MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF FREIGHT FORWARDERS ASSOCIATIONS

FIATA

REVIEW

#150

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FIATA REVIEW
FIATA's industry association magazine presents a global outlook on freight forwarding and logistics, as well as the latest news from the FIATA HQ and its Members.

FIATA
Also known as the 'Architects of Transport', FIATA International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations is a non-governmental, membership-based organisation representing the freight forwarding industry in some 150 territories.

DESIGN AND PRINTER
L'Agefi, Nouvelle Agence Économique et Financière SA
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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

THE FUTURE OF SUPPLY CHAINS AND GLOBAL LOGISTICS IN 2025

In 2025, the global economy stands at a pivotal moment. Economic growth, inflation, geopolitical tensions, and shifting trade policies will all shape supply chains and logistics. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for businesses to navigate uncertainty and seize opportunities.

Will the global economy grow in 2025?

Despite remaining strong during past crises, economic growth remains uncertain. In 2025, growth will rely greatly on economic stability and global events. Emerging markets in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are set to grow, while developed economies struggle with weak demand and high debt. Supply chains are important for helping businesses grow by ensuring efficiency in trade and production. Industries like green technology, electric vehicles, and pharmaceuticals are expected to drive demand, prompting shifts in global logistics. Investment in infrastructure, including ports, railways, and digitalisation, will be key to enabling seamless trade.

Will inflation ease?

Inflation remains a major concern. While central banks worldwide have raised interest rates to curb inflation, the results vary. As supply chain disruptions ease and commodity prices stabilise, there is cautious optimism that inflation levels may moderate in 2025. However, the transition to sustainable energy and shifts in global manufacturing hubs could introduce new cost pressures. For the logistics sector, high inflation has driven up fuel, labour, and material costs, straining budgets. Lower inflation could ease these pressures, but companies must also focus on long-term cost efficiency by adopting digitalisation, automation, and process optimisation.

Will we see peace and prosperity?

The global political landscape is still full of uncertainties. Conflicts in the Middle East, issues between the US and China, Canada, Denmark and tensions between Russia and Western countries are influencing the world today.

Supply chains are highly sensitive to political events. To reduce risks, businesses are relocating production closer to home or to politically stable regions. This trend, known as nearshoring and friend-shoring, is altering traditional trade routes and reshaping logistics networks.

Will nearshoring and friend-shoring continue to grow?

Nearshoring—bringing production closer to key markets—reduces lead times, transport costs, and geopolitical risks. Friend-shoring, which builds supply chains within politically aligned nations, enhances security. These strategies are expected to accelerate in 2025, with North America, Europe, and parts of Asia benefiting from the shift.

What is FIATA's role in a changing landscape?

As the global voice of freight forwarders, FIATA plays a vital role in ensuring efficient and resilient supply chains. FIATA's advocacy for harmonised trade regulations and digital transformation is instrumental in addressing current and future challenges. By promoting standardisation and fostering knowledge sharing, FIATA helps businesses adapt to nearshoring, friend-shoring, and sustainability goals. Additionally, its focus on training and capacity-building equips logistics professionals with the skills needed to navigate complex global markets. Through its leadership, FIATA can serve as a unifying force, enabling the logistics sector to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world.

What lies ahead for supply chains?

The future of supply chains and logistics in 2025 will be shaped by a confluence of economic, geopolitical, and technological factors. While challenges remain, opportunities exist for companies willing to adapt. By embracing innovation, fostering collaboration, and building resilient networks, the logistics sector can play a pivotal role in driving global prosperity in the years ahead. ■

Turgut Erkeskin, FIATA President

2025 FIATA HQ MEETING PROGRAMME

The logistics industry is facing a rapidly evolving landscape, and the 2025 FIATA HQ Meeting presents an essential opportunity for industry leaders to come together, reflect on progress, and discuss the challenges and opportunities shaping the future. Taking place in Geneva from 17-20 March 2025, the meeting will serve as a platform for high-level discussions on the most pressing issues in logistics, from digital transformation to sustainability. This year's theme, "Interconnecting Logistics," emphasises the importance of collaboration in fostering innovation and enhancing the global logistics network. The event promises to provide actionable insights and strategic direction for the industry moving forward. ■

Time	MON 17.03	TUE 18.03	WED 19.03	THUR. 20.03
08:00 - 09:00	Registration			
09:00 - 10:45	Opening Session	Fostering Collaboration for the Future of Freight Forwarding **p.10-11**	Data Ownership and Trusted Networks in Practice **p. 17-19**	
10:45 - 11:15		**BREAK**		
11:15 - 13:00	Addressing Major Issues in Multimodal Transport Logistics **p. 28-29**	Implementing the WCO Shenzhen Action Plan on AEO Programmes **p. 20-21**	Everything You Need to Know to Start Using the eFBL **p. 16-17**	**FIATA Closed Meetings***
13:00 - 13:45		**LUNCH**		
13:45 - 14:30	Coffee & Learn	Coffee & Learn	Coffee & Learn	
14:30 - 16:15	Building a Modern Airfreight Logistics Future **p. 23-25**	Optimising Key Multimodal Transport Corridors with the International Transport Forum, UN ESCAP and UN/CEFACT **p. 26-27**	Practical Aspects to Insure Freight Forwarders' Risks **p. 14-15**	
16:15 - 16:45		**BREAK**		
16:45 - 18:30	Building Cyber Resilience with the World Economic Forum **p. 8-9**	Leveraging Regional Free Trade Agreements **p.22-23**	Closing Session	
19:00 - 21:00	Welcome Reception	FREE	Vietnam Night 2025 FWC	

**This programme does not show specific meetings on Thursday 20th March, and details of such has been shared separately with members of the respective groups concerned.*

Disclaimer: This programme outlined above is preliminary in nature and is intended to give participants a general overview of what the FIATA HQ Meeting might entail. All timings, session names and topics are merely indicative, and FIATA reserves the right to modify the programme and session details at any time. In no circumstances shall FIATA be held liable for any amendments to the programme or any consequences arising from such amendments. Participants are responsible for checking FIATA communications for any changes to the programme.
February 2025

CYBERSECURITY IN LOGISTICS

Building Cyber Resilience with the World Economic Forum

A CONVERSATION WITH THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

In the logistics community, critical infrastructures like ports, airports, and rail networks form the backbone of operations. What makes these vital systems particularly vulnerable to cyberattacks?

The transport ecosystem is undergoing rapid developments in digitalisation and automation, driven by technologies like artificial intelligence, cloud computing and the internet of things. While digitalisation of the trade ecosystem enhances efficiency, reduces costs, and improves transparency, it also introduces a high level of cyber risk. In fact, between January 2023 and January 2024, global critical infrastructure faced over 420 million cyberattacks—equivalent to 13 attacks per second—with the transportation sector being a primary target.

The dynamic threat landscape, coupled with the industry's interconnected network of diverse players with varying levels of digitalisation and cybersecurity maturity, increases the challenge posed by cyber risks and their potential cascading effects. Additionally, the growing complexity of supply chains, the heavy reliance on third parties, outdated information technology and operational technology systems, a shortage of skilled cybersecurity talent, and a fragmented global regulatory landscape further strain resources and hamper efforts to build cyber resilience.

When such infrastructures are compromised, what are the most immediate and long-term impacts on businesses?

Transportation networks—spanning aviation, maritime, rail, and road systems—serve as the backbone of the global economy. Due to the industry's interconnected nature, targeting critical hubs or niche suppliers can unleash widespread ripple effects throughout the ecosystem, extending far beyond individual companies to disrupt entire economies.

The scale of these consequences was demonstrated in the July 2023 ransomware attack on Japan's Port of Nagoya. The attack led to a two-day suspension of operations, disrupting 10% of the total trade of Japan – the world's fourth largest economy. According to research conducted by IBM, a single data breach in the transport sector costs an organisation on average $4.18 million. The consequences can be particularly severe for small and medium-sized enterprises, with 60% of small companies going out of business within six months of a cyberattack or data breach.

Cyberattacks not only have the potential to disrupt operations; they also pose significant safety and environmental

Filipe Beato,
Lead, Centre for Cybersecurity. World Economic Forum

Margi Van Gogh,
Head, Supply Chain, Logistics and Transport Industries, World Economic Forum

risks. This has been highlighted by incidents such as the 2017 cyberattack on a Saudi petrochemical plant, which aimed to trigger an explosion, and the 2020 cyberattack on a water treatment facility in the US, where hackers attempted to poison the water supply.

What emerging cybersecurity trends should businesses prioritise, and how can they future proof against evolving threats?

Only with a collaborative approach will the transport and supply chain ecosystem be able to address the emerging systemic and aggregating risk - mitigating systemic points of failure, improving supply chain resilience, addressing cyber inequity and sustaining confidence across the ecosystem. This needs to happen in collaboration with all modes of transport as well as involved stakeholders such as freight forwarders, brokers, suppliers, technology providers, key associations, regulators and law enforcement agencies.

Recognising the need for a collective effort in transport and logistics, the World Economic Forum launched a Cyber Resilience in Transport and Supply Chain Ecosystems initiative, bringing together players from across the ecosystem to collaboratively foster cyber resilience.

From your 2025 Davos meeting under the theme 'Collaboration for the Intelligent Age,' what are the key takeaways for securing cyberspace in the supply chain?

At the recent World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2025 in Davos, public and private sector leaders came together to address the growing need for resilience in increasingly digitalised, interoperable, and connected supply chains. As digital and physical infrastructure risks escalate, fostering resilience requires a proactive mindset, collaboration across entire value chains—including vendors, customers, and public stakeholders—and strong governance frameworks.

- **Cyber Risk Governance:** Establishing a robust governance structure that prioritises cybersecurity at the board level is crucial for informed decision-making regarding emerging technologies, resource allocation and risk management.

- **Supply Chain Security:** Implementing agile cybersecurity practices throughout the supply chain, engaging value chain partners, including assessing the cybersecurity posture of third-party vendors, is essential to protection and resilience.

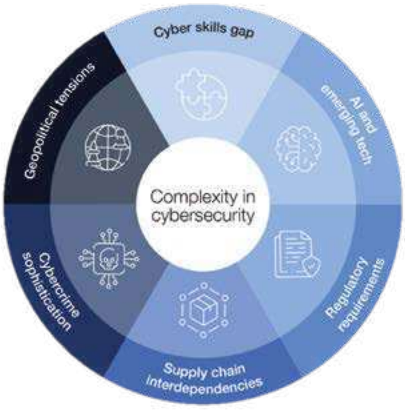
- **Public-private collaboration:** Engaging in partnerships with other organisations, government agencies, and cybersecurity experts to facilitate the sharing of threat intelligence and best practices is essential for enhancing security.

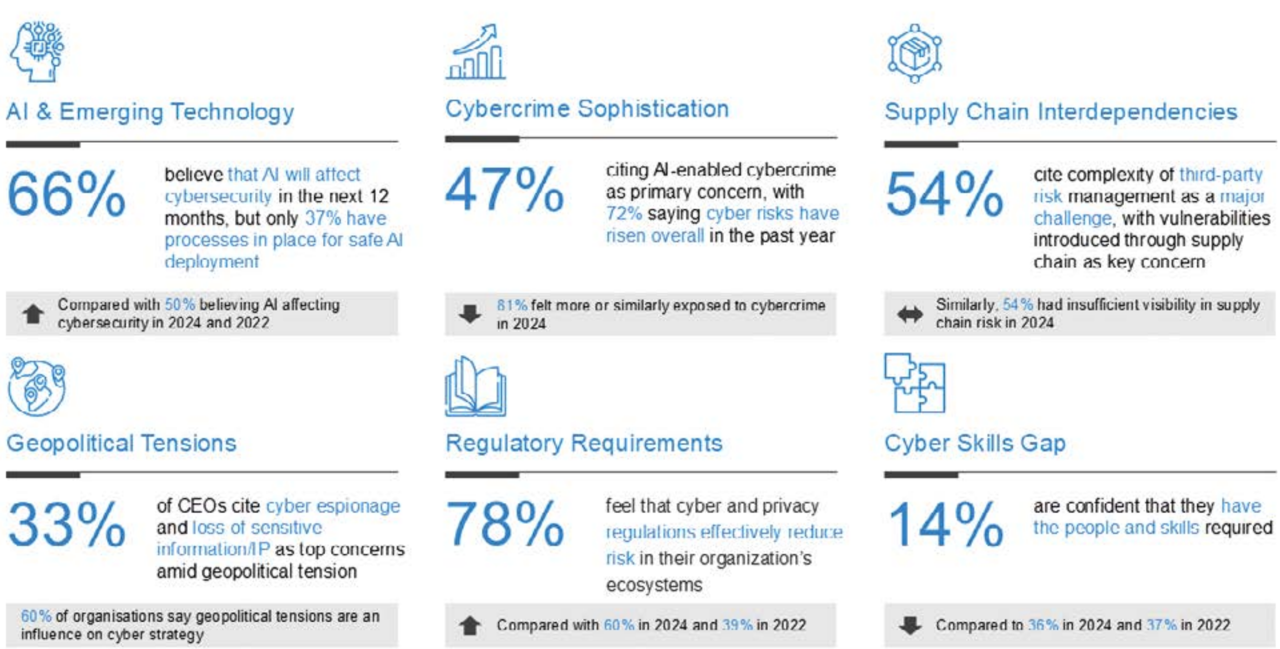
Global Cybersecurity Outlook 2025:
6 compounding factors of complexity in cyberspace

Cybersecurity is entering an era of unprecedented complexity. This complexity is driven by a series of compounding factors:

- Escalating geopolitical tensions are contributing to a more uncertain environment.
- Increased dependence on more complex supply chains is leading to a more opaque and unpredictable risk landscape.
- Rapid adoption of emerging technologies is contributing to new vulnerabilities as cybercriminals harness them effectively.
- Proliferation of regulatory requirements around the world is adding a significant compliance burden for organisations.

All of these challenges are exacerbated by a widening skills gap, making it extremely challenging to manage cyber risks effectively. ■





Source: Global Cybersecurity Outlook, 2025

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Fostering Collaboration for the Future Of Freight Forwarding

VIETNAM'S SUCCESS STORY: ADVANCING LOGISTICS WITH FIATA DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES

The Vietnam Logistics Business Association (VLA) represents over 805 businesses operating in the logistics sector. Under VLA, the Vietnam Logistics Research and Development Institute (VLI) specialises in logistics training, consultancy, and research. As a FIATA Member, VLA is responsible for managing, developing, and implementing the FIATA Diploma in Freight Forwarding (FDFF) and the FIATA Higher Diploma in Supply Chain Management (FHDSCM) in Vietnam. With its expertise, VLA/VLI has successfully implemented these programmes, making Vietnam one of the countries with the highest number of FIATA graduates worldwide.

The FIATA Diploma Programme was launched by VLA/VLI in Vietnam in 2010. To date, over 2,000 students have graduated with FDFF and FHDSCM qualifications. Student enrolment is expected to increase by 30% annually between 2025 and 2030. Initially, the FIATA Diploma Programmes were delivered directly by VLA/VLI to employees working in logistics companies. However, with the rapid growth of the logistics sector, VLA/VLI recognised the need to involve educational institutions in this training. Consequently, since 2017, VLA/VLI has established cooperation agreements with more than 21 institutions, with nine universities in Vietnam adopting the FIATA programme as their standard for student training.

Currently, over 80% of FIATA programme graduates in Vietnam are trained at these institutions. To successfully implement a university partnership, both parties first discuss and design a curriculum that aligns with FIATA standards while addressing practical industry needs. Upon graduation, students receive a university degree alongside a FIATA certificate. Additionally, VLA supports universities by providing in-depth lecturer training, encouraging faculty members to complete the FIATA Education Programmes before teaching them, and facilitating industry connections to enhance practical knowledge.

Furthermore, VLA acts as a bridge between universities and businesses, involving logistics companies in specific training modules, arranging internships, and assisting graduates in securing employment opportunities.

One of VLA's key initiatives has been securing industry-wide recognition of FIATA training programmes as a standard for education and recruitment.

VLA actively involves experienced professionals from leading logistics companies in curriculum development, ensuring the training remains current and highly relevant. To further enhance programme visibility, the association employs a range of communication strategies, including workshops, online platforms, and support for logistics competitions. These efforts effectively raise awareness, attract learners, build employer confidence, and strengthen the VLA/VLI network.

VLA is eager to share Vietnam's experience in implementing FIATA Training Programmes and remain open to collaborating with FIATA Members globally to expand their delivery. VLA encourages FIATA to enhance its support by developing a team of lecturers, providing additional teaching materials, and creating common application software to facilitate FIATA course delivery worldwide.

VLA is honoured to welcome delegates from FIATA Members across the globe to Vietnam, as the host of the 2025 FIATA World Congress. ■

Vietnam Logistics Business Association

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BRIDGING ACADEMIA, INDUSTRY, AND TECHNOLOGY IN LOGISTICS

FIATA interviewed Dr Morteza Bagheri, Director Transportation Systems & Logistics (TSL) Research Lab, to explore the impact of research, innovation, and technology on logistics education, academia-industry partnerships, and inspiring the younger generation to succeed in this dynamic field. The following questions explore his insights and perspectives on these key topics.

How can collaboration amongst researchers and operators support the industry workforce and facilitate daily operations?
Collaboration enhances workforce effectiveness and streamlines operations in logistics. Researchers provide practical solutions to operational challenges, conducting studies that identify inefficiencies and suggest tailored approaches. This partnership adopts continuous improvement, increasing productivity and reducing costs. Additionally, it shapes the industry's future through R&D, helping operators anticipate market changes and adopt innovations, ensuring a resilient workforce.

Why is collaboration between academia and industry positive in preparing students for real-world challenges?
Partnerships between academia and industry are crucial for equipping students with the skills needed for real-world challenges. Engaging with professionals helps students develop essential soft skills like communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, enhancing their adaptability. Collaborations also introduce diverse learning methods beyond traditional lectures, such as hands-on experiences and site visits, reinforcing theoretical knowledge and fostering critical thinking.

In what ways can the adoption of new technologies improve the effectiveness of logistics education and training?
New technologies significantly improve logistics education by making learning faster and cost-effective. Digital platforms and simulations allow for real-time data access and hands-on experiences, accelerating the learning process and preparing students for dynamic environments. Moreover, online courses and virtual classrooms reduce costs associated with traditional education, providing scalable training solutions that increase accessibility to essential logistics education. For instance, this semester, my students participated in a Logistics Exhibition online using Metaverse technology.

Dr Morteza Bagheri,
Director of Transportation Systems & Logistics (TSL) Research Lab
Associate Professor jointly-appointed in School of Industrial Engineering & School of Railway Engineering at Iran University of Science and Technology

From your perspective, what attracts the younger generation to careers in logistics, and how can education programmes better align with their expectations and aspirations?
Younger individuals are attracted to logistics careers due to exciting opportunities presented by technologies like Artificial Intelligence. These advancements streamline operations and enhance decision-making, appealing to tech-savvy individuals eager to make an impact. To align education programmes with the aspirations of today's learners, institutions must adapt to technological shifts. Generation Alpha, for example, prefers quick, engaging content and responsive learning methods. Educational programmes should integrate hands-on experiences, partnerships for internships, and gamified learning to cater to their preferences. By emphasising experiential learning and demonstrating the relevance of logistics in a tech-driven world, educational institutions can engage young learners and prepare them for successful careers in this vital field. ■

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND LAW

FREIGHT FORWARDERS AS CONTRACTUAL CARRIERS: A STRONGER POSITION AGAINST VERTICAL INTEGRATION

The industry is being challenged by the drive of other powerful stakeholders that have integrated vertically. FIATA has been addressing this subject on various occasions, advocating for fair competition. FIATA's efforts for fairer competition have been heard and gained attention:

- in Europe the Block Exemption Regulation was not extended
- in the USA the Carriage of Goods by Sea Act (COGSA) amendment and other developments referred clearly to unfair competition and the domination of shipping lines

But whilst it is FIATA's main objective to protect the industry as a whole, it is equally important for FIATA Individual Members, the freight forwarders, to take the right decisions in order to not only protect themselves but to identify opportunities to drive their destiny in the right direction.

ACTING AS AGENT: PRESENTING CUSTOMERS ON A GOLDEN PLATE?

Forwarders acting as agent are the middlemen, by concluding the contract of carriage between other parties but not in their own name. The contract of carriage is concluded between the shipper and the shipping line, with the knowhow and support of the forwarder who is acting as agent (only). In other words, there is a contractual relationship between shipper and shipping line negotiated by the forwarder. Consequently, the shipper is as much a customer to the forwarder acting as an agent as it is to the shipping line acting as carrier.

If the shipping line approaches and communicates directly with the shipper trying to attract the business without the involvement of the forwarder, one may argue that this is not ethical, but ultimately, the shipping line only approaches an existing contractual partner and customer.

ACTING AS CARRIER: TAKING RESPONSIBILITY AND CONTROL

The best cause of action and protection against the vertical integration of the shipping lines is to, in principal, act as carrier. By acting as carrier, the forwarder is concluding the contract of carriage directly with the shipper and is at the same time concluding a contract of carriage with the shipping line in his name. In this scenario, the shipping line no longer has a direct contractual relationship with the shipper and becomes a sub-contractor of the forwarder.

PERFECT SOLUTION: THE EFBL

The Negotiable FIATA Multimodal Transport Bill of Lading (FBL) was established more than 30 years ago as a paper trade document. It is the only truly multimodal negotiable Bill of Lading, set up by FIATA for the use by freight forwarders acting as Non-Vessel-Operating Common Carrier (NVOCC) and Multimodal Transport Operators (MTO). By choosing the digital FBL (eFBL), a NVOCC not only has highly recognised document, but also has the following advantages:

- access to liability cover
- well-recognised contractual conditions
- access to a source of potential global agents
- access to training courses

CONCLUSION

There is a threat of Big Transport aggressively integrating vertically into the maritime supply chain. It is happening, and they have the funds. Whilst FIATA will continue to try to ensure that the competition takes place on a level playing field, each and every forwarder is responsible for controlling and driving its own destiny. Competition is fierce and only the fittest will be successful. Acting as carrier to become an NVOCC is a major step to remain in the driver seat with the shipper, take control of the maritime supply chain from door to door and unlock new opportunities and business models. ■

Jens Roemer, FIATA Senior Vice President

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND LAW

Practical Aspects of Insuring Freight Forwarders' Risks

MITIGATING RISKS IN FREIGHT FORWARDING: STRATEGIES FOR PROTECTION, COMPLIANCE, AND RESILIENCE

For freight forwarders, understanding their risk exposures and management of those risks is essential to mitigate losses and costly insurance claims.

The risk landscape is complex with numerous, often interrelated hazards. In many jurisdictions some risks, such as dangerous goods and health and safety, are subject to regulation that provides certainty. Other areas of risk related to security, accuracy of communication and administrative compliance require thorough understanding and robust procedures.

Certain risks remain in the direct control of the operator and can be mitigated. Cargo damage or spoilage, for example, as the result of poor or ambiguous communications. Adding greater levels of security for specific shipments and role specific training can all reduce risk. Technology and other innovative solutions can also reduce risk and providing greater transparency.

Contractual risk management is a critical risk mitigation tool. Ensuring that your standard trading conditions are incorporated into all business activities is a no-regrets commitment. Where individual contracts are negotiated, seek to protect your business through diligent review, ensuring that your business has protection and certainty in the event of a dispute.

Recent years have witnessed globally disruptive events that have had profound impacts such as the blockage of the Suez Canal, COVID-19 or more recently the Red Sea disruption, leading to shipping lines routing around the Cape of Good Hope. These disruptive events were each unexpected and won't be the last. Each gave rise to cargo losses, disputes over delayed shipments and increased cost, this is where standard trading conditions and a well drafted and negotiated contract will pay dividends, protecting your business.

Legal liability insurance will provide additional protection and certainty however freight forwarders should understand that losses will typically also attract uninsured costs. Reputational damage and management costs in investigations and managing customer relations should not be underestimated. In this respect, freight forwarders should act as a prudent uninsured when considering investment in safety, security and the general management of risk through their business activities ensuring that losses and unwelcome surprises are minimised. ■

Michael Yarwood
Managing Director Loss Prevention, TT Club

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND LAW

TAILORED INSURANCE STRATEGIES FOR LOGISTICS PROVIDERS

Insuring logistics companies requires a nuanced approach. Freight forwarders, Non-Vessel-Operating Common Carriers (NVOCCs), warehouse operators, and the various intermediaries in between face unique risks and liabilities, making it crucial to work with a specialised insurance broker who understands this niche.

IDENTIFYING PROPER AUTHORITIES AND LICENSING

Review current authorities and activities. Logistics providers often have multiple licenses, each with specific responsibilities and liabilities. Understanding the existence and scope of each authority allows for policies to be tailored to cover the range of risks.

LIABILITY LIMITATIONS & SPECIAL CONTRACTS

Ensure logistics providers limit their liability in transportation documents for each mode of transit and activity. Liability may be governed by international conventions or standardised terms may be provided by industry associations or regulatory bodies. Insurance policies are designed to cover terms and limitations that have been approved by the insurance company. If you have special contracts that exceed your standard terms or require specific certificate of insurance wording, be sure to review with your insurance broker. Customised endorsements or separate policies may be necessary.

UNDERSTANDING THE LEGAL COMPANY NAME

Verify the legal company name associated with each authority as logistics firms often operate under different trade names, subsidiaries, or joint ventures. Including all relevant names on insurance policies helps to avoid claim disputes and ensure comprehensive coverage.

REGULAR REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Be aware of policies with regular reporting requirements, especially for warehouse exposures. Implement robust reporting systems to comply and avoid coverage gaps.

FLAT PREMIUM VS. ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT

Understand if your policy has a flat premium or if it includes an annual adjustment. Logistic Liability policies are often rated on estimated gross freight receipts and then audited at renewal on the actual gross freight receipts. Be prepared for an adjustment of premium if operations have grown.

Insuring logistics companies requires a comprehensive understanding of their operations and the specific risks they face. There are no one-size-fits-all solutions. Tailored coverage solutions based on licensing, transportation document terms, and special contracts are essential for maintaining current coverage in the ever-evolving logistics industry. ■

Michael Brown,
President/CEO Avalon Risk Management Insurance Agency LLC

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND LAW

Everything You Need to Know to Start Using the eFBL

EFBL PILOT: BANK OF CHINA'S DIGITAL LEAP IN TRADE FINANCE

Bank of China was recently involved in a fully digital pilot using the digital FIATA Multimodal Transport Bill of Lading (eFBL) on a real-life transaction. Could you tell us more about the pilot?
On 22 November 2024, Bank of China Jiangsu Branch successfully processed a digital transaction using FIATA's eFBL, marking the first pilot under the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Negotiable Cargo Documents (NCD) Draft Convention. provided trade financing using electronic cargo records as collateral for a small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) importer purchasing wheat feed powder from Kazakhstan. The goods were shipped from Kazakhstan to China via multimodal transportation involving trucks and China-Europe Railway Express freight trains.

According to the contract, payments were to be made partially in advance and partly upon shipment. Initially expected to ship on 26 November, the importer applied for financing in mid-November under the UNCITRAL NCD pilot. However, on 21 November, the importer informed the bank that part of the goods had already been loaded in Kostanay, Kazakhstan, and would be dispatched the same day. This required the issuance of the NCD and financing by 22 November to avoid a contract breach.

To expedite the process, the Bank of China recommended using the eFBL. With support from FIATA and TradeGo (FIATA's authorised platform in China), the eFBL was issued within one day, meeting the importer's urgent needs. We greatly appreciate the assistance of FIATA's Director General, Dr Stéphane Graber, and his team in making this happen so quickly.

You are actively involved in the UNCITRAL work on a draft NCD convention. What do you see as being the main benefits and opportunities of such work for global trade?
The draft NCD Convention introduces a negotiable multimodal transport document, similar to a maritime Bill of Lading. This benefits traders using transportation methods other than sea shipment or multimodal transport by offering additional collateral for financing, greater resale flexibility in transit, and better exporter protection. Electronic cargo records also reduce fraud risks and enhance efficiency. From a banking perspective, these documents provide additional collateral, improving financing capacity and risk control.

The pilot took place fully digitally from start to finish. How can electronic NCDs facilitate banking procedures for trade finance?
Trade banks are moving toward digitalisation, but the lack of a universal legal framework remains a challenge. While the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records (MLETR) provides guidelines, a binding international convention is still needed. The NCD Convention expands MLETR's scope, offering a strong legal foundation for electronic Bills of Lading. These pilot projects help banks adapt in advance.

How do you see electronic multimodal NCDs facilitating trade along key transport corridors?
For trade routes like the China-Europe corridor, fast transit times make efficiency crucial. The pilot project demonstrated the need for rapid issuance of transport documents, confirming that electronic multimodal NCDs help streamline trade and prevent delays.

What can be done to greater facilitate banking approval of electronic NCDs?
The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Banking Commission and ICC Digital Standards Initiative (DSI) are working to standardise trade digitalisation. Adoption ultimately depends on importers and exporters, but banks aim to meet client demands. The main challenges include legal uncertainties, platform fragmentation, and cross-border restrictions. A solid legal framework and better interoperability of digital platforms will accelerate the use of electronic NCDs by banks. ■

Jun Xu, Director Senior Manager, Jiangu Branch, Bank of China and Vice Chair, ICC Banking Commission

DIGITAL TRENDS

TRANSFORMING TRADE: THE EFBL REVOLUTION

The Digital Negotiable FIATA Multimodal Transport Bill of Lading (eFBL) is transforming global trade by replacing traditional paper-based Bills of Lading with a secure, efficient, and legally recognised digital solution.

Key FIATA stakeholders have successfully integrated the eFBL ensuring seamless access, issuance, and transfer, streamlining operations and improving supply chain efficiency.

CargoX is a leading platform for eFBL issuance. Businesses enter shipment details on the CargoX Platform, which connects to FIATA's API to register the eFBL on the FIATA blockchain. This secures the document's authenticity and amendments. The eFBL integrates with Transportation Management Systems (TMS), enabling automated processing and real-time visibility, ensuring smooth communication among carriers, freight forwarders, shippers, and consignees.

By integrating eFBLs into their operations, businesses can increase efficiency, reduce paperwork, speed up document processing, and enhance security.

This digital approach modernises logistics, improves supply chain visibility, and ensures compliance with international regulations, leading to significant cost savings and operational improvements. ■

Igor Dragar, Vice President (Marketing), CargoX

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND LAW

Data Ownership and Trusted Networks in Practice

CHARTING THE COURSE: DATA GOVERNANCE AND OWNERSHIP IN MARITIME SUPPLY CHAINS

As the maritime industry embraces digitalisation, data governance and ownership are key in ensuring efficiency and collaboration. With the increasing reliance on digital solutions, managing, securing, and sharing data effectively is critical. Mr Pascal Ollivier, Chair of the Data Collaboration Committee at the International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH), shares insights into how these concepts are transforming the industry.

Data governance and data ownership are often discussed in the context of digitalisation, but their definitions and roles can sometimes be unclear. How would you define these concepts within the maritime supply chain, and why are they critical for freight forwarders and other stakeholders?
Data governance refers to the policies and processes ensuring proper data management, quality, and security within the maritime supply chain. Data ownership defines control, rights, and responsibilities over data usage. These concepts are crucial for freight forwarders and other stakeholders because they ensure data integrity, security, and compliance with legal frameworks. Proper governance and ownership facilitate trust and collaboration, which are essential for efficient supply chain operations.

Pascal Ollivier, Chair of the Data Collaboration Committee at the International Association of Ports and Harbors

The push for digitalisation in the supply chain has been slower than expected, with a key challenge being the lack of trust between partners when it comes to data sharing. How does uncertainty around data ownership and governance contribute to this hesitation, and what risks does it pose for industry-wide collaboration?
Uncertainty around data ownership and governance leads to hesitation in data sharing due to fears of misuse, lack of control, and potential legal repercussions. This hesitation limits industry-wide collaboration, leading to inefficiencies, lack of transparency, and missed opportunities for optimisation and innovation.

What specific functions do data governance and data ownership serve in improving supply chain operations? What benefits do they bring to freight forwarders, ports, and other logistics providers?
Data governance and ownership help in standardising data formats, ensuring data quality, and protecting sensitive information leading to more efficient and reliable operations. For freight forwarders, ports, and logistics providers, these practices enhance decision-making, improve customer service, reduce operational risks, and foster innovation through better data utilisation. ■

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND LAW

Data Ownership and Trusted Networks in Practice

TRUST IN TRADE: ENABLING SECURE AND SEAMLESS DATA SHARING IN DIGITAL TRADE

Trust has been the foundation of trade for centuries, evolving from personal exchanges to complex international supply chains. It is now embedded in codes, certifications, policies, and protocols, ensuring seamless alignment across multiple stakeholders and geographies.

Digitalisation offers the potential to eliminate paper-based processes, improving efficiency and reducing costs but more than automating processes, it redefines how trust is built and shared. The Digital Standards Initiative (DSI) is leading efforts to create a secure, interoperable digital trade ecosystem, ensuring trust mechanisms remain robust.

The aim is to enable end-to-end digitalisation across supply chains, using common frameworks for data standards and electronic records. Data would be generated once, tagged at the source, and securely shared with authorised parties. Each stakeholder would access only relevant information while maintaining full visibility into its authenticity and traceability.

Two critical pillars support this transformation: harmonising trade data and ensuring seamless data flow. The Key Trade Documents and Data Elements (KTDDE) framework, introduced in 2024, maps the core data requirements of 36 key trade documents, providing guidance for globally interoperable standards. The next step involves addressing interoperability challenges, ensuring smooth integration with corporate data processes.

Beyond data harmonisation, stakeholders must align on technology principles for managing and securing digital records. The Trust in Trade report, published by DSI in 2023, outlines essential elements for digital trust: secure document and data transfer, verification, authentication, and protection.

A digital trade ecosystem must ensure that every digital interaction is verifiable, accountable, and auditable. This follows the Zero Trust Architecture principle of "never trust, always verify." A new "trust supply chain" is emerging, providing secure data exchange across global trade networks. Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) encryption will ensure security and legal protection across decentralised trade ecosystems.

Achieving this vision requires advances in software, hardware, PKI infrastructure, and organisational capabilities. While private, high-security networks will continue to play a role, scalable, open networks must become the long-term solution.

A significant milestone in this transition is the secure transfer of electronic transferable records (ETRs)—the digital equivalent of paper-based trade documents. In October 2024, DSI and the Digital Governance Council in Canada released a technical framework establishing key requirements for reliable ETR transmission:

- **Singularity:** Ensuring only one original ETR exists, functionally equivalent to its paper counterpart.
- **Integrity:** Protecting documents from unauthorised modifications.
- **Exclusive Control:** Ensuring only the designated holder has authority.

This open-source framework, developed in collaboration with industry stakeholders, will evolve to meet the needs of global trade, with a third-party certification process possibly introduced.

Despite progress, many freight forwarders remain in early stages of eBL adoption. The recent FIT Alliance survey found 70% still rely solely on paper BLs, compared to 49.2% of total respondents who have adopted eBLs fully or partially.

While digitalisation offers cost savings, efficiency, and data security, it requires a strong legal foundation. Aligning national laws with the Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records (MLETR) is critical. FIATA and freight forwarders, through the FIT Alliance and national advocacy, play a pivotal role in driving regulatory change and ensuring trade is ready for the digital future.

The transition to digital trade is inevitable. Industry engagement today will determine success tomorrow. ■

Pamela Mar, Managing Director, International Chamber of Commerce Digital Standards Initiative

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND LAW

ENSURING DATA PROTECTION AND TRUST IN DIGITAL LOGISTICS PLATFORMS

The development and roll-out of ever more sophisticated applications powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) has commanded enormous amounts of money in research, infrastructure and software in the information technology sector. The early weeks of 2025 have shown how unpredictable the evolution of this technology will be.

Meanwhile in international logistics, 98% of the 45 million Bills of Lading (BL) issued in 2022 were in paper form! Several businesses have attempted purely digital forwarding models, with varying degrees of success. The advantages and efficiencies of digitalisation are potentially huge, so what is holding the market back?

One of several reasons cited, is concern about the sovereignty and security of data submitted to digital booking and logistics platforms by customers. Whilst a single paper BL on its own will not reveal much about a forwarders or shipper's overall business plans, a digital platform's ability to archive, analyse and extrapolate trends in volumes, origins and destinations offers scope for the 'mining' of customers' digital data and the revelation of commercially sensitive information. The disclosure of customers' identities is also a further source of concern, given the ambitions of many shipping lines to offer door-to-door services direct to cargo owners.

What is missing in the digital trade space, are the rights and protections for commercially sensitive data that have been applied to private consumer data for more than 30 years.

In 2023, the Global Shippers Forum (GSF) and FIATA developed the principles and standards expected of digital logistics platform providers and published "A Charter for Protection and Governance of Data in International Trade". This Charter sets out how platform providers should secure and protect users' data and take steps to report and remedy any losses or misuses of data they hold.

The Charter's starting point is that the ownership of information submitted to a booking platform is vested in the original submitter and that there is no automatic right for platforms to use, store, or sell on information provided by customers without express permission.

It follows that platform providers holding other parties' data have a 'Duty of Care' to protect their systems from unauthorised access and theft of data, using industry standard protection systems. The Charter recommends that platforms appoint a Data Protection Officer to take responsibility for the implementation of these measures and be able to command the resources to ensure data integrity and cyber security are routinely monitored.

In the event of data loss or unauthorised access, the Charter says customers should be promptly informed and regulatory agencies notified if required. This is much more than mere courtesy, as data owners themselves may be under legal obligations to notify their customers of such losses.

Finally, the Charter calls on the larger digital logistics platforms to ensure interoperability, allow off-line commercial transactions between users, and ensure visibility of data holdings by the data owner. A prohibition on using users' data to provide competing services is also essential.

The Charter provides shippers and forwarders with a checklist of rights and protections they should look for in the End User Licensing Agreement they are asked to sign when first registering on a digital platform. These protections may already be there, but if not, will emerge quicker if customers insist on them. ■

James Hookham,
Secretary General, Global Shippers Forum

CUSTOMS

Implementing the WCO Shenzhen Action Plan on AEO Programmes

AEO CERTIFICATION: CHALLENGES & BEST PRACTICES

THE RISING IMPORTANCE OF AEO PROGRAMMES

Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programmes have evolved significantly over time, adapting to the changing needs of global trade. Initially introduced in the early 2000s by the World Customs Organization (WCO), AEO programmes aimed to promote regulatory compliance, enhance the security of supply chains leading to enhanced trade facilitation.

The significance of AEO programmes has grown even further in today's trade environment. AEO certification has the potential to provide traders with access to a variety of benefits, such as priority treatment at customs, reduced inspections, and streamlined handling goods across borders. Thus, AEO status has become a vital tool for ensuring that businesses remain competitive while minimising risk. In the wake of events like the COVID-19 pandemic and the current shifting landscape of international trade agreements, the need for resilient and secure supply chains has become more critical than ever.

COMMON CHALLENGES WITH AEO CERTIFICATION

One of the primary challenges for businesses seeking AEO certification is the application process itself. Completing the application and ensuring compliance with the programme criteria requires gathering information and documentation from stakeholders from varying units within a business as well as business partners. The complexity of ensuring that each of the programme requirements are met can be challenging for organisations whist undertaking the normal daily tasks.

Achieving AEO certification is not just a matter of compiling existing documentation; it often requires a shift in corporate culture towards greater accountability and risk management. Adopting a more structured and transparent approach to trade operations can take time, and resistance to change can slow down the process of certification and maintenance.

This leads to a common pitfall of the certification process: not preparing for ongoing maintenance of AEO status. Once certified, businesses are required to continuously comply with the standards set forth by customs authorities. This means regular reviews, internal audits, and the adaptation of processes as regulations evolve. Establishing a robust monitoring mechanism at the start is a key component for maintaining compliance and access to customs simplifications.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PREPARING FOR CERTIFICATION

In the face of the above challenges, the following practices can help businesses get started on the right foot.

1. Establishing a System

An effective AEO programme requires a structured and organised system to track changes, updates, and compliance requirements. A centralised system helps facilitate communication across departments, ensuring that all relevant information is readily accessible to employees.

2. Employee Training

Employees at all levels must be trained to understand (i) the AEO concept; (ii) the importance of security, compliance, and operational efficiency; (iii) and their responsibilities in meeting the AEO requirements.

3. Regular Internal Audits

AEO certification goes beyond meeting initial criteria; it requires ongoing monitoring of potential vulnerabilities within the supply chain. Regular self-inspections and audits—whether conducted internally or by an authorised third party—help identify and address compliance gaps. Prompt resolution of any issues mitigates security risks and protects certification status.

4. Engaging an AEO Advisory Team

Many organisations benefit from assembling a dedicated AEO advisory team to oversee compliance efforts. These professionals assist in reviewing existing procedures, providing feedback, and recommending improvements to enhance the effectiveness of the AEO programme. Additionally, they play a crucial role in training employees across various operational levels, including warehouse staff and drivers, to ensure adherence to AEO standards. ■

Claire Dodman,
Director of Business Development at CT Strategies

CUSTOMS

STREAMLINING BORDER CLEARANCE THROUGH DIGITALISATION: A WLP PERSPECTIVE

Border clearance is a persistent challenge in global trade, often leading to delays, increased costs, and inefficiencies across supply chains. Lengthy inspection processes, inconsistent documentation, and limited transparency create bottlenecks, particularly for time-sensitive shipments.

An approach led by the World Logistics Passport (WLP) to address these issues is the introduction of priority inspection lanes at Dubai Customs. This digitalised solution significantly reduces clearance times, ensuring faster cargo movement and minimising disruptions. The result is improved predictability and lower costs for businesses, leading to more efficient operations.

Collaboration between customs authorities, logistics providers, and businesses plays a crucial role in creating smoother, more efficient trade pathways. Efforts are underway to establish similar partnerships with key global trade hubs and institutions, offering streamlined border clearances and exclusive advantages across more regions. Such initiatives are reshaping logistics by providing innovative solutions that enhance global trade efficiency and offer businesses a competitive edge. ■

Abdulla Almulla, Acting Director, WLP

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND LAW

Leveraging Regional Free Trade Agreements

GLOBAL TRADE HELPDESK: LEVERAGING TRADE AGREEMENTS AND IDENTIFYING GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

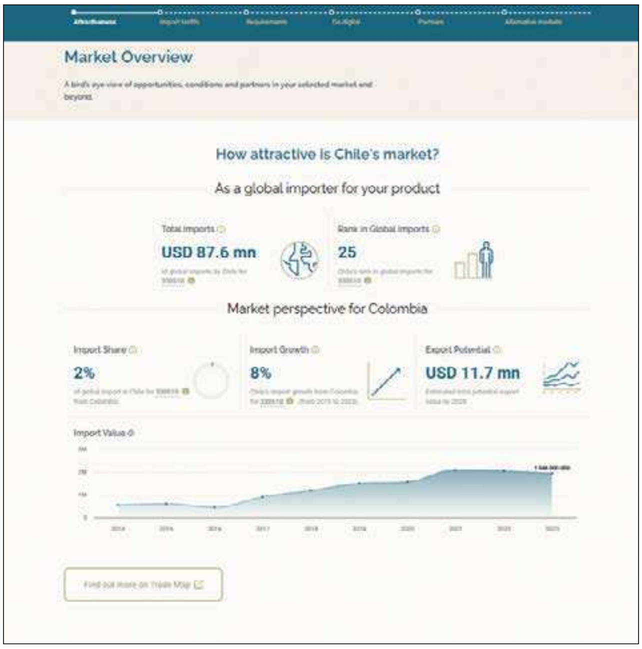
In today's global context of constantly evolving market conditions and an expanding web of over 500 trade agreements in force, identifying opportunities in new markets and making use of relevant preferential access can be a serious challenge. How can small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) be supported with timely and reliable information that is accessible to everyone?

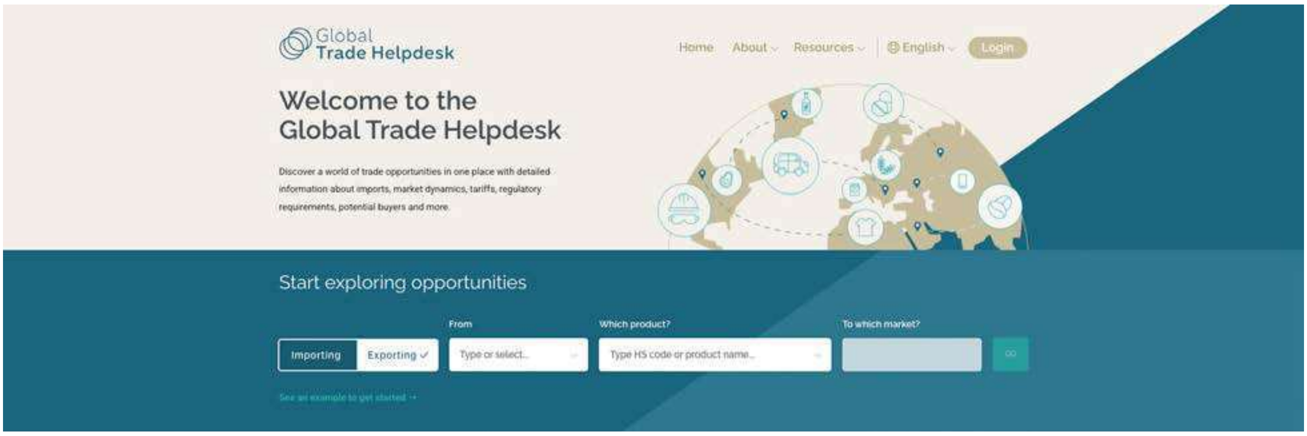
A FREE AND RELIABLE PLATFORM FOR SMES SEEKING TRADE AND MARKET INFORMATION

To address this challenge, the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), together with eight other international organisations have joined forces to provide businesses with a reliable source of international trade information: the Global Trade Helpdesk. Free of charge, the Global Trade Helpdesk is geared to simplify market research for businesses of all sizes. Users enter their country of origin and Harmonised System (HS) product code to receive a detailed market analysis.

The Global Trade Helpdesk supports businesses in identifying promising markets using estimated export potential and key market data. By aggregating information from more than 15 sources in a detailed yet intuitive manner, it first presents the user the market trends and perspectives for the selected territory. If a market appears to offer good opportunities in terms of growth and potential, users can continue their analysis by exploring customs tariffs, existing free trade agreements, and rules of origin. If convinced, users can continue scrolling to examine non-tariff barriers, technical requirements, and sanitary and phytosanitary regulations. The platform also highlights de minimis values, transactional e-commerce marketplaces, digital payment methods, as well as directories of potential partners in trade finance, businesses, as well as business support organisations. The platform is currently available in 8 languages (Arabic, Bahasa Indonesia, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish), reaching users in over 190 economies.

Taking a look at a practical example, from the perspective of a Colombian shampoo exporter interested in exploring opportunities in Chile, the Global Trade Helpdesk provides a market overview delineating the size of the Chilean market, the 25th largest shampoo importer globally. It also shows the recent trends in bilateral trade, with Chile importing over USD 1.9 million in Colombian shampoo in recent years, as well as the estimated export potential by 2029 of USD 11.7 million. The platform also provides detailed information





about applied tariffs, relevant trade agreements and the rules of origin associated with each possible agreement that can be applicable. In the case of Colombian shampoo exports to Chile, there is an Most Favoured Nation (MFN) tariff of 6%, but two possible preferential agreements: the Pacific Alliance agreement as well as a bilateral agreement between Chile and Colombia. The platform also highlights the specific rules of origin for each agreement allowing exporters to choose which agreement and associated Certificate of Origin will be more suitable for them.

If the Colombian exporter wants to compare the opportunities in the Ecuadorean market, they can do so in a single click and discover an MFN tariff of 20% on shampoo, but a regional trade agreement for the Adean Community that offers duty free access.

The Colombian shampoo merchant can compare diverse facets of markets in Latin America as well as other regions, taking into account estimated room for export growth, preferential tariffs, relevant regulations, and more.

If you are interested to learn more, please visit the YouTube Market Analysis Tool channel to access demos and recorded webinars: (328) Global Trade Helpdesk - YouTube
If you have any questions or comments, please write to the team at info@globaltradehelpdesk.org. ■

Anna Jankowska-Ericksson,
Market Analyst, Trade and Market Intelligence,
International Trade Centre

AIRFREIGHT

Building a Modern Airfreight Logistics Future

FIATA AIRFREIGHT OUTLOOK 2025: CHALLENGES, INNOVATION, AND COLLABORATION

The air cargo industry is a cornerstone of global trade, enabling seamless goods movement amid maritime disruptions and e-commerce growth. In 2025, airfreight revenues are projected to surpass USD 1 trillion. However, challenges such as an ageing freighter fleet, rising maintenance costs, capacity constraints, sustainability demands, and evolving regulations persist. As logistics grow more complex, collaboration among carriers, freight forwarders, ground handlers, and airports will be key to efficiency and resilience.

E-commerce continues to drive airfreight expansion, with shifting demographics and evolving consumption patterns reinforcing demand for faster deliveries. Capacity constraints at major hubs may push more traffic to regional airports, highlighting freight forwarders' role in ensuring supply chain fluidity.

The industry is undergoing a digital transformation, where interoperability is key to unlocking digitalisation's full benefits. This includes advancing digital identities, improving data exchange, and addressing cybersecurity risks. The introduction of Pre-Loading Advance Cargo Information (PLACI) regimes in Europe in 2024 underscored the power of multi-stakeholder collaboration, as seen in the Model Bilateral Agreement for Multiple Filing Arrangements, developed under the guidance of FIATA.

Collaboration remains crucial in 2025 to prevent digital fragmentation and ensure platform interoperability. Reforming governance models and building trusted networks will enhance cooperation. At the same time, regulatory harmonisation is essential—particularly in safety and security—given recent supply chain disruptions due to inadequate consultation between authorities and industry stakeholders.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) Cargo Agency Programme remains outdated in key regions like Africa, the Middle East, and Asia-Pacific, where fragmented regulations drive up costs. After a decade of stalled progress, IATA and FIATA are renewing efforts to establish a harmonised Global Air Cargo Programme. This initiative aims to unify standards, fostering stronger airline-forwarder cooperation to address challenges such as e-commerce growth, integrated services, and evolving security requirements.

FIATA remains committed to optimising air cargo operations through industry collaborations. FIATA actively contributes to Cargo IQ, partners with IATA on the Cargo Handling Manual, and supports the streamlining of PLACI programmes to enhance safety, security, and regulatory compliance. Additionally, FIATA continues promoting the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)-FIATA Dangerous Goods by Air training programme, an accessible certification scheme recognised by the IATA Cargo Agency Conference.

Public-private collaboration is essential for regulatory harmonisation and the development of a global framework that ensures safety, security, and compliance. The "Building a Modern Airfreight Logistics Future" session, led by industry experts, will explore key themes that define the current air cargo landscape, such as the role of the Unit Load Device (ULD) in air cargo (p. 25). Participants will gain actionable insights and strategies to enhance cargo security, optimise operational efficiency, and improve overall supply chain resilience and performance. ■

AIRFREIGHT

Building a Modern Airfreight Logistics Future

OPTIMISING ULD OPERATIONS: SAFETY, INNOVATION, AND COLLABORATION IN AIR CARGO

An Aircraft Unit Load Device (ULD)—whether a pallet or container—is designed to consolidate cargo for secure and efficient transport on an aircraft. By bundling multiple shipments into a standardised unit, freight forwarders, airlines, and ground handlers significantly reduce individual cargo handling, thereby minimising damage, expediting turnaround, and enhancing overall safety. ULDs streamline multiple facets of air cargo operations.

For freight forwarders, the core utility of ULDs lies in multimodal, cost-effective consolidation, with loading and unloading occurring at designated facilities at the origin and destination. This provides complete visibility, ensures the integrity of goods, and allows overall control of the cargo flow.

In turn, airlines and ground handlers benefit from receiving standardised devices that accelerate cargo transfer, reduce forklift mishaps, and enhance the predictability of airport operations. Because freight forwarders handle the pre-loading and unloading of cargo on ULDs, acceptance, turnaround, and delivery times are reduced. This benefits airlines and ground handlers while ensuring critical schedules for time- and temperature-sensitive shipments are maintained.

Air cargo—and by extension, ULD operations—is a global, 24/7 activity operating across multiple national borders and jurisdictions, with a multitude of local variations in regulations, physical arrangements, and practices.

In contrast, the aircraft side of ULD operations is, with very few exceptions, universal. There are only two designers and manufacturers of modern aircraft—Boeing and Airbus—and both organisations design, manufacture, and develop operating procedures that are approved by both the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).

The moment a ULD moves from the dynamic ground and surface environment of air cargo into the aircraft hold, it becomes subject to well-defined weight and balance regulations. Safety must remain the highest priority throughout the process, from cargo acceptance to final delivery. Failing to adhere to established safety procedures can lead to catastrophic consequences, as seen in the past. Strict compliance with regulations, thorough training, and rigorous adherence to operational protocols are essential to maintaining the integrity of ULD operations and, ultimately, ensuring the safety of the aircraft, its crew, and all personnel and facilities on the ground.

Unlike ocean freight's uniform reliance on 40ft containers, air cargo prioritises space utilisation and tare weight, leading to diverse ULD types. However, the same regulations apply across the board.

General cargo is transported on pallets or containers, while temperature-sensitive shipments require insulated ULDs with active or passive cooling systems or thermal blankets. Fragile cargo may need sealed covers, and high-value shipments may benefit from lockable ULDs. Fire-resistant containers (FRCs) and fire containment covers (FCCs) mitigate risks associated with lithium batteries and hazardous materials. Enhanced security measures, such as surveillance and real-time tracking, provide greater protection during handling and transit.

Technological advancements in ULD management drive continuous improvement, enhance safety, and optimise cargo flow. Key developments include the Internet of Things (IoT)-enabled real-time tracking, which allows immediate issue resolution, lightweight composite ULDs that reduce emissions and operational costs, and Artificial Intelligence-powered conveyor systems and robotic ULD movers to minimise errors and expedite processing.

The safe and efficient handling of ULDs requires continuous workforce training to enhance safety, efficiency, and regulatory compliance. Key training areas include:

- **Regulatory Compliance:** Training in International Air Transport Association (IATA) ULD Regulations, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards, and region-specific requirements.
- **Cargo Restraint Techniques:** Proper weight distribution and securing methods to maintain cargo integrity.

- **Hazardous Cargo Handling:** Educating staff on segregating and securely transporting dangerous goods.
- **ULD Structural Inspections:** Equipping personnel with the skills to identify and report structural damage that could compromise flight safety.
- **Technology Integration:** Training staff to efficiently utilise IoT-enabled tracking systems, automation tools, and digital cargo management platforms.

Effective ULD handling depends on collaboration among industry stakeholders, including:

- **Ground Handlers:** Responsible for ULD storage, condition checks, and loading onto aircraft.
- **ULD Manufacturers:** Design durable ULDs that comply with regulatory standards.
- **ULD Management Companies:** Operate leasing, maintenance, and tracking networks to optimise ULD use.
- **Industry and Trade Associations:** Organisations such as ICAO, IATA, FIATA, Airport Services Association (ASA), and specialised groups like ULD CARE, Cargo iQ, and other key stakeholders play crucial roles in promoting best practices, regulatory compliance, and continuous improvements in ULD management.

Collaboration among airlines, freight forwarders, ground handlers, and regulatory bodies is crucial for improving ULD safety, compliance, and efficiency. As air cargo operations face increasing complexities, high operational costs, and rapid technological advancements, collaboration remains essential for optimising ULD handling. These stakeholders must:

- Enhance training programmes to attract and develop a skilled workforce capable of managing modern ULD operations.
- Leverage technology for real-time tracking, automation, and more efficient cargo management.
- Commit to continuous improvement by adopting innovative solutions and refining operational processes.

By prioritising safety, industry stakeholders can strengthen operational reliability, maintain regulatory compliance, and drive overall efficiency in global air cargo logistics. ■

Markus Muecke,
Chair of the European Air Cargo Programme Regional Joint Council. FIATA's representative to the IATA ULD Operational Advisory Board (ULDOAG).

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND LAW

Optimising Key Multimodal Transport Corridors
with the International Transport Forum, UN ESCAP and UN/CEFACT

SUSTAINABLE, RESILIENT, AND CONNECTED FREIGHT TRANSPORT: INSIGHTS FROM ITF

When it comes to building well-connected, sustainable, and resilient freight transport systems, the International Transport Forum (ITF) recommends taking a holistic approach. Too often, policy and infrastructure investments are guided by strategic plans focused on just one of these three essential pillars of freight transport. The ITF's latest research explores the conditions under which actions to enhance connectivity, decarbonisation, and resilience are complementary, and when they might involve trade-offs. This research is intended to help governments and infrastructure development partners quantify each pillar and integrate them into planning and prioritisation.

The ITF's research on enhancing regional freight transport in Central Asia and Southeast Asia develops quantitative performance indicators for each pillar. Connectivity indicators include the directness of travel with key trading partners and the average time and cost to reach a certain percentage of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Decarbonisation is measured using energy intensity and total emissions from freight transport. Vulnerabilities to disruption are identified through resilience indicators that calculate the increase in cost and travel time if critical links or nodes are removed from the transport network. These indicators are then used to evaluate different forward-looking policy scenarios using the ITF Global Freight Transport Model, providing evidence-based insights to support policymaking and the identification of actionable plans.

Our findings show that aligning connectivity improvements with sustainability and resilience goals generates strong mutual benefits across all three pillars. Operational enhancements, such as reducing empty backhauls and increasing load factors, have proven effective across Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, offering an impactful way to increase capacity while lowering emissions. Similarly, cross-border cooperation in the Greater Mekong Subregion has both connectivity and resilience benefits by coordinating infrastructure development and facilitating risk management along international freight corridors. By focusing on all three pillars, policymakers and infrastructure finance can effectively support the freight sector in achieving its full potential. ■

For more information, please contact Guineng Chen
(guineng.chen@itf-oecd.org).

Web Links: Central Asia Study Website,
Southeast Asia Study Website

ITF

SIPA
Sustainable Infrastructure
Programme in Asia

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND LAW

ADVANCING DIGITAL TRADE: UN/CEFACT'S TOOLBOX FOR SUSTAINABLE CORRIDOR CONNECTIVITY

Global economic growth projections remain subdued due to economic slowdowns, supply chain disruptions, and increasing trade fragmentation, with a modest 2.8% global growth forecast for 2025.[1] This context threatens the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in developing economies. The introduction of smart solutions and seamless digital connectivity across transport, telecom, logistics, and IT has never been more critical.

Inefficiencies and gaps in both soft and hard trade infrastructure pose significant challenges and undermine competitive performance. This comes against the backdrop of the urgent need to decarbonise international trade and transport processes. Landlocked developing countries face particular challenges, relying heavily on transit countries to gain access to regional and global markets. The corridor approach, focusing on key trade routes and smart infrastructure for ports, railways, and border posts, has gained traction as a viable solution to enhance supply chain efficiency and reduce trade costs.

The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), provides interoperable normative tools for data exchange along transit corridors. UN/CEFACT is currently developing a policy recommendation aimed at enhancing digital connectivity and addressing soft infrastructure gaps along these corridors, as outlined in the UN/CEFACT Package of Standards for Data Exchange. Building on this Package, UN/CEFACT is currently developing a policy recommendation[2] aimed at enhancing digital connectivity along transit corridors while addressing gaps in soft infrastructure.

Since its launch, the UN/CEFACT Package of Standards was adopted by the 27 Member States of the European Union (EU) under the EU eFTI (electronic freight transport information) Regulation (2020/1056)[3] and its delegated act (2024/2024)[4] and referenced in the Roadmap for the Digitalisation of Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor[5] adopted by the seven Participating States in the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia. This is particularly relevant as total trade between the EU and Central Asia has grown by 38.8% over the last decade.[6]

In this evolving landscape, UN/CEFACT is actively promoting the widespread uptake of the UN/CEFACT digital standards, including through the joint UNECE-ICC (International Chamber of Commerce) call to action[7]. These efforts aim to provide a harmonised, efficient, and sustainable framework for international trade connectivity, ensuring that economic growth and environmental sustainability go hand in hand. ■

UN/CEFACT

1) World Economic Situation and Prospects 2025 Report: https://desapublications.un.org/publications/world-economic-situation-and-prospects-2025
2) Toolbox for enhancing digital and sustainable trade facilitation along transit trade and transport corridors: https://uncefact.unece.org/display/uncefactpublic/Toolbox+for+enhancing+digital+and+sustainable+trade+facilitation+along+transit+trade+and+transport+corridors
3) Regulation (EU) 2020/1056 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 July 2020 on electronic freight transport information (Text with EEA relevance): https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32020R1056
4) EU eFTI Regulation (2020/1056) delegated act (2024/2024) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202402024
5) SPECA Roadmap: Roadmap-Digitalisation-Trans-CaspianCorridor_Eng.pdf
6) from EUR 34.2 billion in 2012 to EUR 47.5 billion in 2022, with two-thirds of total trade being imports to the EU.
7) Call to Action on Improved Digitalization Through the Use of UN/CEFACT Standards: https://unece.org/trade/uncefact/CallToAction-Digitalization

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND LAW

Addressing Major Issues in Multimodal Transport Logistics

RAIL'S ROLE IN MULTIMODAL INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT AND THE COTIF LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) represented by its Secretary-General, Mr Aleksandr Kuzmenko and Senior Legal Advisor, Steve Davey are keen to present OTIF's work and the review of the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF) legal framework, and to discuss with FIATA Members the role of rail as part of a multimodal international transport offering.

Cross-border transport is complex and the legal framework surrounding it has developed in a piecemeal way over many years. COTIF offers a series of uniform rules designed to simplify and harmonise the contractual relationships that exist in international rail transport. COTIF provides for the running of OTIF, whose mission is to promote, improve and facilitate international traffic by rail.

The COTIF Uniform Rules concerning the Contract of International Carriage of Goods by Rail (CIM UR) go beyond international carriage by rail: they apply also to multimodal transport in cases where international carriage is the subject of a single contract and includes carriage by:

- road or inland waterway in a Member State's internal traffic as a supplement to transfrontier carriage by rail;
- sea or transfrontier carriage by inland waterway as a supplement to carriage by rail, but only if the carriage by sea or inland waterway is performed on services included in the list of services notified by OTIF Member States and published on OTIF's website.

The CIM UR must reflect and support operational practices and remain effective and relevant. As it wished to receive suggestions from the sector on how to improve and simplify the rules, the Secretariat of OTIF recently carried out a survey on potentially revising the CIM UR. In the context of multimodal transport, OTIF was particularly keen to understand how the CIM UR for multimodal carriage are used in practice today and to receive any suggestions for their modification. Feedback from stakeholders like FIATA is always invaluable in allowing us to identify areas where the rules can be developed and enhanced. ■

In response to OTIF's consultation on the revision of COTIF, FIATA conducted a study within the FIATA Working Group Rail and submitted feedback accordingly to OTIF. FIATA will continue to provide support through the expertise of the global freight forwarding industry in this work.

Steve Davey,
Senior Legal Advisor, OTIF

SUSTAINABILITY

NAVIGATING SUSTAINABILITY AND DECARBONISATION

Global supply chains are at a critical juncture (Forbes, 2025). Environmental regulations and market demand for sustainable practices have made decarbonisation a top priority (Engineering and Technology, 2024), requiring new strategies in freight forwarding—a key link in multimodal transport. Accurately accounting for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is a critical challenge (Our World in Data, 2024). Freight forwarders convening at the 2025 FIATA HQ Meeting will explore this issue in the workshop "GHG Accounting & Data Management: The First Step in Your Decarbonisation Journey."

Regulations like the International Maritime Organization's strategy to reduce shipping emissions by 40% by 2030 (IMO, 2023) reshape maritime logistics. Meeting these demands and customer expectations for sustainability requires insights into Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions (McKinsey, 2024).

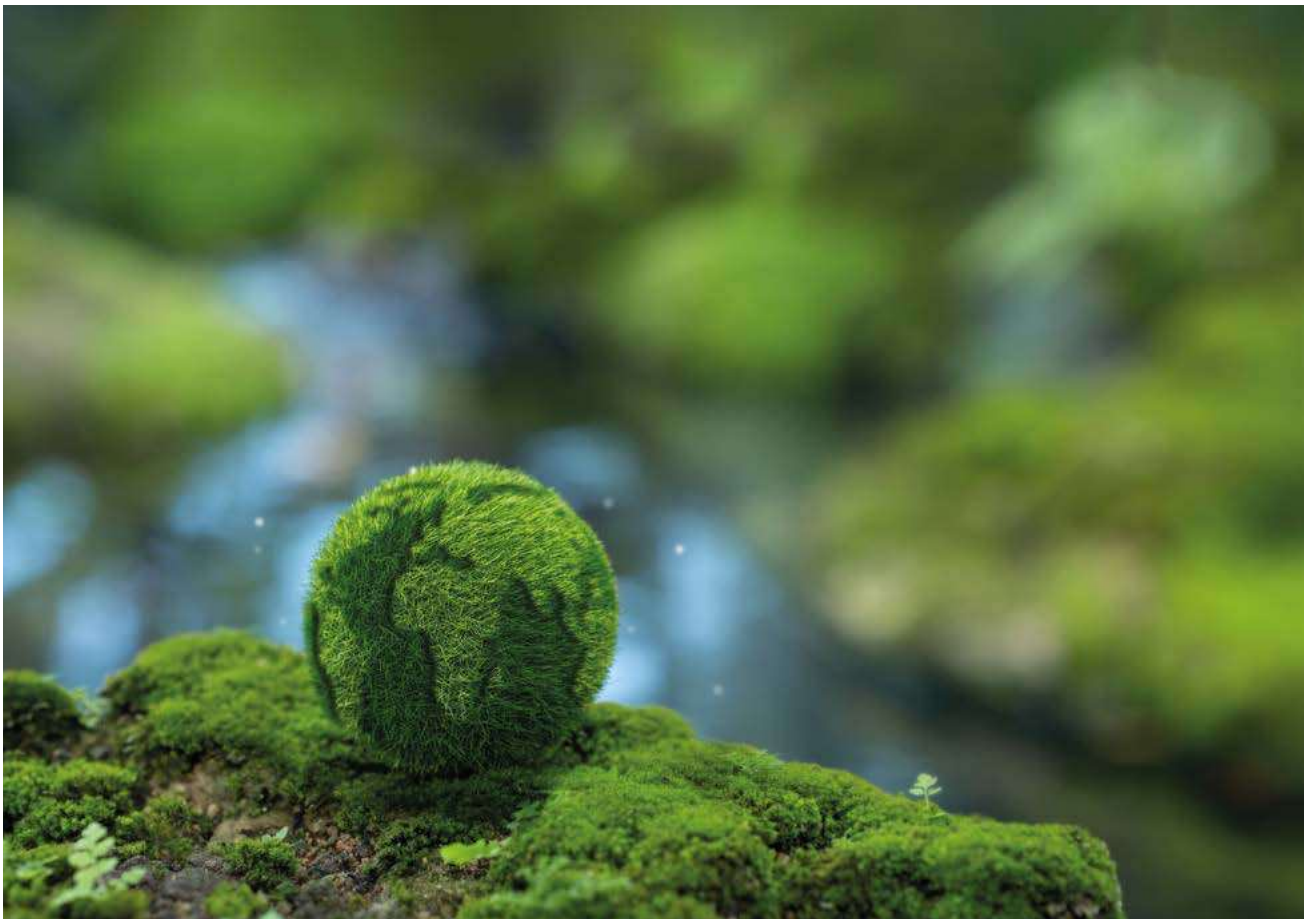
Freight forwarders act as intermediaries, gathering emissions data from diverse transport modes. Scope 1 covers direct emissions from owned assets, Scope 2 includes indirect emissions from purchased energy, and Scope 3 involves value chain emissions. Challenges include data availability and resources, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (Investopedia, 2024). Critical considerations include data ownership, avoiding double counting, and establishing clear reporting responsibilities among intermediaries, such as freight forwarders and stakeholders.

Maritime logistics, responsible for 3% of global GHG emissions (Yale Climate Connections, 2021), exemplifies the intersection of sustainability and multimodal transport. Innovations like alternative fuels and energy-efficient designs show promise but depend on accurate reporting and collaboration.

Decarbonisation is a strategic opportunity for freight forwarders. Embedding robust GHG accounting differentiates them in a competitive market, fostering trust, reducing risks, and unlocking green financing. However, decarbonisation requires operational improvements and market-based solutions.

FIATA's SCB-facilitated workshop offers a roadmap to achieving sustainability goals. By fostering collaboration and data-driven solutions, the multimodal transport sector can transform regulatory pressure into a competitive advantage. ■

SCB Environmental Markets SA



Developing the Saudi AEO Program to Facilitate Commercial Operations and Related Logistical Services

In an important strategic step to enhance the partnership between the public and private sectors in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Zakat, Tax, and Customs Authority (ZATCA) has recently developed the Saudi Authorized Economic Operator (Saudi AEO) Program, which aims to facilitate trade movement and enhance the security of global supply chains.

The Saudi AEO Program places special emphasis on supporting commercial establishments, including importers, exporters, and providers of services and logistics solutions. It aims to enhance the business environment and boost the competitiveness of Saudi commercial enterprises in global markets.

ZATCA developed the Saudi AEO Program in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Environment, Water, and Agriculture, the Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources, the Ministry of Transport and Logistic Services, the Ministry of Health, the Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization, the Communications and Space Technology Commission, the General Authority of Civil Aviation, the Saudi Ports Authority, the Saudi Food and Drug Authority, the Ministry of Investment, and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development.

Through this joint collaboration, the Saudi AEO program implemented the tiering model, which includes three tiers for the importer and exporter, and dedicated tier for the logistics services providers such as customs brokers and shipping agents.

The Saudi AEO and its achievements in facilitating cross-border trade also support the goals of improving the business environment, easing trade, and empowering commercial enterprises to face challenges by providing numerous incentives from ZATCA and its partners from government entities. This will contribute to greater successes for these commercial enterprises in international markets.

Through the Saudi AEO Program, member commercial enterprises will benefit from significant facilitation measures, including the simplification of procedures, ensuring removal of any obstacles related to supply chains, and provision of preferential and international benefits. This enhances the speed of trade movement and reduces costs. Additionally, the program contributes to strengthening the security of the supply chain by ensuring that commercial enterprises adhere to the highest standards of safety and compliance with international regulations. Furthermore, the Program encourages commercial enterprises to adopt innovative logistical solutions to improve efficiency, supporting companies' competitiveness in the global market. It is noteworthy that since its launch in 2018, the Program has benefited more than 550 Saudi commercial enterprises from its advantages, reflecting its success in improving the business environment and enhancing the Kingdom's competitiveness. The Program is also implemented in over 80 countries, which strengthens trade cooperation between the Kingdom and other nations and contributes to accelerating international trade movement. Additionally, the program enhances the flexibility of supply chains by simplifying customs procedures and the associated logistical services.

In conclusion, the Saudi Authorized Economic Operator Program supports the trade facilitation goals set by the Zakat, Tax, and Customs Authority, and enhances the efficiency of business operations at both the local and international levels, thereby strengthening the Kingdom's economic position globally.

هيئة الزكاة والضريبة والجمارك
Zakat,Tax and Customs Authority

AIRFREIGHT

CAPTAIN PACE ON MALTA'S AVIATION GROWTH AND THE FUTURE OF AIRFREIGHT

Captain Pace, could you share a bit about your role at Transport Malta and its functions in civil aviation?
As the Director General for Civil Aviation, my primary responsibility is to implement aviation strategies set by the Authority for Transport in Malta. This involves promoting Malta's aviation sector, encouraging the use of its ports and aviation facilities, and supporting aircraft registration under the Malta flag.

Transport Malta plays a crucial role in civil aviation, with responsibilities that include:

- Ensuring a safe operational environment.
- Regulating air transport, commercial operations and safety standards.
- Managing aircraft registration and licensing.
- Overseeing the construction and maintenance of aerodromes and aviation facilities.
- Coordinating with international civil aviation organisations.
- Optimising Malta's civil aviation infrastructure.
- Setting regulations for passenger and cargo transport, ensuring aviation security, and safeguarding the interests of operators and consumers.

Ultimately, our goal is to maintain a robust, efficient, and forward-thinking aviation sector in Malta.

While Malta is renowned for its maritime sector, what is your perspective on its aviation industry. What are the key opportunities and challenges?
Malta has a strong maritime industry and has been expanding its aviation sector. Since 2013, the aircraft registry grew from 150 to approximately 919. We have also approved over 50 Air Operator Certificates (AOCs), in addition to various maintenance organisations and training facilities.

Malta's bilingual workforce and English-language aviation laws make it an attractive destination for businesses. However, rapid growth has led to a shortage of skilled professionals, which we aim to address through incentives for foreign talent.

Malta recently hosted the European Civil Aviation Conference and is preparing for CAF 3 (3rd ICAO Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels). How do you see the future of the airfreight industry evolving in this regard?
Aviation is vital for both passenger travel and cargo transport. Looking ahead, we need to support and strengthen airfreight operations while addressing challenges such as excessive taxation and rising external costs. A balanced approach is key to sustainable growth

At the Malta Aviation Conference and Expo (MACE), collaboration between public authorities and the private sector for the industry's future was highlighted. What do you think is essential for this partnership to be successful?
Strong collaboration is essential, but the aviation sector must take a stronger stance in environmental policy discussions. The sector has been treated as a revenue source rather than being recognized for its efficiency and innovations. Open dialogue, clear arguments, and a unified approach will be critical in ensuring a fair and sustainable future for aviation.

How can FIATA, as a global federation of freight forwarding associations, contribute to the modernisation and success of the airfreight industry?
The airfreight industry has always been at the forefront of innovation and efficiency. However, these efforts have not always been fully recognised. When I started my career 45 years ago, I was flying a Boeing 720, and I later transitioned to an Airbus A320. The advancements in fuel efficiency and noise reduction between these aircraft are remarkable.

The airfreight industry must continue to adapt to meet consumer demands for fast, reliable deliveries. The industry is already highly efficient, but FIATA can play a key role in lobbying for greater market access, more traffic rights, and a regulatory environment that supports growth, ensuring the industry remains competitive on a global scale. ■

Captain Charles Pace,
Director General for Civil Aviation, Transport Malta

FACTS AND FIGURES

WORLD BANK GROUP UNVEILS B-READY 2024 REPORT

The Business Ready (B-READY) 2024 Report by the World Bank Group benchmarks business environments for private sector development. Relying on data collected from subject matter experts and firms, it evaluates regulatory frameworks, public services, and operational efficiency across 10 key topics, including international trade. The first edition covers 50 economies worldwide, representing all income levels and regions, and received over 3800 contributions.

KEY FINDINGS VARIABILITY WITHIN INCOME LEVELS

Scores for International Trade range from 35 in the Central African Republic to 91 in Hong Kong SAR, China (Figure 1). While higher income economies tend to perform better, income does not solely determine the quality of business environments. There is substantial variability within income levels, denoting that all economies may reform towards an enabling business environment (Figure 2). For example, Rwanda, a low-income, landlocked country in sub-Saharan Africa, ranks 6th in international trade.

UNCOVERING THE PUBLIC SERVICES GAP

Public Services and Operational Efficiency scores show more variation than those for Regulatory Framework. The latter are also generally higher. This gap correlates with the resources and state capacity required to provide quality public services for international trade. High-income economies have the smallest gaps, while low-income economies have the largest.
However, income level does not determine outcomes. Low-cost improvements, such as online availability of regulatory information, can facilitate trade and enhance operational efficiency. Economies with more cost- and time-efficient import and export processes tend to implement these improvements more consistently across all income levels.

REGULATORY PRACTICES FACILITATING INTERNATIONAL TRADE

B-READY 2024 finds good regulatory practices in most economies. Regulatory transparency and accountability are widespread, as 94% of economies provide explanations for logistics licensing decisions and over 90% have comprehensive administrative and judicial appeal mechanisms for the transport sector. A Maritime Single Window environment, legally established by 70% of economies, have revolutionised port operations through streamlined documentation processes. And in 78% of economies, simplified visa regimes for crew members have eased bureaucratic barriers.

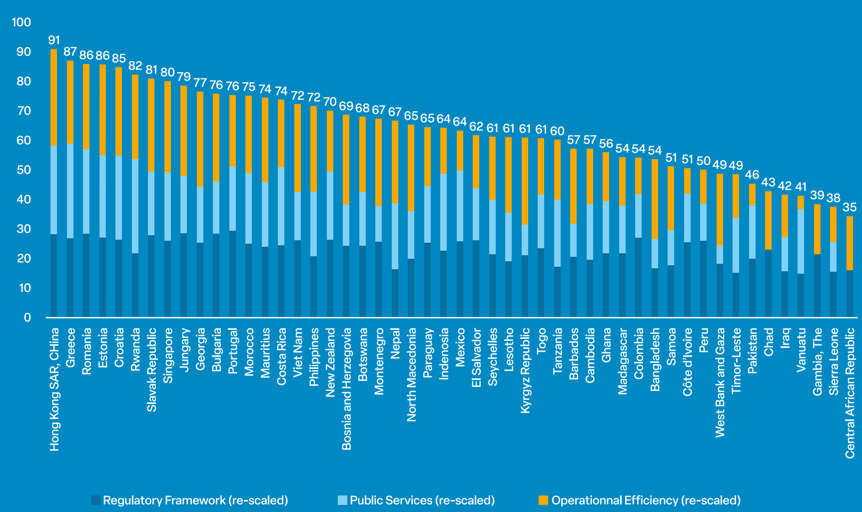
REGULATORY PRACTICES SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL TRADE

As technology advances, digital trade grows. Having good regulations is crucial for a secure and innovative digital economy. B-READY 2024 finds that many economies are lagging in digital trade regulation, with only 48% ensuring technological neutrality. Despite this, some low and lower-middle-income economies like Vietnam, Rwanda, and the Kyrgyz Republic have enshrined this principle in their legislation.

REGULATORY RESTRICTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE (SERVICES)

B-READY 2024 highlights the trade facilitation for freight transportation and freight forwarding sectors. On market entry, 9 in 10 economies do not impose caps on operating licenses for freight transportation and freight forwarding services. Similarly, there are no price floors and guidelines imposed on these sectors in 86% and 84% of economies, respectively for each sector.

Figure 1. B-READY Scores for International Trade and Contribution by Pillar



Source: World Bank, Business Ready 2024

B-READY 2024 also notes a strong trend toward maintaining safety standards. Over 70% of economies require professional certification or training, regular equipment inspections, and limits on consecutive working hours in both sectors. Operational standards support trade facilitation.

ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Electronic Systems for International Trade, like Electronic Single Windows (ESW) or Integrated Customs Management Systems (ICMS), streamline trade by allowing the submission and processing of all required documentation through one entry point. B-READY 2024 shows that 92% of economies have these systems. However, 74% have not fully integrated all relevant agencies, 72% have not done so for all stakeholders, and 54% lack key features. The examples of Morocco, Ghana, Rwanda, Togo, and Cambodia demonstrate that effective implementation is achievable in lower-middle- and low-income economies

TRANSPARENCY AND AVAILABILITY OF TRADE INFORMATION

The availability of information on trade regulations enables businesses to better navigate the complexities of international trade. Economies with higher levels of transparency and readily available trade information have more efficient trade processes, reducing compliance costs and delays. Despite these benefits, 54% of economies do not provide up-to-date relevant trade information on a Trade Information Portal (TIP), including top-ranking high-income economies such as Hungary. Considering the information published across official public agencies' portals, only 18% of economies manage to publish all the relevant types of information assessed, and 20% of them fail to even provide the applied rates of duties, taxes, and fees.

RISK MANAGEMENT

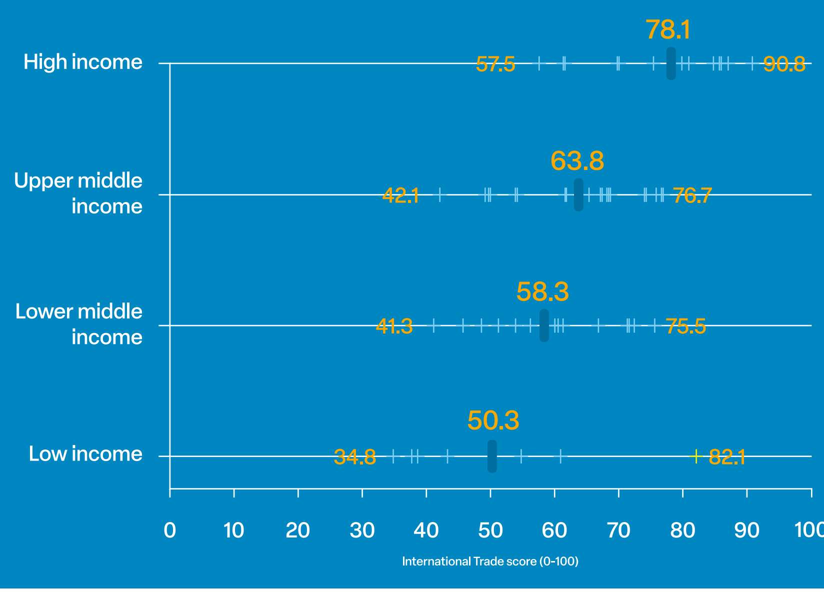
B-READY 2024 shows that effective risk management can boost the efficiency of clearance processes, minimising time and costs for imports and exports. However, many economies struggle with the implementation of these systems. While 90% of economies have a functional risk management system, 84% of them do not integrate all relevant border agencies and 50% do not cover all borders. Standout performances come from mostly high-income economies, as well as Rwanda. On a brighter note, 82% use post-clearance audits and 74% have automated profiling, with Bangladesh and the Kyrgyz Republic lagging regional peers in these indicators.

TRUSTED TRADER PROGRAMMES

Trusted Trader Programmes (TTPs) enable the efficient allocation of public resources and streamline customs procedures for firms. Benefits may include expedited processing, reduced inspections, and priority treatment. B-READY 2024 finds that 76% of economies have implemented a TTP for both exporters and importers. Notable exceptions here are high income economies such as New Zealand and Seychelles. However, only 50% include operators other than direct importers and exporters in their TTPs, and only 44% include logistical operators, such as freight forwarders. Rwanda, despite being a low-income economy is again a good example here. In addition, only 32% of economies provide the full set of evaluated benefits, and 14% offer both the inter-agency recognition of the trusted trader status as well as MRAs with other partners' agencies. Some top-ranking economies overall fail to meet at least one of these criteria, such as Greece or Estonia, while Costa Rica is a good performer. ■

Nuno Mendes dos Santos,
Private Sector Development Specialist, World Bank Group

Figure 2. B-READY Scores for International Trade - Range by Income Level



Source: World Bank, Business Ready 2024

FACTS AND FIGURES

COLOMBIA: A THRIVING HUB FOR LOGISTICS IN LATIN AMERICA

Colombia, with its strategic geographic location, robust infrastructure investments, and commitment to fostering global trade, has emerged as a premier logistics hub in Latin America. The country offers unparalleled advantages for businesses seeking efficient access to regional and international markets, making it an attractive destination for companies aiming to streamline their supply chains.

'The Country of Beauty's privileged position at the crossroads of North and South America is a significant factor in its growing reputation as a logistics powerhouse. Bordering both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the country provides dual maritime access that facilitates trade routes to Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Additionally, its proximity to the Panama Canal enhances its connectivity to global shipping lanes.

Major cities such as Bogotá, Medellín, and Barranquilla serve as key points for domestic and international logistics operations. Bogotá, the capital, is a central hub for air cargo in Latin America, with El Dorado International Airport handling a significant portion of the region's freight. In 2023 alone, the airport managed over 800,000 tons of cargo, according to Aeronáutica Civil de Colombia (Colombian Civil Aviation Authority), underscoring its role as a vital player in global trade.

Over the past decade, Colombia has made substantial investments in infrastructure to support its logistics sector. Initiatives such as the 4G and 5G road programmes have revolutionised transportation by connecting major cities and ports with efficient highway networks. These projects are designed to reduce travel times, lower transportation costs, and enhance the overall competitiveness of Colombian businesses. The National Infrastructure Agency (ANI) reported that the 4G programme alone encompasses over 7,000 kilometers of new and upgraded roads.

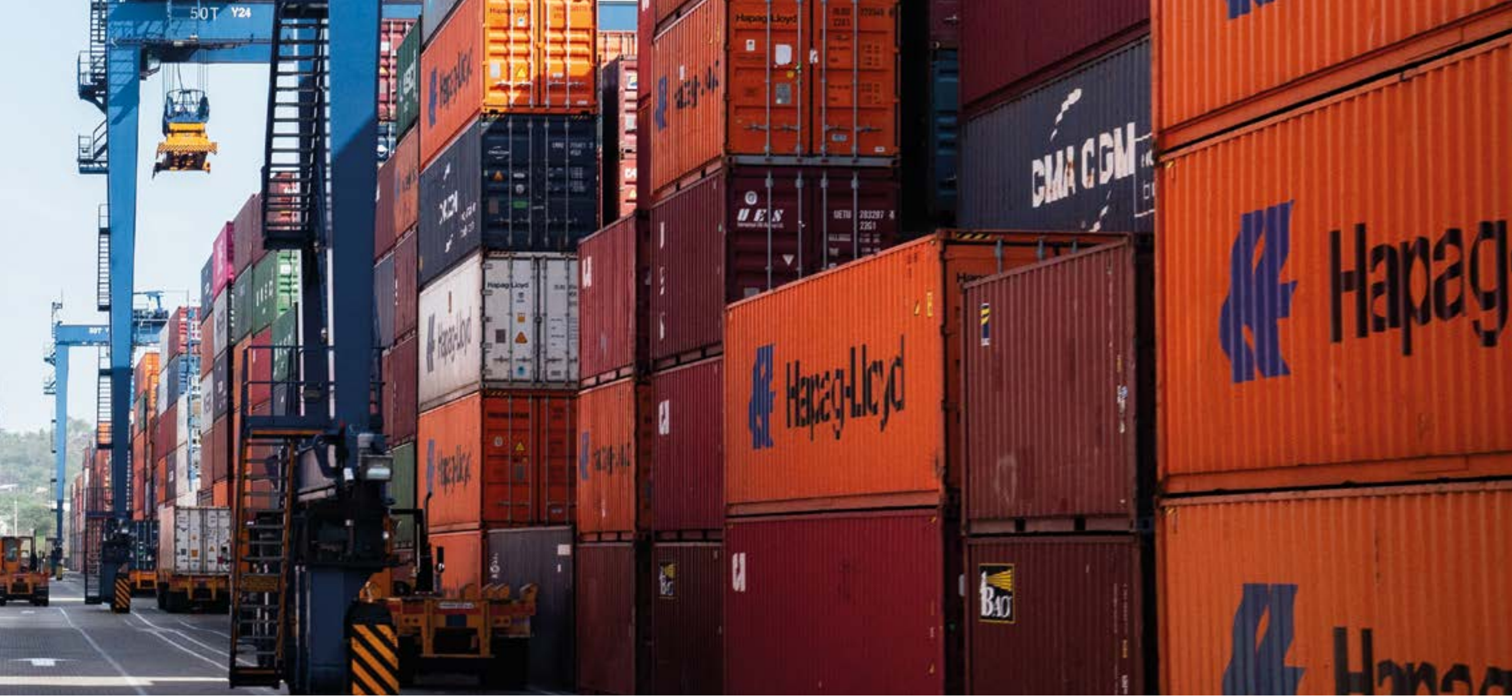
Ports such as Cartagena and Barranquilla (in the Colombian Caribbean coast) and Buenaventura (in the Pacific coast) are equipped with state-of-the-art facilities that streamline the handling and shipping of goods. Cartagena's port, recognised by the United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) as one of the most efficient in the Americas, offers world-class services to international shipping lines. Cartagena mobilised over 47.1 million tons of cargo in 2023, representing 51.7% of the nation's port traffic. Meanwhile, Buenaventura serves as a gateway for trade with the Asia-Pacific region, handling over 1.06 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs), reflecting its strategic importance in connecting Colombia to Asian markets.

FLOURISHING OPPORTUNITIES IN FREE TRADE ZONES

Colombia's free trade zones (FTZs) play a crucial role in attracting global businesses. These zones provide tax incentives, simplified customs procedures, and a conducive environment for logistics and manufacturing operations. With over 120 FTZs strategically distributed across the country, companies can benefit from reduced operational costs while enjoying seamless access to regional markets. According to the Cámara de Usuarios de Zonas Francas (AZFA), Colombia's FTZs have seen consistent growth in international investment.

As a member of the Pacific Alliance—a trade bloc comprising Colombia, Chile, Mexico, and Peru—Colombia enhances its appeal as a strategic destination for business and trade. Through preferential trade agreements, the country enjoys streamlined movement of goods and services among member nations. This regional integration reinforces Colombia's position as a dynamic logistics hub serving diverse markets.

Colombia has also embraced digitalisation to boost its logistics capabilities. The government's commitment to fostering innovation has led to the development of platforms that improve supply chain visibility and efficiency. Initiatives such as the Single Window for Foreign Trade (VUCE), highlighted in a recent report by ProColombia, simplify import and export processes, reducing paperwork and expediting transactions.



Private-sector advancements in technology are equally notable. Companies operating in Colombia are leveraging artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and Internet of Things (IoT) solutions to optimise inventory management, track shipments, and predict demand trends. For example, DHL Colombia has integrated AI-based tools to enhance last-mile delivery efficiency. These innovations contribute to a more resilient and responsive logistics ecosystem.

NEARSHORING OPPORTUNITIES

The global shift towards nearshoring has positioned Colombia as an ideal destination for companies seeking to relocate their operations closer to end markets. Its skilled labour force, competitive costs, and extensive network of trade agreements make it an attractive choice for industries such as manufacturing, technology, and e-commerce.

Colombia's government actively promotes nearshoring through initiatives that incentivise foreign investment. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Tourism, along with ProColombia, works tirelessly to showcase the country's potential to international audiences. ProColombia acts as a key facilitator and interlocutor for international companies, providing tailored guidance and support to ensure a seamless entry into the Colombian market. Recent success stories include US companies establishing manufacturing hubs in Medellín to cater to regional demand.

In addition to its economic advantages, Colombia's commitment to sustainability enhances its appeal as a logistics hub. The country is investing in green infrastructure and renewable energy projects to support eco-friendly transportation solutions. Electric vehicle initiatives and the promotion of clean energy in logistics operations align with global trends towards reducing carbon footprints. According to the Ministry of Environment, Colombia aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, with logistics being a key sector in this transition.

Colombian ports are also prioritising sustainable operations. For example, the Port of Santa Marta integrates electric gantry cranes and advanced systems for reducing carbon emissions, achieving internationally recognised certifications such as ISO 9001:2008 for quality and ISO 14001:2004 for environmental management.

Colombia's rich biodiversity and natural resources further underscore its potential as a sustainable logistics hub. The integration of environmental considerations into infrastructure projects ensures that growth is balanced with conservation, fostering long-term sustainability.

Colombia's emergence as a logistics hub is a testament to its strategic vision and determination to leverage its unique advantages. With its prime location, robust infrastructure, and focus on innovation and sustainability, the country is well-equipped to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving global trade landscape. Businesses seeking efficient and sustainable logistics solutions will find in Colombia a reliable and dynamic partner, ready to drive growth and success in the years to come.

ProColombia is a government agency of the Executive Branch of the Government of Colombia charge of promoting tourism, foreign investment in Colombia, non-mining energy exports and the country's image. ■

Carmen Caballero,
President of ProColombia

PROCOLOMBIA
EXPORTACIONES TURISMO INVERSIÓN MARCA PAÍS

FIATA REGIONS

2025 FIATA-RAME FIELD MEETING – COLLABORATING IN THE BLUE ECONOMY: TRANSFORMING LOGISTICS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The 2024 FIATA-Region Africa & Middle East (RAME) Field Meeting in Dubai (5-6 March) united over 630 logistics and freight forwarding professionals to discuss global supply chain resilience. Under the theme 'Connectivity, Resilience, and Sustainability,' the event tackled industry challenges in an evolving landscape. The Field Meeting was a landmark event, shaping a more resilient, sustainable, and digitally advanced future for global trade. For more coverage of the event, visit the FIATA website.

LOOKING AHEAD TO ZANZIBAR: THE 2025 FIATA-RAME FIELD MEETING

Following the success of the 2024 FIATA-RAME Field Meeting, FIATA warmly invites you to the highly anticipated 2025 FIATA-RAME Field Meeting, taking place on the beautiful island of Zanzibar. Organised by the Tanzania Freight Forwarders Association (TAFFA) and the Zanzibar Freight Bureau (ZFB), this event offers a unique opportunity for logistics professionals, freight forwarders, and industry leaders to come together, exchange ideas, and explore the growing potential of Tanzania as a global trade hub. Zanzibar's stunning location in East Africa makes it the perfect backdrop for discussions on the future of trade and logistics.

The 2025 FIATA-RAME Field Meeting will be highly interactive, facilitating knowledge sharing and networking for freight and logistics professionals. It will create valuable opportunities for participants to connect, share experiences, and gain exposure to best practices in logistics transformation for sustainability, trade facilitation, and policy reform. Additionally, discussions will centre on contemporary industry developments, including the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), financing and insurance opportunities, technology advancements, and enhanced professional development training to build a highly skilled workforce for the growth and resilience of the transport and logistics industry.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN TANZANIA'S LOGISTICS SECTOR

Tanzania's logistics sector offers significant opportunities, though challenges remain. Infrastructure gaps, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and the need for technological upgrades must be addressed. By investing in vital infrastructure—such as roads, ports, and railways—alongside embracing digital transformation, Tanzania can enhance its logistics network and increase efficiency.

Join us in Zanzibar for the FIATA-RAME Field Meeting, 30 April-1 May 2025, and be part of the conversation shaping Tanzania's future in global trade. This event will showcase the nation's commitment to becoming a regional logistics powerhouse, offering ample opportunities for investment, trade, and growth. Don't miss the chance to engage with industry leaders and contribute to Tanzania's dynamic role in the global logistics industry. ■

FIATA REGIONS

2024 FIATA-RAMS FIELD MEETING SUCCESS AND 2025 PREVIEW

The 2024 FIATA-Region Americas (RAMs) Field Meeting, held in Barranquilla, Colombia, on 4 December, proved to be a pivotal event for the global freight forwarding community. Organised alongside the Fitac International Congress (FIC) (2-4 December), the meeting was hosted by FIATA's Association Member, Federación Colombiana de Agentes Logísticos en Comercio Internacional (Fitac). The events attracted over 750 participants from 22 territories around the world, underscoring the sector's broad global reach.

Building on discussions from the 2024 FIATA World Congress held in Panama from 23 to 27 September, the meeting centred around several key topics, including the digitalisation of transport documents, new emergency measures for air cargo transiting through the United States and Canada, training programmes, Pre-Loading Advance Cargo Information (PLACI) regimes, collaboration with the World Bank, and Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programmes.

This inaugural Field Meeting reinforced the critical importance of regional partnerships in advancing the freight forwarding industry. As FIATA continues to grow its global presence, the event highlighted its ongoing commitment to fostering regional collaboration. FIATA expresses its gratitude to Fitac for hosting this successful meeting and for their significant contribution to promoting dialogue within the logistics community.

The Field Meeting also provided FIATA with the opportunity to engage with key Colombian stakeholders, including the Colombian National Tax and Customs Directorate (DIAN), the National Planning Department (DNP), the Customs and Trade Facilitation and Trade and Investment Policy Commissions of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism. Discussions during these meetings focused on trade facilitation, the digitalisation of transport documents, including the Digital FIATA Multimodal Transport Bill of Lading (eFBL), supply chain security, and sustainability in logistics.

Miguel Espinosa, FIATA RAMs Vice-Chair stated: "Colombia was the epicentre of the first FIATA-RAMs Field Meeting. Presidents of FIATA Association Members, along with cargo transportation professionals, industry leaders, and stakeholders from the global trade and logistics sectors, gathered to discuss key topics including digital transformation, sustainable logistics, regulatory frameworks, challenges, as well as mobility and logistics connectivity for multimodal cargo transportation. Capacity development initiatives tailored to the unique needs of the Americas were also explored. The FIATA-RAMs Field Meeting served as a platform for promoting integration and regional alliances, with the aim of planning and projecting a sustainable future for the logistics industry."

2025 FIATA-RAMS FIELD MEETING

FIATA is pleased with the success of the event in Colombia and invites its Members to join the 2025 FIATA-RAMs Field Meeting, which will take place in São Paulo, Brazil, 19-22 August 2025. Hosted by the Associação Nacional das Empresas Transitárias, Agentes de Carga Aérea, Comissárias de Despachos e Operadores Intermodais (ACTC), FIATA's Association Member in Brazil, this upcoming event will continue to provide a vital platform for collaboration and the advancement of best practices within the global freight forwarding sector. ■

FIATA REGIONS

INDIA TO HOST THE 2025 FIATA-RAP FIELD MEETING

The 2025 FIATA-Region Asia-Pacific (RAP) Field Meeting will take place in New Delhi, India, from 21-24 May 2025, hosted by the Air Cargo Agents Association of India (ACAAI) at The Radisson, Delhi Airport. India secured the hosting rights at the RAP meeting during the 2024 FIATA HQ Meeting in Geneva, Switzerland where ACAAI President Mr CK Govil's presentation won over the jury.

This prestigious event will bring together logistics professionals, freight forwarders, and supply chain experts from across RAP to discuss industry trends, challenges, and business opportunities. Delegates will engage in discussions shaping the future of logistics in the region.

The meeting will feature insightful sessions led by industry experts, focusing on freight forwarding, digitalisation, and evolving challenges. Workshops will offer interactive discussions, fostering innovative solutions. The event also provides a platform for professionals to connect with peers, explore partnerships, and strengthen industry relationships, driving growth and cooperation.

International delegates will experience India's rich heritage through guided tours and social events. Attendees will also enjoy India's renowned cuisine and hospitality, offering a truly immersive experience.

India's rapidly expanding logistics sector includes high-speed expressways, new airports, multimodal cargo hubs, and advanced cargo terminals, enhancing efficiency and connectivity. The meeting is ideal for logistics professionals, service providers, policymakers, and stakeholders within the Asia-Pacific transport sector.

India's capital blends history, culture, and modernity, featuring iconic landmarks such as India Gate, Red Fort, and Qutub Minar. New Delhi's world-class airports and excellent transport infrastructure make it a prime destination for this global event.

For the latest updates on the programme and registration, visit FIATA & ACAAI websites. ■

FIATA REGIONS

PRAGUE TO HOST THE 1ST FIATA-REU FIELD MEETING

Prague is set to host the first FIATA-Region Europe (REU) Field Meeting, 3-4 September 2025 providing an essential platform for industry professionals to engage in key discussions on logistics and freight forwarding in the region.
Situated in the historic region of Bohemia, Prague boasts a history dating back to the 8th century. The Czech state began to take shape in the 9th and 10th centuries under the rule of the Přemyslid dynasty. Since the 13th century, Prague has served as the centre of the Czech Kingdom. Even as part of the Austrian Empire, the city maintained its status as a prominent provincial capital. Since 1918, Prague has been the capital of Czechoslovakia, and following the split in 1993, it became the capital of the Czech Republic, now Czechia.

Today, Prague spans 550 km2 and is home to over 1.5 million residents. With its unique charm, it welcomes over 3 million visitors annually. Iconic landmarks include Prague Castle, which dates back to the 9th century, the Lesser Town, originally built for the Czech nobility, and the Charles Bridge. The Old Town, with its Municipal House and famous Astronomical Clock, is a highlight for history enthusiasts, while the New Town presents a vibrant mix of boulevards, banking hubs, and high-end shopping.

Yet, Prague is more than a city of history. It is a dynamic hub for business, conferences, and innovation. Beyond its cultural and historical significance, Prague has established itself as a key logistics hub in Central Europe. The Czech Republic's strategic location at the heart of the continent makes it a vital gateway for trade and transport between Western and Eastern Europe. Prague's well-developed infrastructure, extensive road and rail networks, and modern logistics facilities contribute to its role as a critical transit point for goods moving across Europe.

The city benefits from direct motorway connections to Germany, Austria, Poland, and Slovakia, ensuring smooth freight movement across borders. Its rail network is among the densest in Europe, supporting efficient multimodal transport solutions. Additionally, Prague's Václav Havel International Airport plays a crucial role in air cargo operations, linking the region to key global markets. The presence of major logistics companies and distribution centres further strengthens Prague's position as a hub for warehousing, e-commerce fulfilment, and supply chain operations.

Outside of Prague, Czechia is a landlocked country in the heart of Europe, surrounded by mountains that have helped preserve its historic character. The nation comprises three main regions: Bohemia, Moravia, and Upper Silesia. With a population of approximately 10.5 million, Czech is the predominant language, while minority communities include those of German, Vietnamese, Russian, and Ukrainian descent.

Czechia offers a wealth of historical and natural wonders. The country's efficient road and rail networks ensure that all of these treasures are accessible within a few hours' journey from Prague. For those seeking to explore a country rich in history, culture, and natural beauty, Prague and Czechia offer an unforgettable experience. Come and discover all that this remarkable destination has to offer! ■

FIATA
REU FIELD MEETING
PRAGUE 2025
3.-4.SEPTEMBER

MEMBER NEWS

FIATA MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS AND UPDATES

ASSOCIATION DES FREIGHT FORWARDERS DU MAROC -AFFM

The AFFM Association hosted the FIATA Diploma graduation ceremony, an event celebrating our graduates. Inspiring speeches were delivered by our esteemed partners: Single Window, GIZ, and assurance companies, highlighting the importance of the FIATA Diploma and embracing challenges with confidence.

All 27 graduates have successfully secured positions within leading freight forwarding companies.

Furthermore, we announced the start of the new FIATA Diploma class for 2025 and the launch of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)-FIATA Dangerous Goods by Air Training Programme. ■

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY OF SLOVENIA TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

On 17 January 2025, Transport Association representatives met European Parliament Member Marjan Šarec in Ljubljana to discuss key issues in Slovenian transport and logistics. Topics included expanding the EU mobility package, addressing green transition costs, tackling subsidy disparities, and developing intermodal terminals. They also discussed resolving tachograph inconsistencies, updating electric vehicle inspection procedures, and accelerating digitalisation for stakeholders. The importance of strengthening collaboration with European parliamentarians and the commission to improve the sector was emphasised. The meeting reinforced the commitment to addressing challenges and advancing Slovenian transport and logistics. ■

ASOCIACIÓN HONDUREÑA DE AGENCIAS DE CARGA INTERNACIONAL – AHACI

On 11 December 2024, AHACI and the food producing sector, through the Agromercados Honduras Fair (Feria Agricola en Fundación para el Desarrollo Empresarial Rural - FUNDER), signed a collaboration agreement with the purpose of facilitating the participation of national and international companies in the 6th edition of Agromercados Honduras 2025.

Agrologistics is a key element of our territory's food system that can offer multiple benefits by increasing food security, ecological, resilient and inclusive development, such as healthy diets, lower carbon and water footprints, climate resilience, high-quality jobs, and improve farmers' participation in the national and international market.

The event will take place at the Expocenter, San Pedro Sula, Honduras, on May 8 and 9 2025. Visit www.agromercados.hn for more information. ■

HONG KONG ASSOCIATION OF FREIGHT FORWARDING AND LOGISTICS - HAFFA

HAFFA and Hong Kong Air Cargo Terminals Ltd (Hactl) successfully hosted a grand opening ceremony of the first-ever Hong Kong Air Cargo & Logistics Football Tournament on 30 November 2024, celebrating not only kicking off this exciting tournament but also the launch of the much-awaited Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) three-runway system! The opening ceremony saw distinguished guests including Mr Lam Sai Hung, Secretary for Transport & Logistics, the Honourable Mr Frankie Yick, Legislative Councillor, and Ms Louise Ho, Commissioner of Customs and Excise. With joyous parade, heartwarming speeches, and an exhilarating friendly match, the event set the stage for coming months of camaraderie, teamwork, and healthy competition. The tournament will run from now until April 2025, featuring eight competing teams representing key players in the air cargo industry. ■

To access the press release and more photos click here or scan the QR Code below!

Click here for more information on the 2024-2025 Hong Kong Air Cargo & Logistics Football Tournament or scan the QR code below!

NATIONAL CUSTOMS BROKERS & FORWARDERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA - NCBFAA

NCBFAA and the Airforwarders Association (AfA) worked with Customs and Border Protection and the Transportation Security Administration to successfully implement the updated Air Cargo Advance Screening (ACAS) on Nov. 12. CBP developed ACAS to evaluate air shipments for threats to aviation. Messages describing upcoming shipments are sent to the Department of Homeland Security in advance of cargo departure for the U.S. This data is then reviewed jointly by CBP and TSA to identify threats. Both NCBFAA and AfA, meanwhile, are focused on the incoming Trump Administration's vow to disrupt trade flows with the imposition of tariffs on U.S. trade partners. ■

ASSOCIATION FOR TRANSPORT, FREIGHT FORWARDING AND LOGISTICS ORGANIZATIONS IN UKRAINE – UKRZOVNISHTRANS

In 2024, the Association initiated implementation in the field of transport. On July 17, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the UKRZOVNISHTRANS Association and the Agency for Regional Development of the Odesa Region regarding the development of transportation. On September 5, the webinar "Problems of forwarding by road transport" was held. On September 13, the General Meeting welcomed new members of LLC "UKRAMARYN" and FOP Ivaniv V.V. XXXI All-Ukrainian Day of Logistics in Kyiv gathered 1.5 thousand. participants, where issues of the future logistics business were discussed. ■

TURKISH FORWARDING AND LOGISTICS ASSOCIATION – UTIKAD

Türkiye's Largest Logistics Meeting: Türkiye Logistics Summit Türkiye Logistics Summit, organized by the Turkish Forwarding and Logistics Association (UTIKAD), was held on 23 October 2024 at the Four Seasons Hotel Bosphorus in Istanbul. FIATA President Turgut Erkeskin was among the opening speakers of the summit. Türkiye Logistics Summit, which included more than 600 participants, 30 speakers, 4 panels, 2 special sessions and 2 keynote speakers, became an important meeting point for strategic collaborations. The summit featured panels on "Innovative Approaches in Supply Chain", "Artificial Intelligence and Digitalization", "Sustainable Logistics" and "Future of Logistics, Logistics of the Future". ■

IN MEMORIAM: ROBERT KINGSFORD KUTIN JNR

It is with great sadness that FIATA announces the passing of Mr Robert Kingsford Kutin Jnr on 22 December 2024, following a prolonged battle with illness, in Accra, Ghana.
Mr Kutin Jnr was a distinguished figure in the freight forwarding and logistics industry. As the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Allship Logistics Limited and Oriental International Limited, he played a significant role in shaping the sector in Ghana. His leadership as President of the Ghana Institute of Freight Forwarders (2005–2009) left an enduring impact on the organisation.
In 2013, Mr Kutin Jnr became the first Ghanaian Vice President of FIATA, where he worked tirelessly to promote the interests of African freight forwarders at an international level. His contributions during his tenure from 2013 to 2015 highlighted his unwavering dedication to the profession.
FIATA extends its deepest condolences to Mr Kutin Jnr's family, friends, colleagues.
His contributions to the freight forwarding industry, both locally and globally, will not be forgotten. Mr Kutin Jnr's legacy will continue to inspire and guide future generations.
May he rest in peace. ■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2025 FIATA WORLD CONGRESS: GREEN AND RESILIENT LOGISTICS IN VIETNAM

The 62nd FIATA World Congress (FWC) will be held from 6-10 October 2025 at the National Convention Center in Hanoi, Vietnam. This global event will bring together over 1,000 delegates, including freight forwarders, logistics experts, policymakers, and industry leaders from around the world. The theme of the 2025 FWC, "Green and Resilient Logistics," addresses sustainability, innovation, and adaptability in the logistics industry. As climate change and economic disruptions impact global trade, the 2025 FWC will focus on strategies for creating a more sustainable and resilient logistics sector.

A LANDMARK EVENT FOR THE GLOBAL LOGISTICS INDUSTRY

Organised by the Vietnam Logistics Business Association (VLA) in collaboration with FIATA, the 2025 FWC will be a premier platform for networking, collaboration, and knowledge exchange. Vietnam's strategic location and growing trade infrastructure offer logistics professionals a unique opportunity to engage with key stakeholders, explore emerging trends, and discuss the industry's future.

Vietnam has become a major logistics hub in the Asia-Pacific region, with a dynamic economy, expanding port networks, and a commitment to digital transformation. Hosting the 2025 FWC reinforces the country's growing role in the global supply chain and its position as a key player in international trade.

VIETNAM'S COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE LOGISTICS

In preparation for the congress, VLA has launched the "Green Logistics – Sustainable Destination" FIATA World Congress Road Show across Vietnam. This initiative promotes sustainable practices and showcases Vietnam's efforts in eco-friendly freight solutions, digital transformation, and policy development for sustainable growth. Hosting the 2025 FWC highlights Vietnam's commitment to reducing the environmental impact of logistics while improving efficiency and competitiveness.

A GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION

The FWC is known for its dynamic programme, which will include:

- Panel discussions by global logistics leaders
- Networking events connecting logistics professionals worldwide
- Exhibitions showcasing cutting-edge logistics technologies and services
- Delegates will have the chance to exchange ideas, explore business partnerships, and gain insights into the future of freight forwarding and supply chain management.

WHY ATTEND THE 2025 FWC?

THE 2025 FWC offers participants the chance to:

- Gain industry knowledge from top logistics experts
- Engage with decision-makers and potential partners
- Experience Vietnam's vibrant logistics sector firsthand
- Discover innovative solutions for enhancing supply chain resilience
- With Vietnam's economic growth and sustainability efforts, this congress will shape the future of global logistics.

JOIN US IN VIETNAM!

THE 2025 FWC is the perfect platform for collaboration, innovation, and driving positive change in the logistics industry. Don't miss the opportunity to be part of the conversation that will shape the future of logistics!

For more information and registration, visit fiata2025.vn/eng/ ■

AGENDA

UPCOMING FIATA EVENTS

2025 FIATA HQ Meeting
17-20 MARCH 2025
Geneva, Switzerland,
For more information, please see p. 6-29

2025 FIATA-RAME Field Meeting
30 APRIL - 1 MAY 2025
Zanzibar, Tanzania,
For more information, please see p. 36

2025 FIATA-RAP Field Meeting
21-24 MAY 2025
Delhi, India,
For more information, please see p. 38

2025 FIATA-RAMs Field Meeting
19-22 AUGUST 2025
São Paulo, Brazil,
For more information, please see p. 37

2025 FIATA-REU Field Meeting
3-4 SEPTEMBER 2025
Prague, Czechia,
For more information, please see p. 39

2025 FIATA World Congress
6-10 OCTOBER 2025
Hanoi, Vietnam,
For more information, please see p. 42

FIATA WORLD CONGRESS
Hanoi 06-10 October 2025
GREEN & RESILIENT LOGISTICS

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FIATA WORLD CONGRESS 2025

OCTOBER 06 - 10/2025

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(*) SPECIAL FEE FOR EARLY BIRD UNTIL JUNE 2025

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