.



Customs

BELGIAN CUSTOMS CONFERENCE 2017

Earlier this week the Belgian Customs conference was organised by VOKA-Alphaport with the slogan “Customs and Trade; together ready for the future”. Over 200 professionals in customs, logistics, IT and fiscal matters attended the event. The main topics of the conference were the UCC, e-commerce and Brexit. Among other speakers like the Belgian Federal Minister of Finance, Johan Van Overtveldt and the head of unit business processes of the directorate general for Taxation & Customs Union of the European Commission, Frank Janssen, CLECAT was invited to express its views on the opportunities of e-commerce in customs matters.

CLECAT stated that currently there is a gap between customs legislation, IT-systems and procedures and the reality of e-commerce taking a rapidly increasing role in international trade and logistics. Organisations and authorities like the WTO, WCO, the UN and the European Commission have also already realised this and are making legislation and recommendations in order to suit this new reality. CLECAT welcomes these initiatives, especially the [VAT Digital Single Market Package](#) of the Commission, which CLECAT was able to advise in through the VAT e-commerce working group of DG TAXUD. Also a few European countries, like the Netherlands and Norway, have already launched some initiatives in order to deal with current and upcoming challenges and opportunities of e-commerce.

Despite the rapid increase of e-commerce and a report of the Port of Antwerp, which stated that e-commerce is one of the most important factors for growth of that port, a majority of the participants expressed in a survey before the conference that e-commerce is not a part of their business. This is partially due to the fact that for customs matters e-commerce is still being considered something that is only relevant for express and postal services, by both authorities and trade. Another important factor might be that there is a lack of information on how to deal with e-commerce in customs. A survey during the conference showed that over 80% of the participants said that there is not enough information available on fiscal matters in e-commerce. CLECAT addressed this already in its speech before the survey. CLECAT also emphasised that authorities and logistic service providers have to realise that e-commerce is now an integral part of our economy and despite legislation and IT-systems not being ready yet, practical solutions and services should be explored as soon as possible in order to reap the full opportunities of e-commerce.

FIRST COMPANY IN EUROPE RECEIVES CENTRALISED CLEARANCE AUTHORISATION

During the Belgian Customs conference, it was announced that the Customs service provider Portmade received the first authorisation for Centralised Clearance in the EU. For now the authorisation is only granted for one trade flow between Belgium and the Netherlands, but is still a huge step forward in achieving the goal of having real centralised clearance, which forwarders and customs service providers for many years have been calling for.

Jeff Hermans, managing director of [Portmade](#) said: “as a company, we like to be a frontrunner in innovative pilot projects. This gives our company a competitive advantage, even though the possibilities of centralised clearance are still limited. Towards the future, we are ready for expansion of these possibilities to other countries.”



CLECAT congratulates Portmade with the first authorisation for centralised clearance and is very pleased to see its members being the first to explore the possible benefits of the new Union Customs Code.

IMPORTS OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS SUBJECT TO NEW EU ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

A new system of electronic certification to better monitor imports of organic products became applicable this week, making the EU a global leader in traceability and in the collection of reliable data on trade of these products.

According to the EU Commission, this pioneering e-certification system will contribute to enhancing food safety provisions and reducing potential fraud. It will also reduce the administrative burden for operators and authorities, and provide much more comprehensive statistical data on organic imports.

Both paper and e-certification will be used during a 6-month transition period. As of 19 October 2017, organic imports will be covered only by e-certification.

EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Phil Hogan said: "Our commitment to stringent certification and inspection measures is an important component in the EU's food safety standards. These high standards have allowed us to become the best address for food in the world, but we must always strive to find new and better ways to do even more. These new rules will improve the traceability of organic products, which is an important growing market."

In practical terms, the changes will require the addition of these import certificates into the Trade Control & Expert System (TRACES) – the existing EU electronic system for tracking movements of food products across the EU.

CLECAT welcomes any initiative that increases safety and digitalisation in international trade, but warns that the actual implementation of the new EU electronic certification system should not lead to unnecessary burdens, costs and/or delays in international trade.

Source: [EU Commission](#)

Sustainable Logistics

CARBON OFFSETTING FAILED TO DELIVER REAL GHG REDUCTIONS

A study commissioned by DG CLIMA finds that the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), part of the Kyoto Protocol, does not live up to its promises regarding carbon emissions. According to the study by Öko-Institut e.V., 85% of the surveyed projects have a low likelihood of additional emissions reductions and in many cases emissions reductions are over-estimated. The study presents recommendations for carbon offsetting schemes in general. The study provides an interesting perspective on carbon offsetting with regards to the upcoming carbon offsetting scheme for aviation agreed under the International Civil Aviation Organisation's (ICAO).

Carbon offsetting schemes allow polluters to invest in carbon reducing projects to offset their emissions. The CDM under the UN allows industrialized countries to invest in certified climate projects in developing countries to meet their climate goals. However, as the study finds a majority of these projects "are not providing real, measurable and additional emission reductions". The study concludes



that great care needs to be taken when reviewing and certifying offsetting projects and they should only be considered a stepping-stone to other more effective policies to achieve emissions reductions.

The study is available [here](#).

General

BIFA: A FRICTIONLESS BORDER IS HIGHEST PRIORITY POST-BREXIT

Nobody really knows what the Brexit implications are for trade, Robert Keen, Director General, BIFA, told delegates at the Brexit Briefing at Multimodal 2017. And he brought along a crystal ball to emphasize the point. “We, like most people, have heard all sorts of ‘facts’ and figures, but really we don’t know any more than we did on June 23rd. We have tried not to speculate too much as we don’t know very much.” Keen did stress however that freight forwarders and the wider logistics business could be sure that in BIFA and ASM, “you have the best people talking to Customs on your behalf”.

ASM (Agency Sector Management) deals with the technical issues and its Chairman Peter MacSwiney outlined some of the ways in which BIFA and ASM are interacting with government agencies, in particular via the Joint Customs Consultative Committee (JCCC). He says a frictionless border is the highest priority so the sub-committee is looking at what the UK will need to achieve that.

One of the most important elements is to prevent delays at the borders so that “we do not get a traffic jam from Paris to Stoke-on-Trent. This means we need the goods customs cleared before they reach the ferry or Channel Tunnel.”

Some government regulatory bodies are resistant to that and MacSwiney noted that when Prime Minister Theresa May speaks about Brexit, she is very controlled until she hits the word ‘Customs’. “This is quite worrying, especially as it seems the Customs agenda will have to wait until the issues of people and who owes what to who have been sorted out.” He pointed out the UK has spent the last 40 years aligning its systems with those of the rest of Europe so “it would be a shame to throw that all away – to put it mildly.”

For instance, he would like to keep the Single Transit Contract so that, for a consignment going from Heathrow to Paris to New York, the port of EU export would be deemed as Heathrow as it is now. MacSwiney also explained that the new Customs Declarations Service (CDS) which will gradually replace CHIEF, began development several years ago and so was not designed to deal with Brexit “But I think it probably will”. His main message was that “I think we are going to be OK. We are engaging fully with Customs and they are listening to us. In the UK, we have a history of sorting it out.”

Keen agreed in general, finishing the session by assaying: “The complexity and level of detail is mind-boggling but hopefully you have been reassured that we have the best people and best tools – as well as the crystal ball, of course.”

Source: [BIFA](#), 7 April

GLOBAL ECONOMY GAINING MOMENTUM—FOR NOW

The IMF projects the world economy to grow a pace of 3.5 percent in 2017, up from 3.1 percent last year and to continue this trend in 2018. In the World Economic Outlook April 2017 the IMF also calls for more international collaboration to ensure future international growth and stability.



The latest projections are slightly higher than those of the previous update. This improvement comes primarily from good economic news for Europe and Asia, as well as the IMF's continuing expectation for higher growth this year in the United States. Despite these signs of strength, many other countries will continue to struggle this year with growth rates significantly below past readings. Commodity exporters will face challenging times with commodity prices stabilizing at low levels, and some low-income countries are faced with mass starvation due to adverse weather conditions and civil unrests. The IMF concludes that the world economy may be gaining momentum, but we cannot be sure that we are out of the woods. There are clearly upside possibilities. Consumer and business confidence in advanced economies could rise further – though confidence indicators are already at relatively elevated levels. On the other hand, the world economy still faces headwinds. For one thing, trend productivity growth remains subdued across the world economy. Big uncertainties also stem from the US, where a combination of monetary normalization policy and expansionary fiscal policy could nurture inflation and lead to rising interest rates. In China the high reliance on domestic credit for economic growth may lead to future financial stability problems.

The IMF stresses that international growth and stability rely on multilateral collaboration across a range of problems that spill over national borders. These include avoiding the damages of protectionism and a renewed commitment to support trade. Combined with the right government policies trade has proven to be an engine for growth, especially in poorer countries. Other cross-border challenges that require collaboration include financial oversight, tax avoidance, climate, disease, refugee policy, and famine relief.

IMF World Economic Outlook April 2017 available [here](#).

Forthcoming events

CLECAT MEETINGS

Customs and Indirect Taxation Institute

16 June, Lisbon

Board and General Assembly

16 June, Lisbon

Road institute meeting

28 June, Brussels

Supply Chain Security Institute

24 October, Paris (tbc)

Air Logistics Institute

24 October, Paris (tbc)

CLECAT Freight Forwarders Forum 2018

24 November, Barcelona



OTHER EVENTS WITH CLECAT PARTICIPATION

ELP dinner event on Smart Freight Logistics

24 April, Brussels

Collaborative Innovation Day

25 April, Brussels

DTLF Plenary Forum

26 April, Brussels

Global Green Logistics: Making Emissions Accounting Work for Business

9 May, Transport Logistic Messe, München

Global Liner Shipping Conference

16-17 May, Hamburg

ELP dinner event on Low Carbon Strategy

30 May, Brussels

8th edition of the UIC/FIATA Market Place Seminar

14-15 September, Duisburg

EP/COUNCIL MEETINGS

European Parliament

Transport and Tourism Committee

3-4 May, Brussels

Plenary Session

26-27 April, Strasbourg

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council

8-9 June 2017, Luxembourg

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