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ITCO study highlights critical role of PFAS

As Bulk Distributor previously reported (see BD May/June 2022, p1) governmental consultation processes are underway which could see restrictions on the manufacture of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

There are concerns over potential waste material degradation which could adversely affect the environment and health.

The review of PFAS materials is mostly being conducted by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), which implements EU chemicals regulations.

Certain restrictions, if enacted, would be detrimental to the tank container industry which mostly uses the material in its solid form for the manufacture of sealing elements. This is because alternative materials are less effective and could potentially reduce safety and increase waste.

Now ITCO has weighed in with a case study* of



The PFAS used for tank container sealing is solid and does not cause the environmental issues cited in ECHA's scope

PFAS materials – particularly PTFE – outlining the critical role they play in safely transporting liquids and liquefied gases in bulk, most of which are classified as dangerous goods or are otherwise potentially hazardous.

The main detrimental uses considered by ECHA include: fire-fighting foam, textile treatment (eg,

clothing), and food contact materials, such as food packaging.

ITCO says these industries use the material in vast quantities and their method of application is mobile and dispersible. The life expectancy is much shorter, and materials are disposed of in domestic waste systems.

In contrast, the material used for tank container sealing is in solid form and manufactured from rods of material. These do not shred into particles and do not cause the environmental issues cited in ECHA's scope.

There is one sealing element is use, a man-lid braided PTFE seal, which is now recognised as a potential environmental risk and ITCO is currently advocating the removal of this seal from the list of acceptable seal elements. Even so, braided PTFE seals do not shed PFAS in the same manner as the items cited by ECHA and the production quantity is "infinitesimal" by comparison.

ITCO recognises the importance and supports the work of the governmental authorities, but believes that "the mobility, frequency, and degradability of sealing element materials, in the form that they are used within the tank container industry, is extremely low risk to the environment, compared to the material form cited by governmental research. Furthermore, by using the

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most appropriate materials for sealing elements, it prevents leakage of dangerous goods and protects the public and the environment."

(Continued on p2)



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Update to CTU guide

An important update has been made to Cargo Integrity Group's Quick Guide to the IMO/ILO/UNECE Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units (CTU Code).

The Cargo Integrity Group comprises seven industry bodies - Bureau International des Containers (BIC), Container Owners Association (COA), Global Shippers Forum (GSF), International Cargo Handling Co-ordination Association (ICHCA International), FIATA (International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations), and TT Club.

The group produced a Quick Guide to the CTU Code some two years ago designed to assist those responsible for packing containers and accurately declaring details of their contents to abide by the often-complex regulations contained in the voluminous CTU Code itself. There is also a useful Checklist of actions required by packers and shippers of containers.

The need for increased integrity in the global supply chain persists, the group maintains, and urges all involved in intermodal container transport to pay heed.

A particular driver of the need to update the Code is that the types of cargo carried in CTUs (particularly freight containers) has expanded over the years and innovations in packaging, such as the use of flexitanks and other recent developments, allow heavy, bulky items, traditionally loaded directly into ships' holds (eg, stone, steel, waste materials and project cargoes), to be carried instead in CTUs.

The person who packs and secures cargo into a CTU, and seals it, may be the last person to look



A particular driver of the need to update the CTU Code is that the types of cargo carried in freight containers has expanded over the years

inside that unit until it is opened at its final destination, the Guide notes. Consequently, a great many people in the transport sector rely on the skill of such persons, including vehicle drivers and other road users; rail workers; crew members of inland waterway vessels; handling staff and dockworkers at ports/terminals when the unit is transferred from one conveyance to another; the ship's crew; those who inspect cargoes; and those who unpack the unit at its destination.

In addition, the general public are at risk from a poorly packed CTU which results in a road accident or train derailment.

The Group believes that awareness of the CTU Code is pivotal to achieving safe and secure transport and has followed up the Quick Guide's publication with provision of its full text in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish and Italian.

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ITCO study highlights critical role of PFAS

(Continued from p1)

The study points out that highly regulated tanks, defined as UN Portable Tanks in the IMO International Dangerous Goods Code, rely on sealing elements within the valves, ancillaries and access hatches which are fitted to operational openings.

For some special applications, the tank and valve might also be lined. Sealing element materials must provide a range of technical properties that ensure the materials function as reliable and safe containment of liquids and liquefied gases.

PFAS materials such as PTFE, are widely used because of the proven properties of chemical resistance, temperature range, durability, shrinkage, and vibration resistance, and cutting and machining qualities. Because of the exceptional properties of existing sealing elements, the operational safety and leak tightness record of the tank container remains excellent.

No alternative

Alternative sealing element materials have been researched and in some controlled applications have been trialled, but there is an "overwhelming technical need" to continue the use of solid form PFAS, it goes on.

"There is a risk to the environment and the public should access to the totally reliable existing sealing element material be restricted."

As solid form PFAS used for sealing elements does not shred or degrade into particles, the seals have a long life expectancy and are eventually safely disposed as licensed industrial waste. ITCO has initiated a programme to consolidate used materials and to seek recycling options.

But for reasons of continued safety, ITCO is calling on regulators to designate solid PFAS sealing elements in tank containers as 'materials of essential use'.

ITCO considers the danger and risks of the transport of chemical substances (flammable, toxic, corrosive dangerous goods) more hazardous than containment in static plant equipment.

Chemical plant valve sealing requirements are for mostly static operations and are within a controlled environment. The substances within a chemical plant would normally feature a bund to contain any leakage should this occur. It is possible to predict with greater accuracy the maintenance and emergency procedures because of the known environment.

The consequences of leakages from tank containers can be significantly higher than leakages from valves in a controlled environment. "A leakage from portable tank containers in transit could result in dangerous and potentially lethal chemicals affecting the environment and the public with potentially serious consequences and a risk to life," ITCO states.

Currently, and historically, the leak tightness record for portable tank containers operations is exceptional with very few reports of leakage due to design of the tank and its sealing elements.

But, moving away from PFAS-based materials without an equivalent alternative "will significantly increase the risk of leakage" either by reduction in the material's sealing performance or significantly reducing the substance range of chemical compatibility, the study continues.

Alternative sealing elements could require to be chemical substance specific and require a lower safety margin for acceptable usages.

An appendix to a report following the meeting of the United Nations Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods highlights the potential serious consequences for their safe transport presented by any restriction on the PFAS materials used in sealing. This reinforces ITCO's concerns that restrictions in PFAS will result in a higher risk.

Life expectancy

In addition to the excellent sealing performance, existing materials have an extended life expectancy which benefits industry, its personnel, and the environment.

Because of their life expectancy, inherent durability, compatibility with almost all substances transported and in-situ cleanability, PFAS sealing elements also do not require frequent maintenance. This means that personnel are not required to strip and change valve seals frequently, and handle used and contaminated materials.

On the contrary, the use of alternative materials for sealing elements such as compressed fibrous gaskets, could requiring changing after each transport event, causing considerable handling of contaminated materials and an increase in the quantity of waste disposal.

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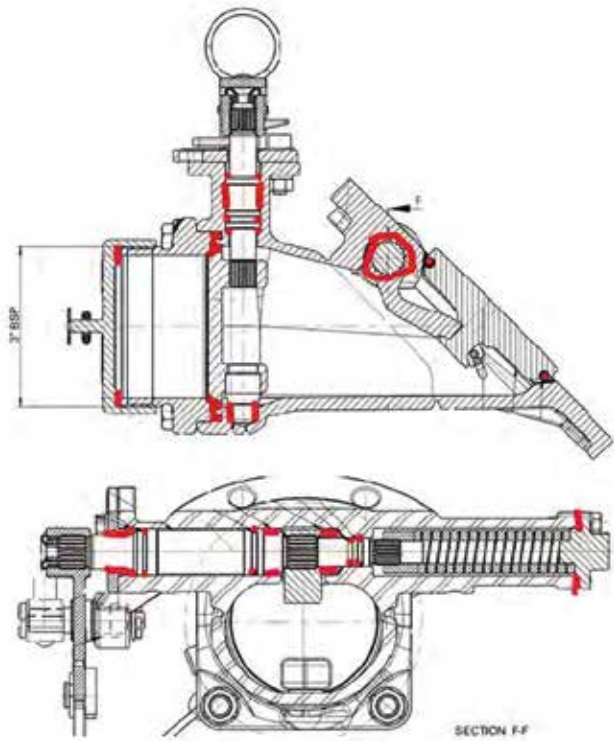
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Bottom valve assembly, just one type of valve used in a typical tank container. Highlighted in red, the main sealing elements can be seen. These are elastomers (either solid or composite silicon core with an FEP or PFA outer) and solid virgin or filled PTFEs for seals and wear sections. A gasket is sited at arrow F to permit sealing between the vessel and the assembly and is normally a PTFE envelope over a CNAF gasket

Environment

It follows that the benefit of existing sealing element materials which have a long-life expectancy and wide chemical compatibility is that it reduces the frequency of sealing element maintenance replacement and therefore the quantity of new seals manufactured each year and the quantity disposed, ITCO argues.

New material from manufacturing off-cuts and machining and drillings can be recycled. However, used material recycling is currently problematic due to potential contaminants and the lack of a viable economic quantity of material. There is ongoing work to develop a viable process. For example, a trial recycling of tank container sealing elements is underway in the Netherlands.

Used tank container sealing element materials are currently safely

disposed of through licensed industrial waste collection systems, but the aim is to increase recycling processes.

ITCO's programme to dispose of sealing materials safely and to work with recyclers to develop processes to use the materials in a re-manufacture is also ongoing.

Recommendation

A restriction on PFAS would require finding technically suitable alternatives, manufacturing and testing these alternatives and then re-applying for industry approval. (See box story above - *What's wrong with the alternatives?*)

But a tank container's life expectancy exceeds 20 years and there are thousands of valve designs that are in continued use. "To re-approve all this equipment would take many years at significant

What's wrong with the alternatives?

Basically, ITCO is at pains to emphasise there are no alternative materials that provide the crucial performance range achieved by existing specified solid state PFAS sealing elements.

Some of the non-PFAS alternatives researched – which include UHMW-PE, PVC-U, polypropylene, elastomeric compounds, and natural rubber – could be economically beneficial except that the operational cost resulting from risk of leakage from an inferior material would by far exceed any saving. Furthermore, alternative materials are technically unsuitable in many required applications and therefore are not feasible alternatives.

The alternatives suggested in the regulator's call for evidence as replacement PFAS sealing materials do not possess the universal range of properties to be a suitable replacement, especially as their mechanical properties, and so their function, differ depending on their location and purpose within the sealing arrangement.

However, there are certain situations where some alternative sealing elements might be usable with some of the substances being carried and in specific equipment applications, but the fact remains that alternative materials present risks.

For example, a fibrous material might be used as a gasket to seal the face between two flanges, but the material cannot be used in the manufacture of an 'O' ring. In addition to being less reliable as a sealing gasket, fibrous material may become saturated with the dangerous substance transported in the tank eg, a toxic chemical. The gasket would need to be handled by personnel undertaking maintenance, thus adding a health and safety issue along with an additional environmental disposal risk.

The loss of PFAS for manufacturing sealing materials would also require a significant increase in the number of seals and gasket manufactured for maintenance replacements parts, because the alternatives will not achieve the same range of substance compatibility and durable life expectancy.

This would inherently raise the risk of leakages caused by inadvertently fitting incompatible sealing material to different tanks but would also significantly increase the waste streams produced by frequent repurposing the tank sealing element.

If a PFAS sealing element is fitted abroad it might need to be replaced and adding to waste.

"Fundamentally, the chemical transport industry is not able to cope with this dramatic change. It might cause a reduction in available cargo carrying capacity and an increase in costs. Some transports may stop entirely due to the leakage risks of alternative materials," the study concludes.

cost; some valve designs might not achieve re-approval using non-PFAS alternatives. And achieving approval does not mean they will necessarily satisfy the customer's end needs," ITCO notes.

As a recommendation, ITCO is calling on regulators "for reasons of safety" to designate sealing elements in tank containers as "materials of essential use". To this end, the organisation has submitted its arguments to ECHA, and will also soon pass it on to US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which is currently looking at PFAS forms that pose higher risks to water supplies.

*TG09 Case Study. *The Health and Safety Impact on the Tank Container Industry in the event of a Restriction to the Manufacture of Perfluoroalkyl & Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS).*

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Vervaeke opts for first composite tank



The Vervaeke Group has specialised in the bulk transport of chlorinated chemicals for many years. The logistics company therefore has a significant fleet of rubber-lined road tankers.

However, due to the high corrosivity of chlorine-containing products, the rubber lining becomes corroded, so any change of product can endanger the quality of the next. In addition, the repair or replacement of this type of lining is very labour-intensive, resulting in rapidly rising costs.

Vervaeke therefore started looking for a solution to carry out the transport of chlorinated products in the safest and most cost-efficient conditions. After much R&D and in collaboration with an external partner, Vervaeke commissioned the construction of a new tank capable of transporting the most aggressive chlorine-containing products.

Constructed around a seamless plastic liner, the tank has very high chemical resistance. Since it is made of composite material, it is also lighter than a rubber-lined tank and so can carry more payload. This new technology also makes it possible to switch from one product to another safely and quickly, without compromising quality.

Vervaeke has signed an exclusivity contract with the manufacturer of these composite tanks and already has a number of them in use. The company is also the 'privileged' partner for maintenance and repair of this type of equipment.

Going hydrogen!

In another move, Vervaeke has ordered its first hydrogen-powered fuel cell electric truck. This zero emission truck stands for 100 percent CO₂ neutral transport.

Hydrogen is expected to play an important role in decarbonising hard-to-abate sectors like steelmaking, chemicals and transport. The EU estimates that up to 24 percent of energy use could be hydrogen-based in 2050. And although electric cars are set to dominate the market for private vehicles, hydrogen is still expected to play a key role in decarbonising heavy duty road transport.

As the new truck emits only water vapour instead of carbon emissions, it stands for zero emission. Moreover, it allows quick acceleration which means safe merging and manoeuvring, while a smooth and near-silent ride let drivers focus on the road and create an important decrease in noise pollution.

The investment is in line with the quest for sustainable transport with Vervaeke working in close partnership with one of its largest customers. It comes on top of Vervaeke's continuous investments in the most modern equipment, the most efficient engines, partnerships with customers in environmentally friendly projects and well-trained drivers.

Furthermore, this project will allow Vervaeke to acquire important experience and knowledge about the use of hydrogen technology. The firm's intention is to train its technicians in this specific technology to enable them to execute the maintenance of its own fleet, as Vervaeke has always done, and still does. Vervaeke is also promoting the use of the H₂ technology for ADR approval at the UN level.

The first truck will be delivered in the first half of 2023.

New MD

Vervaeke has appointed Serge De Wolf as managing director for the company in Belgium, including France and Luxembourg.

With a career as managing director and CEO at other leading transport companies, De Wolf has also been chairman of the ADR Commission in Belgium and chairman of the logistics working group of the Belgian Association of Chemical Distributors.

"I am convinced that, thanks to his extensive sector-related experience and his people skills, Serge De Wolf is the perfect man to help lead Vervaeke on its way to an even stronger position as a reliable employer and partner and as a pioneer in sustainable entrepreneurship," said Frederic Derumeaux, CEO at Vervaeke.

"In the current economic climate, where there is some uncertainty, it is important to be attentive to opportunities and to adapt quickly. In addition, our sector faces some considerable challenges, both in terms of retaining and attracting competent staff and in terms of innovation and sustainability.

"The arrival of Serge will also allow me to take up specific challenges and projects that will further strengthen the Vervaeke group and ensure it is future-proof."

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VdB takes on Simons dry bulk

Van den Bosch is taking over the dry bulk logistics activities of fellow carrier Gé Simons Internationaal Transport in Hilvarenbeek. The agreement was concluded between Rico Daandels, CEO of Van den Bosch, and Frank Simons, owner of Gé Simons.

Like Van den Bosch, Gé Simons was founded in 1964. Starting with one truck, the company has grown into an internationally operating logistics provider including the intermodal transport of dry bulk goods with pressurised silo containers to the Italian market.

It means further expansion for Van den Bosch's European network. "Gé Simons' strong focus on Italy is in line with our European growth strategy as an intermodal logistics service provider," said Daandels. "The acquisition will strengthen our position in the Italian market and develop our dry bulk activities further."

In recent years, Van den Bosch has invested heavily in the dry bulk division and now claims to be the European market leader in pressurised silo container transport.

These activities will continue under the flag of Van den Bosch and will be integrated into the company's branches. The acquisition comprises the container fleet, consisting of 40ft pressurised silo containers and various trucks, trailers and chassis.

All the employees involved, both drivers and office employees, will become part of Van den Bosch.

Heating sock

Optimising the supply chain is one of the priorities that Van den Bosch commits to every day.

Smaller innovations play at least as big a role in this endeavour as large ones. The bulk logistics specialist's heating sock is a particularly good example of this. With the heating sock the company says it is taking the next step in conditioned transport of liquid foodstuffs.

The transport of heat sensitive products requires the tank container's temperature to be carefully regulated, seeing as these products cool down quickly and at the same time cannot become too hot as this can cause them to burn.

However, it is not possible to suit the product valve, through which the product is unloaded, with heat regulation. The result is that the lack of heating causes the product to solidify around the product valve which makes it nearly impossible to open and difficult to unload.

However, heating sock offers a solution, say Van den Bosch. The heating sock is connected to the truck and leads to the truck's battery through a cable. The temperature can be set manually between 0 and 80 degrees, preventing product solidification around the product valve. Once the set temperature is reached, the heating sock turns off automatically.

With the company's focus on dry as well as liquid bulk, Van den Bosch transports various heat sensitive products every day, including glucose and chocolate products such as milk chocolate and ice dipping. It previously introduced the high-volume temperature controlled tank container as an innovation in intermodal transport of liquid foodstuffs. Now it is shifting its focus to the unloading of these products. Introducing the heating sock facilitates this and further optimises the supply chain, the company says.

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The heating sock's temperature can be set manually between 0 and 80 degrees, preventing product solidification around the product valve



Gé Simons ships dry bulk goods with pressurised silo containers to the Italian market

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Suttons navigates Shanghai lockdown

The China subsidiary of Suttons International faced a severe challenge when Shanghai went through a two-month lockdown.

For the subsidiary both the international business, dependent on supply chains from overseas, and the domestic business had a sudden and potentially catastrophic shock.

Suttons overcame the challenge by being agile and pro-active, with a high degree of disciplined self-organisation and a 'can do' pro-active attitude. This was supported by an empowering approach to leadership. While many other logistics companies effectively ground to a halt during the lockdown, Suttons China increased its revenue and market share.

It was late on 27 March 2022 when Tommy Hu, the manager of the domestic logistics operation, was notified that Shanghai would be going into a short lockdown. He anticipated, however, that this lockdown would be longer and effectively stop operations due to drivers and trucks being largely in Shanghai.

That very evening he called a team meeting on WeChat to discuss what to do. Two options emerged: wait and see to get further insight, or

quickly redeploy all the trucks outside of Shanghai. The latter option would incur increased cost.

Having heard all the arguments for and against, it was decided to be pro-active and redeploy. Hu recognised this would enable them to have the maximum flexibility, instead of having his drivers locked down at home and his operations grounded to a halt.

That evening the subsidiary arranged for a fast redeployment. It also contacted key clients to see if they could pre-empt orders, so that as many chemical tanks as possible being moved the next day could be full rather than empty. In addition to redeployment, the satellite depot in Jinshan (two hours away) had to be dramatically scaled up as, until then, it had only looked after a small amount of volume.

All of this needed the organisation to change how it operated quickly, with initiative being enabled at all levels. The fast decision making, and enablement of fast implementation, was a good example of Leadership 4.0, where leadership is a dynamic involving all rather than only depending on formal roles, titles or leadership from the top.

Luckily, Hu and some of his key managers had been trained in such an approach, the CALagility System of Complex Adaptive Leadership (CAL). The CAL approach uniquely blends modern western complexity science with ancient Chinese wisdom. So, for the Suttons managers this was an easy transition who largely ground to a halt. The situation was very fluid and during the early stages even the authorities were not clear on what needed to be done. It was the drivers on the ground, crossing different local authority boundaries, who told the managers what needed to be done – a good example of Leadership 3.0, with followers taking the lead and leaders following those they lead.

With the redeployment of drivers and trucks out of Shanghai, and Jinshan made into a temporary depot, the challenges were far from over. To move anything during the period a variety of new issues needed to be managed. This included arranging special passes needed by drivers moving between different areas, enabling daily PCR Covid tests for the drivers, liaising with key clients regarding the various Covid measures introduced, ensuring families and workers got enough food delivered to them and providing mental health support during such a pressing time.

All of these issues were delegated with full decision-making authority to individuals who looked after them in addition to their normal jobs. Meanwhile, the regional director of North Asia, Karl Hudson, who was also an alumnus of the CAL approach, had delegated to Hu in an effective way. He did not need to be on top of everything, and only asked to be kept informed at the usual heads of departments weekly meeting.

With all of the Covid-related issues having to be managed, albeit in a distributed leadership way, the workload tripled. However, no extra staff were taken on and the team adapted to encompass the new demands.

So, while many of its competitors saw operations stop and revenue fall to zero, Suttons China increased its revenue over the period by 30 percent.



SA Talke celebrated the 20 million safe working hours with all its employees at an official ceremony

20 million safe working hours

Talke is celebrating an important safety milestone in Saudi Arabia.

Its joint venture with Saudi Sisco and Al-Jabr Group, SA Talke, has reached 20 million safe working hours without lost time injuries. The award underlines the high focus on safety throughout the Talke Group, the firm says.

The company celebrated this special event with all its employees at an official ceremony. Alfred Talke, group managing partner and shareholder of Talke, congratulated the employees as one of the three shareholders present.

"Reaching 20 million working hours without lost time is a great milestone for our joint venture and our group as a whole," he said. "The fact that we were able to achieve this is mainly due to the commitment and safety awareness of the employees. After all, they are the ones who live our culture, organisational structures and processes, which are designed for safety, on a daily basis. My special, personal thanks go to all of them and I congratulate them on this prestigious achievement."

Not wanting to rest on its laurels, SA Talke continuously analyses and improves its safety concepts.

Founded in 2003, the joint venture focuses on logistics solutions for the most important product flows from manufacturers in the Middle East to end consumers in Asia and Europe. Talke supports the activities of this regional joint venture with its global positioning, extensive network and expertise from over 75 years of pioneering work in chemical logistics. In addition, SA Talke draws on Talke Group's expertise in the planning, construction and operation of logistics sites.



Suttons China opted for a fast redeployment of tanks to outside Shanghai

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GATX/Trifleet offer LNG solution

GATX Rail Europe and its tank container subsidiary Trifleet say they have developed an efficient method for transporting LNG in bulk.

Using an intermodal solution, GATX and Trifleet offer clients the possibility to fit up to 44 containers per 580m block train and a 34-ton LNG payload per railcar. The train, if on- and offload infrastructure allows it, can be as long as 815m, allowing for 31 cars or 62 containers in total.

Compared with conventional railcars, full intermodality offers a leeway that a car or container can be repaired independently with no down time, alongside more efficient storage of the stackable containers. Built according to relevant laws and regulations, the containers are designed for complete intermodality.

"The combination of both assets, GATX railcars and Trifleet containers, gives our customers the possibility to build a target-oriented and distinctly sustainable supply chain," the company said. "All in all, our solution will allow you to transport up to approximately 750 tons of LNG per block train and integrate the benefits of full intermodality."

GATX sees LNG as "the energy source for the future", as it offers an alternative technology bridge to the next 15-20 years. Essentially, it can become a substitute fuel, thus appeasing some of Europe's current dependence on gas.

"Current events show that we have to act immediately," it continued. "Germany, for example, has already taken the initiative to invest in LNG terminals. In the race to diversify energy sources and move toward more sustainable sources altogether, the only option left for the transport industry is to move in-step with upgraded and sustainably functional operations. This is why GATX Rail Europe is now happy to offer its clients a climate-neutral, intermodal transportation option for LNG cargo."

Trinity supply order

GATX has also entered into a new long-term railcar supply agreement with a subsidiary of Trinity Industries to purchase 15,000 newly built railcars through 2028, with an option to order up to an additional 500 railcars each year from 2023 to 2028.

The agreement enables GATX to order a broad mix of tank and freight cars. Trinity will deliver 6,000 tank cars at a rate of 1,200 cars each year from 2024 through 2028. The remaining 9,000 cars, which can be a mix of freight and tank cars, will be ordered at a rate of 1,500 cars per order year from 2023 to 2028 and delivered under a schedule yet to be determined.

"This agreement provides GATX with guaranteed access to high-quality, modern and cost-advantaged railcars in North America," said Robert C Lyons, president and CEO of GATX.

"With our existing supply agreements scheduled to expire at the end of 2023, this is an opportune time to establish a new agreement with Trinity, a proven supplier to GATX. We now have long-term access to a wide range of car types, enabling us to continue serving our large and diverse customer base. We expect this order will cover our base fleet reinvestment needs in North America through 2028, and we will continue to pursue additional attractive investment opportunities in the new and secondary railcar markets."

www.gatx.com



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Ermewa expands sustainability initiatives

Now under the wings of funds managers DWS and Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ), Ermewa recently published its annual sustainability report.

The report outlines a number of developments in the group's two tank container leasing companies, Eurotainer and Raffles Lease.

Baffles

Raffles Lease extended its baffle strategy and now also offers 35 cbm baffle swaps in order to achieve the best possible payload and to minimise empty legs. Swaps are often frequently used for rail transport and help to improve the carbon footprint by moving the container off the road, while at the same time reducing empty journeys.

High heat

Eurotainer developed a high heat SPT (T22, 1,100 litre design for high hazard materials) together with CIMC. These tanks include internal steam coils, heated siphon tubes, and a heated bottom head to ensure that the product does not solidify at the bottom of the tank.

The transported material is a class 6.1 subsidiary class 8 toxic solid, which must be molten in order to fill and discharge the tank. The corrosive nature of this product at a high temperature requires thicker stainless steel.

Carbon steel

Collaboration with the customer and CIMC to develop carbon steel liquid tanks for transporting a liquid chemical that was highly corrosive to stainless steel and was not compatible with any linings which they had tried.

Prior to this, the customer stored product in old DOT-51 specification T50 tank containers, but this limited them to shipping exclusively within the USA. Nor could it operate at heights and required the product loading and discharge to be piped to ground level.

The solution was a T22 tank made from special grade stainless steels to resist the chloride content of the product.

The project resulted in 85 tanks being manufactured for delivery earlier this year.

Specific ISO tank

Eurotainer also worked with a customer and manufacturer NT Tank to quote for special ISO tanks, which complied with the customer's specific needs.

The customer's fuel terminal is designed for automatic filling of side load/discharge road tankers with 10,900-litre compartments. Eurotainer's priority was to design an ISO tank that would in turn comply with the terminal standard operating procedures (SOP) and resolve any safety aspects of loading an ISO tank in this high volume and highly volatile environment.

The bunded capacity at the terminal where the ISO tanks were to be filled was limited to a maximum of 16,000 litres. This spill containment system is a legal requirement to ensure that the terminal is able to capture and contain the product in the event of an overflow or failure in the filling process.

In this case, no product may leave the confines of the terminal at any time. The Eurotainer ISO tanks were to be filled with aviation fuel which would then be barged to an Australian indigenous community, located in the Torres Strait between Australia and Papua New Guinea.

The solution provided by Eurotainer met the capacity of the terminal bund, but also removed the safety issues faced by terminal operators in having to board the trailer carrying the ISO tank in order to connect it with the rear discharge of a standard tank container.

Eurotainer developed a dedicated side load/discharge ISO design, incorporating all of the automatic terminal control processes, including vapour recovery, overfill protection, auto shut off control and side operation.

The customer embraced the changes and has adopted the new Eurotainer design as the standard for all new ISO tanks in its ever-expanding fleet of aviation tanks for the Australasian market.

www.ermewa-group.com

de Zeeuw joins CS Leasing

CS Leasing is continuing the expansion of its global management team with the appointment of Guido de Zeeuw as European sales director.

A seasoned industry professional with over 15 years of ISO tank container leasing and operating experience, de Zeeuw will use his extensive experience and industry expertise to drive CS Leasing's European growth.

This latest addition to the CS Leasing team comes as the company expands its customer base with a diverse portfolio of container equipment, finance, and lease products to service growing global demand.

Based in Rotterdam, de Zeeuw brings over 15 years of expertise in the tank container industry, having worked in a variety of sales roles with various operators and leasing companies. Most recently, he worked as a sales manager for Tankcon. Previously, he held positions with companies such as Interbulk, Ermewa and Bulktaier, as well as being a joint founder and owner of TankOne for several years.

"We have known Guido for a number of years and have always been impressed with his deep knowledge of the market and his entrepreneurial approach to driving growth through excellent customer service. Guido's strong long-term relationships with both customers and vendors fit well with the existing culture of CS Leasing," said Kevin Singh, vice president, Europe at CS Leasing.

"Guido is a great addition to our management team and will no doubt improve what we can offer our customer base. We are excited to welcome Guido to the CS Leasing team to support our long-term growth."

www.csintermodal.com

Unitas selects Kibbe for Americas role

Al Kibbe has been appointed as director of tank leasing Americas for leasing company Unitas.

Kibbe brings a wealth of experience and knowledge having worked in the tank industry for more than 20 years, most recently at Eurotainer following its acquisition of Taylor Minster Leasing where he was a director for 4.5 years. Prior to these he held positions at Hoover and Transamerica.

Kibbe is based in Houston establishing a physical presence for Unitas in the Americas, underpinning its commitment to having local people service customers. He also has considerable experience and expertise in the gas and cryogenic market, which continues Unitas strategy as a niche lessor.

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Traffic stagnates in first half – Hupac

Switzerland-based rail operator Hupac is in many ways a bellwether for the state of European intermodal logistics.

Assessing the first half of this year, Hupac said that despite lively demand, the group's traffic stagnated at the previous year's level with an increase of just 1 percent. Construction activity in Germany in particular had a negative impact in the months of April and June.

Traffic on Hupac's network achieved a volume of 575,000 road consignments, a small increase of 1 percent over the previous year. After a lively development in the first quarter with monthly growth rates in the high single digits, traffic slumped in the months of April and June. This was due to route closures and capacity restrictions caused by the intensive construction activity on the Rhine-Alpine corridor.

Transalpine traffic through Switzerland was particularly affected. "In the north-south corridor, we were not able to achieve our set growth targets," explained CEO Michail Stahlhut. "On the other hand, traffic in the north-east and south-east corridors developed positively. Traffic in Spain remained below expectations due to capacity bottlenecks."

The situation in maritime transport remained tense. Pandemic-related congestion in overseas traffic triggered negative cascading effects in European seaports, in domestic terminals and in combined transport operations. In addition, there was the poor performance of the German rail network.

Despite a 3 percent increase over the previous year, the ERS Railways subsidiary still had not been able to reach pre-pandemic volumes.

Investing in resilience

Hupac said that it is countering the ongoing difficult situation in the railway network in Germany with a 10-point 'Contingency & Resilience' programme, which was presented at the operator's general assembly in May 2022. "Our response to the capacity restrictions caused by construction activity on the network are investments in reserves and emergency measures," Stahlhut continued.

The first measures have already been implemented. By the end of the year, the wagon fleet will be significantly increased by the purchase and rental of almost 900 additional modules. A large number of these wagons are stationed as reserves at nodes in the network for use in the event of irregularities and so contribute to the stability of the overall transport service.

Hupac is also strengthening its position in the traction sector. Performance is being improved by focusing on high-performance rail partners, deepening co-operation with Swiss national carrier SBB Cargo International, securing additional train drivers to stand in on behalf of Hupac in the event of breakdowns and, last but not least, through proactive information and management.

In the terminal side of the business, bottlenecks at the Busto Arsizio-Gallarate hub were overcome through active collection management of the loading units.

Network capacity

However, the central concern of the Hupac Group is to secure sufficient capacity in the railway network. For upcoming construction work in the coming years, the focus must be increasingly on capacity-saving planning and on efficient diversion routes, the operator added. The negative experiences at certain periods during this year show that time-sensitive combined transport needs full train path capacity on a weekly basis, even during construction measures, in order to avoid supply bottlenecks.

"All parties involved in the transport chain must significantly increase their ambition for more capacity under the given circumstances," Stahlhut demanded. A short-term switch to pure road transport is only possible to a small extent for combined transport customers. In particular, the extensive corridor renovations planned in the German network from 2024 onwards remain a risk for Europe-wide supply if construction measures are not planned in line with the market and functional rerouting concepts are not created.

This could be prevented by improving the international co-ordination of construction sites along the entire corridors and, in some cases, by upgrading the diversion routes. Smaller measures such as additional switches, changes to operating rules, etc. can make a big difference and must be implemented as a priority.

This echoes a call by Hupac, along with SBB Cargo, VAP association and BLS Cargo, to upgrade the railway on the French side of the Rhine valley as an alternative solution while completion of the line on the German side between Karlsruhe and Basel is undertaken. This is not expected before 2040-2045.

Capacity bottlenecks are noticeably worsening and represent a worrying constant, the Swiss companies stated.

Capacity preview

For the coming months, Hupac expects a satisfactory capacity offer with the current Covid 19 situation, despite the numerous construction sites on the Rhine-Alpine corridor. This is being made possible by diversions, the strengthening of the offer on alternative relations and the provision of reserve compositions. Stahlhut concluded: "We have understood our customers' request for more transparency and will provide a detailed capacity preview with monthly updates. This will enable transport companies and shippers to manage traffic volumes better even in the event of capacity restrictions."

Polish transshipment terminal

Further east Hupac is opening a new transshipment terminal in



Bottlenecks at the Busto Arsizio-Gallarate hub were overcome through active collection management of the loading units

Brwinów, near Warsaw, Poland. The facility supports the exchange of goods in central and eastern Europe and enables the further growth of combined transport, the company claimed.

The HTB Hupac Terminal Brwinów is located in a logistics district about 25km southwest of Warsaw. The facility, with a handling capacity of 12 train pairs per day in phase 2, can shift up to 180,000 containers a year from road to rail. This would prevent the equivalent of 10km of traffic congestion every day and reduce CO2 emissions by up to 250,000 tons a year, Hupac stated.

"The development of the infrastructure is taking place according to our proven step-by-step approach," said Stahlhut at the inauguration ceremony in Brwinów in September. "In the first phase, we will put two transshipment tracks and three service tracks into operation. Loading units will be handled by reach-stackers. In the second phase, we will scale capacity and install another three transshipment tracks as well as powerful gantry cranes," he added. From the beginning, the terminal has been designed for 740m long trains. "In this way, we are anticipating the parameters of the European freight corridors and achieve maximum productivity for combined transport trains."

The terminal is seen as an essential requirement for developing the European intermodal network, and companies looking to switch to climate-friendly combined transport in the Warsaw economic region. The investment in the terminal equates to €37 million.

Hupac launched the terminal project in 2017 and initially provided for road and rail access. After a pandemic-related break, construction work was resumed in March 2021 and completed at the end of August 2022. The facility covers an area of 140,000 sqm and includes a check-in area, transshipment area of 42,000 sqm, office facilities and technical buildings. In addition, there is another plot of land of 160,000 sqm for future developments.

Around 40 percent of the area will be planted with trees, bushes and meadow areas. "In this way, we can reduce soil sealing and protect nature and the environment," explained Dario Arcotti, director engineering at Hupac. The entire handling area of the terminal is equipped with underground detention basins and a separate wastewater system to prevent possible groundwater contamination.

The owner and operator of the facility is the Polish company Hupac Terminal Brwinów Sp zoo. The operations handover is scheduled to

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HTB Hupac Terminal Brwinów is located in a logistics district about 25km southwest of Warsaw

take place this autumn. In the initial phase, the terminal will operate in two shifts.

"We are looking forward to the challenge and want to offer our customers real added value with numerous additional services," said Diana Batko, managing director of Hupac's subsidiary in Poland. Along with smooth transshipment, these include customs services, loading stations for containers and weighing of loading units. The terminal is accessible to all railway companies in accordance with applicable EU law.

Combined transport hub

The Brwinów terminal creates real opportunities for the development of combined transport, said Renzo Capanni, who took over responsibility for Hupac Intermodal's Shuttle Net North East business area at the end of August. "Until now, there were no capacity reserves for intermodal transport within 120km of the Polish capital. The new terminal creates prospects for the growth of the entire sector."

Once the terminal is operational, Hupac will gradually transfer existing connections to the new facility. Capanni went on: "Brwinów in the heart of Poland is the ideal location for international connections to the Polish market. In the mid-term, we see opportunities not only in strengthening traffic on the east-west axis, but also in developing traffic on the north-south axis, where Brwinów can take on a central hub function."

www.hupac.com

BNSF to build integrated rail complex in Barstow

BNSF Railway is investing more than US\$1.5 billion to construct a state-of-the-art rail facility in Southern California, the first being developed by a Class 1 railroad, the carrier claimed.

The Barstow International Gateway will be an approximately 4,500-acre new integrated rail facility on the west side of Barstow, consisting of a rail yard, intermodal facility and warehouses for transloading freight from international containers to domestic containers.

The facility will allow the direct transfer of containers from ships at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach to trains for transport through the Alameda Corridor onto the BNSF mainline up to Barstow, some 200km north-east of the port complex. Once the containers reach the Barstow International Gateway, they will be processed at the facility using clean-energy powered cargo-handling equipment, and then staged and built into trains moving east via BNSF's network across the nation. Westbound freight will similarly be processed at the facility to bring trains to the ports and other California terminals.

"By allowing for more efficient transfer of cargo directly between ships and rail, the Barstow International Gateway will maximise rail and distribution efficiency regionally and across the US supply chain and reduce truck traffic and freeway congestion in the Los Angeles Basin and the Inland Empire," said Katie Farmer, president and CEO of BNSF.

"This will play a critical role in improving fluidity throughout our rail network, moving containers off the ports quicker, and facilitating improved efficiency at our existing intermodal hubs, including those in the Midwest and Texas. The facility will also have an important positive economic impact, including the creation of new, local railroad jobs," said Farmer.

"The significance of BNSF's investment to improve the supply chain here in California cannot be overstated. Rail plays a critical role in moving goods safely and efficiently, while reducing emissions due to congestion in many of our high-traffic corridors," said Trelynd Bradley, deputy director of sustainable freight and supply chain development at the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development.

He added: "Projects like BNSF's will work to strengthen our inland local economies, such as that of Barstow in San Bernardino County. We look forward to continuing to work with projects like these, as well as others, to drive transformative investments that will enhance and elevate California's supply chain ecosystem for a more efficient and resilient tomorrow."

"BNSF's planned gateway will improve cargo velocity through our port and reduce truck traffic on our freeways," said Port of Los Angeles executive director Gene Seroka. "This project will help ensure that goods moving through the San Pedro Bay will get to consumers, businesses and manufacturers with speed and reliability."

"The Port of Long Beach welcomes BNSF's planned Barstow International Gateway in the High Desert. This project will help improve supply chain fluidity, reduce environmental impacts and enhance the competitiveness of California and the nation's largest port complex," added Mario Cordero, Port of Long Beach executive director.

Dawn Rowe, San Bernardino County supervisor for the Third District, added: "The County of San Bernardino plays a critical role in supporting the movement of goods to the rest of the country. Barstow International Gateway will be essential for modelling new and efficient ways to address supply chain issues that have impacted everyone over the past several years."

Willie A Hopkins, Jr, Barstow City manager emphasised: "This facility will bring thousands of jobs to Barstow, while increasing equity, opportunity and the economic competitiveness of the High Desert." He continued, "BNSF has been an important part of our city since its inception and on this 75th anniversary, we are proud to partner with them to ensure our success in the future."

"We appreciate the support from leaders at the state, regional and city level and look forward to building on our 140-year history in the High Desert to open the Barstow International Gateway as soon as possible," affirmed BNSF's Farmer.

www.bnsf.com



Barstow Mountain train (Photo: Business Wire)



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Water levels in the Rhine dropped to some of the lowest levels ever recorded

Best get used to low Rhine water

A long, hot and dry summer in Europe resulted in water levels in the River Rhine drop to some of the lowest levels ever recorded.

Yet, what made this year's water shortage more striking was how early it started affecting river traffic. Previous summer droughts in Europe typically saw low water levels recorded in September or October. Yet this year, the depth at the chokepoint of Kaub, near Frankfurt, fell to 32cm on Monday 15 August.

That depth was even lower than the previous level of 35cm recorded at Kaub in 2003, according to data from the German Federal Waterways and Shipping Administration (WSV). Vessels need about 1.5m of Kaub reference waterline to sail fully loaded.

Barge rates to ship fuel from Rotterdam to Basel, Switzerland, reached near all-time highs.

Such problems on the Rhine are not new, but underline the difficulties that ports face with landside logistics, said consultancy Transport Intelligence (TI).

Contargo, a Rhine intermodal terminal operator, issued a statement on 12 August concerning its river-barge operations, asserting that the water-level had fallen to such a degree that "our barges will not be able to sail without danger, and for reasons of safety we shall have to largely discontinue our navigation on the Upper and Middle Rhine".

Other barge operators made similar statements. Essentially this meant that container and other cargo-type operations that normally use the Rhine to access much of western Germany had to shift to

rail and road transport. This may have been a significant problem but was far from unprecedented, as the Rhine has experienced low water levels on several occasions over the past couple of decades.

TI noted that barges provide a useful addition to landside logistics for the ports of Rotterdam and Antwerp. Both ports have seen sustained growth in volumes over the past several decades, and this has been paralleled by the development of additional container terminals, with Maasvlakte 2 being a good example.

However, developing landside logistics is less straightforward. The roads in both Northern Belgium and Southern Netherlands are heavily used, which is hardly surprising for such a populated region. New rail capacity has been created to support higher port volumes, but this also struggles to compete for space with local passenger services. The use of barges has opened up the possibility of using large intermodal terminals on the central Rhine, such as Duisburg, bypassing the congestion of the lower-Rhine region. "If the capacity of barge traffic is constrained, it will present an obstacle to growth for both port complexes," TI stated.

Much of the congestion in container ports worldwide is due to landside container logistics systems being overwhelmed by changes in container movement patterns. However, if container shipping continues to grow, the issue of substantial new infrastructure will have to be built to support it. This will be both expensive and politically difficult in many major port locations. But, of course, it will also be a major opportunity for logistics service providers and investors.

London Gateway tops 10 million

Dubai-headquartered logistics group DP World saw its terminal at London Gateway handled its 10 millionth container in September, just nine years after the logistics hub on the doorstep of the UK capital opened for business.

The milestone illustrates the remarkable track record of growth at London Gateway, which last year transported 1.8 million TEU, an increase of almost 650 percent compared with its first full year of operation in 2014. A new £350 million fourth berth will increase capacity by a third when it opens in 2024.

Ernst Schulze, UK chief executive of DP World, said: "After the disruption of recent years, shipping lines and cargo owners are looking for capacity, reliability and growth opportunities. We are providing it, enabling customers to move goods smoothly and efficiently in and out of the UK and across their supply chains.

"Within a decade, London Gateway is likely to be handling up to 30 percent of the country's containerised trade. Its port-centric logistics park will be one of the largest in Europe, employing 12,000 people and underpinned by investment in a second rail terminal and a new fourth berth," Schulze added.

DP World claims to operate the UK's most advanced logistics hubs: two deep water ports at London Gateway and Southampton with access to freight rail terminals. By offering a choice of deepwater entry and exit points to and from UK, the logistics provider offers greater flexibility and choice for shipping lines, cargo owners and exporters, the group stated.

London Gateway handled more than 1 million TEU in six months between January and June, a record for the port. This performance contributed to a record volume of cargo in the first half of the year for DP World's ports in the UK, with a combined total of 1,937,000 TEU when factoring in throughput at Southampton.

Over the past 10 years DP World has invested £2 billion in the UK, and over the next 10 years it has earmarked a further £1 billion of investment, which will act as a catalyst for the regeneration of some of the most deprived areas in the country.

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Rupture discs & safety valves – an ideal solution

For many years emissions were an unavoidable consequence of industrial development.

An increase in consciousness of environmental issues combined with subsequent legislation means that major oil and gas companies are under pressure to cut their greenhouse gas emissions and several have responded by setting reduction targets over the coming decades.

There are several ways in which operators can work towards emissions reductions. Explosion safety and venting equipment maker Rembe's focus is on the impact the use of various safety devices can have on this target.

The first point of consideration in this regard should be the safety valves in use. Valves are an obvious place to start as no valve is 100 percent leak-tight, and this decreases every time there is an activation and the valve re-seats. In the building of new plants, it is a fairly simple solution to specify within the design of the plant a

There is a lack of understanding among engineers in industry surrounding the use of rupture discs



valve with a lower leak rate. However, existing plants are looking at substantial investments to replace older designs with newer technologies. Not a viable economical solution in most cases.

While there have been significant increases in the capabilities of safety valves, they are still not the ideal product when considering future net zero targets. No safety valve is 100 percent leak-tight and they struggle to meet the exacting requirements of legislators. An alternative solution is needed.

Secondary relief

Although rupture discs have been around for many decades, they are often considered only as secondary relief, to be used where there is a possibility that the safety valve may fail. There is a lack of understanding among engineers in industry and a number of myths surrounding the use of rupture discs.

A rupture disc is a non-reclosing device and therefore must be completely replaced when there is an activation. Nuisance downtime leads many operators to associate rupture discs as being problematic whereas if a disc is rupturing frequently there is likely a problem with the process. It is still unrecognised by many operators that when the disc performs correctly it is not the problem, but the solution.

How can a rupture disc help to get improved performance from a safety valve? Rupture discs are 100 percent leak-tight. By installing a rupture disc in front of a safety valve you get double protection and a solution which can meet emission requirements. There is no more leakage through the safety valve in normal operation and where there is an over-pressure activation, the valve reseats to seal the process once the pressure is vented.

The belief that this arrangement adds more cost onto a project has been proven to be false, in fact the opposite is the case. A correctly engineered rupture disc will help lower operating costs and increase the up-time for any plant.

In processes where there is a high concentration of corrosive media, increased temperatures and an operating pressure close to the safety valve set pressure, safety valves are pushed to their limits. Poor performance is common-place. High maintenance costs are needed to keep the valve as close to original specifications as possible, increased downtime to the production for routine valve servicing and/or repairs and higher manpower costs to cover the work scopes.

The solution of some safety valve manufacturers is a higher specification valve, more exotic materials with higher capex costs as well as increased cost of spares to maintain the valves. But if one considers a typical petrochemical plant with several hundred safety valves the capital expenditure is significant.

Isolating the valve

A rupture disc fitted upstream of the safety valve completely isolates the valve from the process. This protects the safety valve from the process which in turn reduces maintenance requirements. There is also the possibility of reducing costs by sourcing a rupture disc and holder in an exotic material and a standard safety valve. The costs of a disc and holder are usually significantly lower than having to source a high specification safety valve which is compatible with the process media.

The protection of safety valves with rupture discs has become increasingly common in recent years across several industries. However, many operators miss the opportunity to protect the safety valve fully by also isolating the valve from potential corrosion issues on the outlet of the valve.

In many cases, the valve outlet is not a separate discharge line to, but is connected with other parts of the plant via a manifold which allows process gases/vapour to enter the outlet of the valve. If there is a risk that the process media can damage the valve via the inlet, this is also the case downstream.

A rupture disc can also be used to isolate the safety valve outlet and prevent any contact with the process media. The rupture disc will also block any back pressure from entering the safety valve and remove those concerns during valve selection.

With burst sensors installed both upstream and downstream rupture discs can be monitored and connected back to the control room for system reporting across the plant, so operators know instantly which valves and discs are in a green or red state.

Another myth surrounding rupture discs is that they can leak. If the disc is to be installed as the primary safety device, that's to say, without a safety valve behind it, this can be a concern for operators looking to reduce emissions. The majority of leakages via rupture discs are caused by corrosion or damage during installation by mishandling or incorrect torquing.

Rupture disc technology has improved significantly over the years to ensure that damages caused by corrosion or incorrect handling are all but eliminated. Today's modern rupture discs no longer use

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A rupture disc fitted upstream of the safety valve completely isolates the valve from the process



mechanical scoring techniques during manufacturing which can lead to work hardening and corrosion over time. Advanced manufacturing technologies have resulted in robust rupture discs which are no longer sensitive to torque and virtually immune to damage during installation. Most spurious failures from rupture discs can be avoided by working together with the disc manufacturer to select the ideal rupture disc for the process conditions.

Overall, rupture discs can be used as a cost-effective and efficient way to create a leak-tight process and reduce emissions whether on their own or in combination with a safety valve.

www.rembe.de

X-treme cladding

Using composite materials to clad tank containers is becoming increasingly popular.

Based in Rehau, Bavaria, Lamilux Composites has been producing fibre-reinforced plastics for around 70 years.

The medium-sized company says it is the leading European producer thanks to its technologically advanced continuous production process, large manufacturing capacities and wide product range.

As tank containers last for a long time, Lamilux sees the exterior shell as the operator's business card. Cladding the container with Lamilux X-treme glass-fibre reinforced plastic permanently protects the representative shell from UV, weather and mechanical effects.

Lamilux X-treme is a fibre-reinforced composite material with the maximum possible content of reinforcement fibres in a highly elastic epoxy resin matrix, and the company says the shock-resistant material reduces maintenance and repair costs, thus reducing container downtime.

Tank containers of all kinds are subjected to very high mechanical loads during loading and transport; whether on a cargo ship or trains and trucks. But, even under the toughest conditions, the Lamilux material remains visually appealing and maximises the durability of the entire structure, the manufacture claims. The operator also saves running operating costs for his fleet, as the tank container has a significantly lower deadweight than ones with a conventional exterior shell.

Lamilux X-treme and Lamilux X-treme Carbon absorb any load and tension forces on sandwich panels with their large-scale use in a wide variety of applications, making the whole structure resistant to torsion. This becomes clear when the carbon-fibre-reinforced polymer is compared with other materials used as sandwich face sheets. It is up to 50 percent lighter with a tensile strength three or four times greater than steel or aluminium.

The low thermal expansion in the composite material ensures that large structural components can be produced without bubbles or distortions emerging in the long term. The low thermal conductivity in products and the consequent optimised insulation in cooling transport containers make powerful arguments for the material's use in refrigerated trucks, says Lamilux.



The fibre-reinforced composites are produced in a continuous, automated production process

The fibre-reinforced composites are produced in a continuous, automated production process. The separate production lines guarantee minimum delivery periods while providing consistently optimum quality which can be reproduced at any time. The X-treme product range can be manufactured in widths up to 3m while the length of sheets or rolls are tailored to customer requirements.

Thanks to the content of reinforcement fibres, equal to approximately 70 percent by weight, and perfect bonding with the high-strength epoxy resin matrix, tensile strengths can be achieved which are more than twice that of steel.

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ATC - from student idea to successful business

During his studies, Bertalan Baskay, now owner of ATC Professional Services in Budapest, Hungary, considered his future and decided he wanted to do “something with cleaning” aimed at a ‘cleaner world’.

Following contacts with transport company Van den Bosch all the pieces of the puzzle fell together; it had to be a tank cleaning.

The tank cleaning facility has been in operation now for more two years. So, now is a good moment to look back with Baskay, but also to look ahead. Gröninger Cleaning Systems account manager Ferenc Methorst has been involved in the project from the start and spoke with Baskay.

“I had the idea for a tank cleaning facility, but I really had no idea where to begin,” Bertalan said. “I came in contact with Gröninger Cleaning Systems in Rotterdam via the internet. Clearly, Gröninger could be seen as a company with experience and knowledge. After the first contact, many conversations and a lot of e-mail exchanges followed. I soon went to visit Gröninger, and the company has helped me right from the start. This gave me a better understanding of the opportunities, possibilities and requirements.”

Entrepreneurship runs in the family. Hungary is an important logistics hub between Eastern and Western Europe, and also for tank and bulk transport. So, on paper there was demand; but a good location and a business plan were needed.

The end result of the process is a successful tank



With its state-of-the-art tank cleaning, ATC is setting the standard for Hungary

cleaning site located on the Budapest ring road.

“Gröninger helped me with everything, and every day I still learn,” Baskay went on. “The good and constructive contact with Gröninger staff and customers has helped the overall development. During trips to Gröninger I was taken to many tank cleaning depots. I have seen a lot, had many training sessions and also was a cleaning operator myself for a while at OTT (Den Ouden) and Stubbe. Gröninger opened doors for me.”

However, not everything went smoothly.

“Suddenly there was the hard coronavirus lockdown. After quite some hassle with travel documents, an installation engineer from Gröninger managed to travel to Hungary. On the way he even slept in his van since hotels were closed. Typical for Gröninger, the company never abandoned me and always kept the confidence level high.

“Partly due to the lockdown, the engineer stayed here for more than two months. Together we built up the system. Gröninger software

engineers ‘remotely’ carried out the commissioning, and contacts with tank cleaning managers from the Netherlands continued. Without Gröninger’s knowledge network, the progress would have been slower or perhaps I would not have been successful at all.”

The tank cleaning in Budapest consists of a food bay, a chemical bay and an IBC cleaning facility. There are also six steaming points. With its state-of-the-art tank cleaning, ATC is setting the standard for cleaning in Hungary. Currently on average 40 tankers and 16 IBCs are cleaned each day.

A modern water treatment system has been installed in Budapest as well. Due to the many years of co-operation between Gröninger and partner Aaqua, the systems and controls connect seamlessly. There are several influent tanks, a physical purification, biological purification and an effluent tank.

Due to the growing number of cleanings, expansion of the wastewater treatment plant has started and there are also plans to expand the cleaning plant.

Baskay concludes: “I am grateful that Gröninger has helped up to where I am today. Together with Gröninger, I will continue to work with ATC towards a cleaner world. Our collaboration has a solid foundation.”

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US Container expands in GA, NJ

Two new projects aim to enable US Container Depot to grow and better protect customers’ tank containers.

In Savannah, Georgia, the container services company recently secured two additional properties totalling some five acres on Sonny Perdue Drive, close to its current four-acre facility, giving it a total of nine acres in the region.

Meanwhile, in Newark, New Jersey, the company is improving its yard through multiple phases, beginning with the construction of a fully enclosed loaded container pad for safer storage and containment.

“We are excited to share these big steps forward for US Container, and look forward to continuing to grow with in all three of our current markets: New York/New Jersey; Savannah; and Jacksonville, Florida,” the company said in a customer notice.

The Savannah project includes a two-acre yard that will be used for tractor and chassis staging and parking, and a three-acre yard for empty container storage, and an ISO tank service centre for maintenance and repair. Together with the company’s existing four-acre yard for loaded and empty container storage and heating, US Container expects to increase storage capacity by 1,350 containers, bringing total capacity in Savannah to around 2,250 containers, the company said.

US Container explained that it currently stores more than 900 containers but found it had no space left to support the needs of customers. The company has worked with a real estate advisor over the past decade. He found two new sites being developed just down the street from its current facility. While the sites are not all connected, they are within a short distance of each other and will help US Container to spread out truck traffic.

In Newark, Phase 1 of the yard improvement project includes erecting a 9,614 sq ft, fully enclosed loaded container pad for secondary containment, eliminating vehicle traffic in the

storage and containment area.

The project was made possible by US Container’s previous purchase of multiple reach stackers, allowing it to eliminate vehicle entry- and exit-ways. Along with protecting the containers from any yard traffic, the new 38-by-253 ft concrete slab will support containers inside a 1 ft high wall.

The reach stackers allow the company to stack four containers per column by being able to reach over the first row to pick up a container in the second row. By having access from both sides, US Container can stack four rows of containers within the containment area. Because the reach stackers work outside the containment area, a container inside the area is protected from all vehicle traffic, including the stackers.

Phase 2 involves installing a product transfer pad and containment area, the third phase involves expanding the company’s containment and safety area to allow for greater loaded storage, and the fourth phase includes laying a foundation for an improved pressure test and container testing facility at its Joseph Street location.

www.uscontainerdepot.com



The Savannah and Newark projects will enable US Container Depot to expand and offer more services to clients



Apax Funds acquired Boasso in 2015 as part of its purchase of Quality Distribution

KKR buys Boasso from Apax Funds

Apax Partners is selling its majority interest in international tank depot firm Boasso Global, Inc to asset management outfit KKR.

KKR is making the investment in Boasso through its KKR Global Infrastructure Investors IV fund, which focuses on infrastructure investments in North America and Western Europe. Financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Apax Funds acquired Boasso in 2015 as part of its purchase of Quality Distribution. In 2021, Quality Distribution sold its Quality Carriers bulk liquid chemical transport business to CSX Corporation. As a result of that transaction, Boasso became a standalone entity.

Boasso runs a network of 34 depots comprising 17 in North America, eight in the United Kingdom, and nine in Continental Europe. In the past year, Boasso has bought UK-firm PM Rees & Sons and

Netherlands-based Frans de Wit.

The company is a Responsible Care certified member within the American Chemistry Council.

The company's full range of ISO tank transport and depot services are trusted by a diverse group of long-term customers. Under the Apax Funds' ownership, Boasso has significant organic growth and acquisitions. The company has expanded its geographic footprint, including entering the UK and European markets.

Joe Troy, chairman & CEO of Boasso, commented: "It has been a privilege to work with Apax, whose guidance and support have helped Boasso achieve significant growth. As we look ahead, we are excited about the new opportunities before us as we continue to expand our global footprint and provide our customers with the outstanding service offerings they have come to expect. We also look

forward to beginning our new strategic partnership with KKR."

Ashish Karandikar, partner at Apax, said: "We are very proud of what the Boasso team has accomplished over the past seven years, advancing the company's record of excellence and executing a well-defined strategy. It has been a pleasure to work with Boasso's experienced management team and we wish them nothing but success in the future."

Since establishing its global infrastructure strategy in 2008, KKR has been one of the most active infrastructure investors with a team of more than 75 investment professionals across eight countries in the US, Europe and Asia Pacific. The infrastructure team oversees approximately US\$49 billion in assets and has made over 65 investments across a range of sub-sectors and geographies.

"Boasso uses its network of assets to provide

essential services to operators of ISO tanks, facilitating the efficient and safe flow of chemical and food grade products that are critical to the global economy," said Dash Lane, a partner on KKR's infrastructure team. "We are very excited to begin working with Joe and the rest of the Boasso team. Our patient, long-term oriented capital is well positioned to support Boasso's network of facilities, its employees and its customers in their next phase of growth."

Apax Partners and Boasso were advised by Kirkland & Ellis, LLP as legal counsel and by lead financial advisor Harris Williams; JP Morgan Securities also provided financial advice. KKR was advised by Simpson Thacher & Bartlett as legal counsel and Jefferies as financial advisor.

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Schütz acquires Remi Tack

After decades of working together as partners, Schütz is acquiring Belgian reconditioner Remi Tack.

The transaction will support the development of the circular economy in the region to drive sustainability and improvement in the service levels for the company's customers.

Remi Tack, based in Estaimpuis, was founded in 1999 and is one of the leading companies in the reconditioning industry in Benelux. The family-run company reconditions returned packaging in extensive processes in compliance with the latest environmental, safety and quality standards. In its operations, Remi Tack focuses on the environment and sustainability: for example, the company's use of fresh process water has been reduced by more than 44 percent by using recycled, filtered process water in the initial steps of the washing processes.

Remi Tack's trailer fleet includes mega trailers with a capacity of 68 IBCs instead of 52 units in a standard trailer and the roof is covered with solar panels.

Schütz and Remi Tack have a long-standing partnership, and the acquisition creates synergies for both companies and provides customers with an even greater service depth.

"We are grateful for the confidence and faith placed in us by the owner Tom Tack and his management team," said Schütz CEO Roland Strassburger. "The acquisition enables us to expand the portfolio of services for our customers in the Benelux region, and sees us moving even closer to our customers and, together with the Remi Tack team, we are further strengthening our commitment to a sustainable circular economy."

Tom Tack, owner of Remi Tack, added: "From our many years of working together as partners, we know that Remi Tack is in excellent hands with Schütz. The philosophies of our two family businesses are a perfect match. We know that Schütz will use its significant innovative strength to drive the further development of our industrial packaging product range and offer an even wider range of reprocessing and recycling services."



Buying Remi Tack will support the development of the circular economy in the region

A wealth of information

Schütz's Info-ID gives IBC customers and users direct access to additional product and application-specific information via a QR code.

Traceability and clear identification of packaging materials are essential features, particularly when transporting and storing chemicals, hazardous substances or sensitive goods such as foods.

Schütz already has a labelling system that makes it easy to identify

the respective packaging material. Now the company is going a step further: with the new Info-ID, IBC customers and users have direct access to additional product-specific information that can be accessed by scanning a QR code.

The packaging company's product range includes a large selection of types, equipment variants and additional components. An individual label located on the label plate of each IBC provides information about the article number of the packaging product, the container type, the volume and the order number. In addition, users are given information about the production date and where the IBC was manufactured. Thanks to this information, which can be accessed by scanning the barcode, the packaging can be clearly identified.

Now, even more product and application-specific information can be accessed. Users can scan the Schütz Info-ID with any internet-enabled mobile device and are automatically directed to the individual product page on www.schuetz-id.info. Alternatively, this page can also be accessed manually by entering the alphanumeric code provided in plain text under the QR code of the ID on the website www.schuetz-id.info.

Additional benefits include application notes, which provide important information on handling and the safety of the packaging in the form of guides and videos. The IBC Handling Guide is also a useful reference resource which provides answers to all important questions about IBC handling; it can be ordered through the respective product page.

www.schuetz.net



The new Schütz Info-ID gives IBC customers and users direct access to additional product and application-specific information via a QR code

Mauser brands return programme

Mauser Packaging Solutions has branded its global collection programme as 'Recover Syst-M'.

For more than 50 years, Mauser Packaging Solutions has collected empty industrial packaging from companies around the world. The new name and logo capture the essence of the programme while emphasising its key strengths – giving IBCs and drums a second life and diverting waste from landfills, the company said.

"Every year, Mauser Packaging Solutions gives tens of millions of used IBCs and plastic and steel drums around the world a new life. Having a brand name that represents this programme, unites us all around our common goal of extending the life cycle of packaging and supporting the circular economy," said Mark Burgess, CEO of Mauser.

Recover Syst-M serves as the first step in the reconditioning process. Reconditioned IBCs and drums provide a variety of benefits including carbon emission savings, preservation of natural resources, and a reduction of waste – all while meeting the highest environmental and quality standards.

The Mauser team can develop a unique collection solution to meet each business need.

www.mauserpackaging.com



Mauser's Recover Syst-M serves as the first step in the reconditioning process



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Packem, Umasree in rPET JV

After announcing investments to become the first Brazilian company to produce 100 percent sustainable FIBCs made of PET/PCR (rPET), Packem has signed a joint venture with Umasree Texplast to build a second production unit for PET bags, this time in India.

"This new facility in Asia will take Packem to global markets that are already served today by Umasree, in PP bags, especially the United States, Canada and Europe," said Eduardo Santos Neto, CEO of Packem. "We have been Umasree's business partners for over 10 years and it was this relationship of trust that enabled the joint-venture and the joint investment of US\$15 million in the new facility, being 51 percent Packem and 49 percent Umasree."

The transaction was assisted by MNSS Advisors, which acted as financial, legal and tax advisor to Umasree, and by law firm Trilegal, which handled Packem's interests.

The future PET/PCR big bag facility is expected to create about 700 new jobs in India, which is the largest producer and exporter of big bags in the world. "Our rPET big bag will bring great environmental and social benefits to India, in addition to direct jobs. It is estimated that every ton of recycled plastic will create three local jobs for the collection and recycling industry. In

addition, our project will create local demand for post-consumer PET bottles,

with positive impact for oceans, rivers and the environment in general," points

out Marcos Spitzner Filho, CFO of Packem.

Umasree's CEO Punit Gopalka said he chose Packem because it is a young, energetic company with a future vision. In addition, he highlighted India as a strategic location to serve the global market, in which it has been operating since 2005 and, for the first time, with a 100 percent recycled and recyclable product.

Gopalka sees a lot of potential in the new product. "End users and governments are pressuring manufacturers to identify a new product that is environmentally sustainable," he pointed out. The global FIBC market is led by five countries - India, China, Vietnam, Turkey and Mexico - which in 2021 exported 250 million units, with India accounting for 50 percent of that volume.



Umasree has been providing customised FIBCs for more than 15 years

"We predict that at least 2 percent of the global big bag market will be able to replace the polypropylene product immediately with PET/PCR big bags and that this replacement will increase over the years," Umasree's CEO reckoned.

According to Packem, this is the greatest innovation of recent years in the segment of packaging for agriculture. "Packem's goal is to develop the circular economy of packaging for the sector. These are the first 100 percent bag-to-bag projects in the world and will see the FIBCs used in the field processed and recycled to be made into big bags again. We will reuse 100 percent of the rPET big bags and this clearly demonstrates our commitment to eliminate virgin plastic from agribusiness and industry, using recycled plastic taken from farms and the environment as a whole," highlighted Spitzner Filho.



Packem's goal is to develop the circular economy of packaging for the agricultural sector

The special technology for the production of high performance fabrics from polyester/PET PCR is exclusive to Austrian machine manufacturer Starlinger. Packem's first sustainable big bag facility is located in Aurora (State of Santa Catarina), next to its current headquarters, with installed capacity to produce 6.4 million units of big bags a year.

Packem produces some 6 million big bags a year. With the rPET project, it will create more than 400 new direct jobs.

Based in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, Umasree has been providing customised FIBCs for more than 15 years. It produces 3.5 million units each year.

www.packem.com.br
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Naik Londono and David Baur, co-founders and co-CEOs of Aeler

Aeler unveils smart, composite for more payload

Swiss logistics technology firm Aeler is launching its new generation container at Intermodal Europe 2022.

The company says the new container drastically reduces both operational costs and CO2 emissions, thanks to the widespread use of composites and advanced IoT systems. A particular feature is extra payload for bulk liquids in flexitanks.

Noting that the steel container which enabled the rise of the global economy and through which 80 percent of the world's goods transit, is the basically same now as it was 60 years ago, co-CEO David Baur said: "The logistics industry is ripe for a new technological breakthrough. With the Aeler container, we are reworking the very foundations of this trillion-dollar industry."

Co-CEO Naik Londono added: "The support we're receiving from both investors and customers validates Aeler's transformational approach to what's now becoming a fast-changing market."

The Unit One container is light, robust, insulated, 'smart' and can hold more payload.

Key benefits include a 20 percent reduction in CO2 emissions thanks to its additional payload and aerodynamic design, and it is said to have 11 percent more storage volume thanks to the container's flat inside walls. The additional space can be as much as 17 percent for cargo in flexitanks, the designers claim.

The container is also claimed to have better structural insulation

which should result in significant reductions in temperature variations. In this way, it offers "a real alternative to 'reefers' for (temperature) sensitive goods".

Fitting time and costs needed to insulate or reinforce traditional containers are reduced or even eliminated, and the Unit One has integrated visibility technology that allows stakeholders of a container and its contents to know where and 'how' it is at all times, eg, humidity, temperature, pressure, door-opening, shocks.

To achieve this lighter, yet stronger container, Aeler partnered with top universities such as EPFL's Labs which developed the composite for Solar Impulse, the solar aircraft that circumnavigated the globe without fuel in 2016.

The Aeler container has been CSC certified, and design patents are pending.

Unit One is offered in conjunction with Aeler's Container As A Service (CAAS) which gives customers simple, flexible and worry-free access, even for short periods of time or one-way trips.

Customers just pick up their containers at an Aeler depot, use and track them via the company's Control Tower platform. When finished, they simply return them to an Aeler depot, and Aeler takes care of the rest.

www.aeler.com

BT Pack boosts recycling

France-based BT Pack has been offering a recycling service for its container liners to customers all around Europe since 2020.

Now the company has stepped up the programme to offer collection onsite and recycling of used PE liners either to make different products or fabricate new liners from recycled material.

The company says it is currently able to offer liners with up to 50 percent recycled material, so allowing customers to improve their carbon footprint. The recycling is carried out within Europe which also supports the carbon footprint rating.

For pharma shipments, BT Pack is supplying thermal insulating liners that can be fitted into any sea container. The company accepts that the obvious choice for such shipments will ISO reefer containers. However, it argues that using a thermal liner in a standard dry container entails a fraction of the cost of hiring a reefer unit. BT Pack also supplies the same for pallets.

Within the group, container liners account for the biggest share of production in terms of manufactured units and volumes are growing each year.

BT Pack supplies three main liner fabrics, PE film, woven PP, and woven PE, under virgin or foodgrade quality, and from 10ft containers up to 53ft sizes as well as truck size for any granule and powder to be shipped in bulk.

With some recent acquisitions the firm is now producing some of its own raw material, such as PE and PP film, which contribute both to growth and to closer quality control of the material used.

www.bt-pack.com



Using a thermal liner entails a fraction of the cost of using a reefer container, says BT Pack

Bertling Logistics updates offsetting projects

Along with its offsetting partner ClimatePartner, Bertling Logistics has announced two new projects as part of its offsetting portfolio. Bertling clients can choose from these for emissions compensation.

In Uganda, the majority of the population does not have access to clean cooking facilities. As a result, many people cook over open fires using self-collected wood which stresses the environment as well as people's health.

ClimatePartner offers has a carbon offset project that provides energy-efficient biomass cookstoves to communities all over the country. These improved cookstoves use considerably less fuel and therefore reduce the amount of air pollution and environmental degradation while saving greenhouse gas emissions.

In Indonesia, tropical swamp forests belong to the world's most efficient carbon sinks. In the project area on the island of Borneo, this type of forest has another unique function: it is one of the two remaining habitats for wild orangutans. Not only orangutans, but countless other animal and plant species are severely affected by ongoing deforestation, driven by the palm oil industry. At the same time, the clearing of the swamp forest releases CO2 as well as large amounts of the particularly climate-damaging gas methane.

The offsetting project protects 64,000 ha of rainforest by offering people in the region alternative sources of income to illegal deforestation. For example, they work on community farms for controlled rubber harvesting. The project contributes to the preservation of Borneo's high biodiversity with up to 1,000 plant and animal species per square kilometre.

www.bertling.com

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PBLA gets together in Madrid

The Premier Bulk Liquids Alliance (PBLA) had a successful reunion in Madrid on 20-22 September.

The annual get together took place in Madrid's emblematic Gran Vía and got underway with a welcome rooftop cocktail for all participants.

To kick off the first and second day, industry related presentations were made to all attendees. These included USA PBLA member OEC Liquid Logistics Solutions followed by Swiss smart container creators AELER with a specific focus on its suitability for flexitanks supported by case studies.

Then the International Olive Council, which is headquartered in Madrid, presented a summary of the trends and developments in the global olive oil trade.

The final presentation was by Valencian start-up Navlandis, presenting its folding 20ft container, the Z-box, and recent trials carried out in Germany with flexitanks.

Some 400 meetings then ensued over the following two days between 50 ISO tank and flexitank logistics specialists representing 40 countries from around the world.

President and co-founder Jason Wright highlighted "two-thirds of attendees were new members since the last in-person edition three years ago and had never met face-to-face before although they had been communicating. This created a very special atmosphere with a unique spectrum of specialists discussing bulk liquid logistics and how to consolidate and increase their business in this field."

There has been an increased number of inquiries from independent ISO tank operators and agents seeing the need to be better connected in this specialist field, and this is where PBLA membership has gained traction particularly in the past year. Wright said "this is proof, as our membership repeatedly confirmed in Madrid, that the one stop shop bulk liquid service offering is increasingly a winning formula, as demand to provide reliable and independent logistics services for ISO tanks and flexitanks remains strong".

Due to the success of the event and popular demand from PBLA attendees, the next one is being planned for the second half of May next year in a location yet to be disclosed.



Two-thirds of attendees were new members since the last in-person event three years ago

World Bulk Wine

In a bid to give the network and its members increased visibility in the global bulk wine trade, PBLA has reached a partnership agreement with the WBWE which is held every November in Amsterdam.

As a result of this agreement, PBLA will have its first booth at this year's event and will be joined by members specialising in bulk wine logistics to attend to bulk wine shippers, buyers, traders, and brokers alike. The agreement extends to the sister event World Olive Oil Exhibition held annually in Madrid at which PBLA will also be present.

Wright stated: "Having been the very first logistics sponsor, with a previous employer, at the first editions of WBWE and WOEE, it is particularly thrilling for me to enter this partnership now with both exhibitions. Wine and olive oil are two key premium products that are increasingly carried in bulk."

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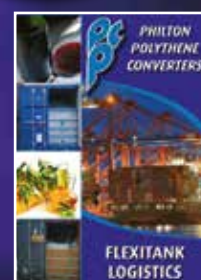


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H Essers wins award for Chevron services



The Ghent warehouse location has optimal accessibility to large cities, surrounding ports and the European hinterland

H Essers has worked with Chevron for more than 20 years now.

What once started with a simple warehousing solution in Boom has since developed into an impressive multi-customer warehousing site near Port of Ghent.

In 1997, H Essers set up a warehouse location in Boom for Chevron. As the supply chain changed over the years, the two partners went in search of a new location with optimum facilities and good accessibility. "This search led us to a new, trimodal warehousing site in Ghent," said Tom Smekens, operations manager. "Chevron has been overseeing operations from its own part of our mega-site since 2019. From here it can enjoy access to the inland shipping and rail terminal and to our one-stop-shop concept."

The latter is important because the long collaboration with Chevron goes further than just warehousing. "We manage various activities for Chevron, including liquid bulk and packed transport and customs and forwarding support," added chemicals industry lead Staf Vandenbosch. "Our all-in service aims to simplify our client's supply chains. Looking at the entire logistics process is an important part of our collaboration with Chevron. After all, the chemical supply chain poses a lot of challenges. We've carried out several optimisation projects in close consultation with Chevron, ranging from IT implementations and pick-and-pack solutions to value-added services such as drum repacking. Listening closely to the client and drafting a detailed plan according to their needs lays the foundation for a strong and sustainable relationship."

3PL warehouse

The icing on the cake was the 3PL Warehouse Contractor OE Award, which is reserved for external logistics providers with outstanding services. This year's award went to H Essers' team in Ghent.

"We won bronze for our work for Chevron," explained Smekens. "In addition to providing incident-free warehousing services, we also excelled in inventory management, accurate accounting and on-time deliveries. We go above and beyond for all our clients, but recognition like this adds even more incentive to excel."

Geert Tavernier, manager SC operations Europe at Chevron, confirmed the success and the energy company's satisfaction with the services provided by H Essers in Ghent.

"A crowning achievement of the work this team has been doing for us for many years," he said. "With the breadth of our activities worldwide, we are very pleased with the many opportunities H Essers offers us here. The warehousing and value-added services are secure and correct, and thanks to the customer-oriented approach, we can always count on a flexible service. The team is very proactive."

Expansion

The Ghent team can apply its experience to other clients as well. The site can be expanded in the future for the benefit of both new and existing clients. H Essers can expand its warehousing capacity as needed, which includes value-added services such as filling and drumming. The fact that the location is trimodal makes it easier to organise warehousing and inbound and outbound traffic in a sustainable and efficient way. Accessibility to large cities, surrounding ports and the European hinterland is optimal, so H Essers believes customers in the chemical sector can count on an all-in-one logistics hub, including expansion space and personalised services on site.

Kohlpaintner joins VCI presidium

Brenntag CEO Dr Christian Kohlpaintner has been elected to the presidium of the German chemical association VCI.

The general meeting voted on 29 September to elect him as a member of the trade association's governing body.

Kohlpaintner said: "I would like to thank the members of the VCI at the general meeting for the vote of confidence. As a representative of Brenntag, I look forward to bringing the chemical distribution perspective to the work of the association to an even greater extent and to representing the interests of our industry in these challenging times together with my colleagues on the presidium."

VCI managing director Dr Wolfgang Grosse Entrup added: "With the new and the established board members, the VCI remains well-positioned as a leading trade association and an effective industrial policy player in Berlin and Brussels. As the strong voice of the industry, we will continue to demand action and to point out solutions to politicians."

"For us, everything is at stake now: the future of our industrial location and sustainable transformation. I am delighted that Christian Kohlpaintner is actively supporting us on our way."

www.brenntag.com

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world's leading chemical logistics providers. Now, our global team of 4,600 team players is ready to shape the future of our industry – are you ready to move to the next level with us?



Bluechain lands in UK

A leading construction materials supplier has become the first UK customer for Bluechain, a fintech start-up that claims to transform the traditional payments and receivables process.

By using Bluechain, Aggregate Industries will be able to digitise the billing, collections and reconciliation process with its small and medium sized customers (SMEs).

Bluechain sees the UK as a strategic market for its current growth objectives and it plans to expand aggressively in the country, aiming to reach 100,000 new customers by the end of its first year. With other expansions already in the works, including Europe and Africa, Bluechain has its sights set on landing large businesses and SME customers across a range of sectors including utilities, wholesale, construction and professional services.

The UK expansion follows a successful Australian launch in the

summer of 2020 focused on supporting SMEs. Bluechain has a growing number of customers and partners, including NRS Couriers, Rabbithole Café, Madcrew Wealth and Tuber.

The Request to Pay (RtP) company offers its platform to connect businesses and customers in real-time, transforming the biller and payer experience and taking the reactive 'black hole' of invoicing into "an insightful and connected mutually beneficial relationship".

Bluechain's system puts control in the hands of the payee. Customers can schedule bills at a date that aligns with their payday and split payments into smaller amounts, pay in full or query their bill.

Businesses receive complete transparency on invoice status with live data to know when they will get paid. It also eliminates security risks as payment data is never in transit and verified billers no longer need to share risky text payment links.

Tim Annis, UK managing director at Bluechain, said: "Businesses such as Aggregate Industries and their customers are the backbone of the UK economy and this launch into the UK market is a great opportunity for Bluechain to help transform the payments experience particularly for SMEs."

"Bluechain's platform takes businesses one step closer to their customers, and we are thrilled at the opportunities that this is bringing for UK customers. It's great to be able to work with a partner like Aggregate Industries as we thrive together in delivering the best in class customer experience for billing and collections."

Phil Rice, head of credit at Aggregate Industries, added: "Aggregate Industries and the broader Holcim Group are always looking for new ways to support and improve the customer experience. Through our open innovation platform, Holcim MAQER, we identify and partner with start-ups delivering the most impactful solutions that solve challenges for our customers and our own teams. Bluechain presents an opportunity to create a closer level of customer engagement. The focus on how we can help them become more digitally enabled while at the same time supporting the cost-to-service receivables makes it a win-win. Bluechain's end-to-end approach presents just such a solution."

www.bluechain.com



Acquiring Meyer Agrarlogistik fits into Nijhof-Wassink's strategy to increase its transport for the compound feed industry

Nijhof-Wassink adds to feed business

Since the start of October, the activities of Landhandel Meyer's logistics division in Bösel, Germany, have been taken over by Nijhof-Wassink's Feed Logistics division.

The fleet of 10 truck-trailer combinations, and 13 employees, continue under the name Meyer Agrarlogistik.

"This acquisition fits into Nijhof-Wassink's strategy to increase its transport for the compound feed industry, and to build an even stronger international and regional presence," said Martin Schoemaker, feed logistics managing director at Nijhof-Wassink. "It's a great opportunity for both parties to join forces and be able to offer our customers enhanced flexibility, service and efficiency."

Ralf Meyer, the previous owner, remains associated with the company in a commercial capacity.

Using more than 400 truck-trailer combinations on a daily basis, Nijhof-Wassink's feed logistics division handles the bulk transport of dry raw materials and additives for the production of animal feed, such as proteins, milk powder, whey powder and vitamins, and distributes compartmentalised transport for animal feeds, fertilisers and bagged goods from the manufacturers to agricultural customers.

www.nijhof-wassink.com



By using Bluechain, Aggregate Industries will be able to digitise the billing, collections and reconciliation process with its SME customers





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WHS takes next step in sustainability

Fourth-party logistics (4PL) service provider WHS Logistics has entered into a new partnership with BigMile, a software supplier for calculating and analysing transport-related CO2 emissions.

"As a control tower, we are the link pin between shippers, carriers and producers in the liquid bulk supply chain. Because we are at the heart of the supply chain, we are able to provide targeted advice about possible reductions in the carbon footprint," explained Bas Pilon, general manager of WHS.

The 4PL supports customers with a 'one-stop-shop' concept covering the total supply chain process for liquid bulk transport in Europe. It offers services for procurement, planning, execution, invoicing, health & safety and data analysis, all with a focus on liquid bulk, which includes food, feed and bulk commodities. WHS works with hundreds of partners, from shippers and carriers to end customers.

The company has now chosen to work with BigMile Carbon Analytics to gain reliable CO2 calculations based on the internationally acknowledged GLEC framework. "Many of our clients are multinationals. As of 2023, these organisations will have to report on their environmental and social impact and start paying CO2 taxes. In fact, more and more clients and end customers are already asking us for CO2 reports. Thanks to BigMile, we are prepared for this," Pilon continued.

The fact that WHS will be providing insights into the CO2 emissions of transport movements offers advantages for multiple parties, Pilon added.



WHS has chosen to work with BigMile Carbon Analytics to gain reliable CO2 calculations based on the GLEC framework

"Besides getting visibility into our own total carbon footprint, we can also see which lanes are highly polluting. We can then use this information to help our partners – eg, customers and carriers – to make improvements. In order to reduce emissions optimally and look for alternatives, we need to consider this triangle. Not only all three parties – customers, carriers and ourselves – but also the end customers will benefit from this."

So why did WHS select BigMile? "Because we do a lot of work for multinationals, we felt it was very important to work with a party that is accredited according to the GLEC method. This is a globally recognised methodology for measuring greenhouse gas emissions from different modes of transport," said Pilon.

Sven Poot, business development manager at BigMile, commented: "WHS Logistics can achieve synergy benefits by combining different customers' transport flows. Thanks to BigMile's interactive platform, WHS now also has insight into the related CO2 emissions so that this can also be a factor when choosing transport, in addition to cost and delivery time. This can be an extra stimulus for a modal shift or another more sustainable solution. In practice, it will become increasingly clear that sustainability and efficiency often go hand in hand."

www.hs-group.eu

Change at the top for Abbey Logistics

The UK's largest food tanker business, Abbey Logistics, has announced that long serving CEO Steve Granite has stepped down from his role as CEO to take up a new position as executive chairman.

Granite joined the business as a 15-year-old apprentice in 1995 and held various positions including finance director, before being named successor to majority shareholder Stephen Lucy, in 2009 as managing director. During that period, Granite grew revenues from £18 million in 2009 to close to £70 million in its latest year ending June 2022.

In 2016 he led a management buy-out from the Lucy family, backed by NorthEdge Capital and has steered the company to record revenues and profits in recent years. Since 2020, Granite has reduced his time in Abbey to enable him to focus time on another investment he holds outside of the logistics sector. This led to the appointment of the existing group managing director David Patten



Abbey Logistics says it is now the UK's largest food tanker business



Steve Granite has steered Abbey Logistics to record revenues and profits in recent years

as successor.

As part of the changes, existing non-executive chairman Julian Maturi will move to a non-executive director role and Josette Saville will become a statutory director in her existing role as sales director.

Granite said: "Now that we have a robust, experienced, and well-balanced management team in place, I'm able to move into this new role as executive chairman. Moving forward I will spend more of my time nurturing the leadership team, being an ambassador for the company, especially in attracting more young people into the sector and supporting the overall strategic planning and execution of the business."

"Dave and his team have shown over the past two years that they can lead the day to day running of the business successfully and this is seen in consistent financial and customer service results. I am proud of what we have achieved at Abbey since taking over as managing director in 2009 then CEO in 2016 and very much look forward to this next chapter in my new role, supporting the board and the wider management team.

"For the past few years, the business has been back to profitability and is healthy and ready for further growth towards £100m sales."

www.abbeylogisticsgroup.com

Overcoming the pressures of external forces on our supply chain

Recent turbulent events have had a large impact on the supply chain. Covid, extreme climate events, and Brexit, among many others, have resulted in distinct issues which Suttons International, and other logistics companies, have had to adapt to overcome.

These issues add complexity to the supply chain and impact the basic principle of what we and many other businesses do every day, which is to move bulk chemicals from A to B using various different elements of an intermodal supply chain, such as road, rail, or sea.

Drivers are a crucial element of the chemical logistics supply chain. They are highly trained and utilise a specialised skillset to safely complete the first and last steps of any delivery at customer plants either loading or discharging tanks.

The coronavirus pandemic, of which we are still feeling the effects in all areas of society, has had a major impact on driver availability. This issue had been building across the entire haulage community for many years but was brought to a head with the onset of the pandemic.

A reduction in capacity across all sectors of the driver population has occurred due to driving no longer being seen as a job of choice within the workforce. This has been compounded by the impact of covid, which saw many existing drivers move out of the chemical industry and into consumer facing driving roles such as home delivery.

Recruiting new drivers into the industry has been a challenge. Increasing driver wages is the most obvious first step that most hauliers took. At Suttons we went above and beyond that by improving working conditions for our drivers too.

We have invested in our fleet to bring the latest models of Volvo FH trucks, which provide unparalleled levels of comfort for drivers on nights out, we have also introduced in cab technology such as Microlise drive tabs, which streamlines the drivers job, letting them focus on the road and making deliveries.

Another major issue the entire logistics industry is currently facing is new customs requirements that have been introduced following Brexit.

The introduction of customs requirements for products traveling between the EU and the UK has led to additional transit times across the industry. Traditionally fast movements between Europe

and the UK, which usually take under 4 to 5 days, have increased to upwards of over 7 days due to the new measures and protocols, which require more time and effort from operators and planners to address.

The additional transit times have caused capacity issues in terminals, which are rapidly filling up due to the longer clearing time for tanks and containers. This has naturally led to a backlog of tank availability across the entire supply chain.

Suttons introduced a number of new processes and ways of working, including the recruitment of an entirely new customs team, to support our operations and planning teams with the complex requirements of the new measures.

We have also been pro-active in sourcing additional storage capacity outside of busy terminals and port areas to address the extended transit times. Finally, we have been offering our customers, who are experiencing plant shutdowns as a result of the delays at ports and terminals, alternative storage solutions, to help offset disruption to their operation.

While there was no easy solution to the increased hurdles that Brexit introduced, by pro-actively introducing a new team of customs agents into the business, sourcing additional storage spaces in the event of backlogs at ports, and offering our customers access to our tanks in the event of emergency plant shutdowns, we have mitigated the brunt of the problems caused by Brexit, and have adapted to the new normal.

Volatile weather has always been a hurdle for international logistics and shipping, however over the recent years this has become more and more prevalent, as we all have seen.

Storms surges and high winds force the closure of terminals throughout the supply chain and can have a knock-on impact on vessel sailing schedules as there are delays in and out of ports. On the opposite end of the spectrum, warmer climates can result in lower water levels on inland waterways such as the Rhine, which prevents barges from sailing and in turn increases the demand on rail networks, thus creating capacity constraints.

At times these are very much out of anyone's control, and naturally will impact not just the chemical supply chain, but the wider logistics industry as a whole.



www.suttonsgroup.com

The key for our business to offset any disruptions caused by unpredictable weather is to be as knowledgeable and informed as possible on the situation from our suppliers and be effective in our communication to our customers.

We maintain an agile and flexible approach so that when we receive information on potential delays, we can predict what the impact will be, and adjust our network accordingly to allow us to continue to deliver a service to our customers.

Our strength is the adaptability of our teams in being flexible in our approach. Our procurement team seeks out all available transport solutions, and our sales teams are quick to react to price changes to ensure our customers do not receive added charges.

The key to overcoming factors outside our control, and to continuously provide great customer service is adaptability and communication. Not only with our customers, but internally, with colleagues and drivers, and externally with our partners and suppliers in the supply chain.

We can learn from our customers, suppliers, and by communicating effectively with each other we can see where we can expect to see delays or a drop off in service levels. This communication throughout the supply chain helps everyone adapt and accommodate to the changes to the expected order schedule.

Smoother ports for lower emissions

Optimising or shifting road traffic to other modes of transport in port-areas can have a major impact on CO2 emissions in ports.

A smooth and efficient flow of daily port-related traffic, such as the clearance of goods, is also an important instrument to reduce emissions in ports, especially with the limitations for pollutants becoming stricter.

Streamlining such flows through bundling clearance activities in border inspection posts is also an important instrument, as it helps prevent unnecessary traffic in port-areas.

These were some of the results from the final Smooth Ports conference, held in Brussels.

The Smooth Ports project started in 2019 and focused on identifying measures and instruments to reduce CO2 emissions in ports. For this purpose, the Ministry of Economy and Innovation of the Free and Hanseatic State of Hamburg, the Port Authority Network Northern Tyrrhenian Sea, the Port of Nantes-Saint-Nazaire Authority, the Municipality of Monfalcone, the Regional Administration Varna, and Port of Hamburg Marketing, joined forces.

Ships also play a significant role as polluters. Here,



Smooth Ports designates measures to reduce CO2 emissions from daily port-related traffic

too, Smooth Ports was able to identify a number of instruments to reduce emissions to a large extent. The provision of alternative fuels is an important factor in reducing emissions in ports. Additionally, one of the final conclusions was that the provision of onshore power supply (OPS) is becoming more important for the reduction of emissions in ports and in respect of upcoming legislation.

This was also underlined during a panel discussion with high-level stakeholders from the European Commission, DG Mobility and Transport, Unit Ports

& Inland Navigation (DG MOVE), European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO), and the Hamburg Port Authority (HPA) that was moderated by the Brussels Bureau of the business newspaper 'Handelsblatt'.

HPA provided practical examples of what environmentally sensitive traffic management measures can be taken by ports when it comes to the optimisation of truck flows in the ports. One of the examples was 'Mozart' – traffic management with traffic signal control using quantum-inspired optimisation. The stakeholders from DG MOVE and ESPO addressed legislation and how the challenges can be tackled in Europe to fulfil the goals.

Shore power

The discussion also addressed the impending need to provide shore power to ships in ports. This is one of many issues where the chicken-and-egg problem is prevalent. This type of problem is due to barriers and drivers related to, for example, technology and operations, as well as institutional-, economic-, or stakeholder-related elements. From a port perspective, technical, policy and legislative, and business-related elements are examples.

With the Green Deal and stakeholder engagement in mind, of course the environmental aspect is important too. Legislation requires OPS to be offered starting from 2025, with further offerings by 2030. This is outlined in the Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Regulation.

An interesting discussion of the panellists after their keynotes then illustrated that the topics are rather complex, with a wide range of stakeholders involved in various kinds of daily port activities and along the supply chain.

The DG Move stakeholder, in his keynote, also pointed out that there is currently a lot of legislative revision ongoing at European Commission level. When looking at directives, examples can be found in addressing an alternative fuel infrastructure,

combined-transport regulation, and the revision of the TEN-T framework.

Regulations are revised regularly, but the 'Green Deal' concept presented by the president of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen underlined the need to consider more recent developments and technological advancements in legislative texts and funding or leveraging tools of the European Commission.

The partnership presented the overall and individual results of the EU project. The Interreg Europe Joint Secretariat then also introduced the new Interreg Europe programme 2021–2027 after the project result presentations. The above-mentioned keynotes and the panel discussion on the topic of 'sustainable port development and traffic management in European ports' then rounded off the event.

Throughout the project lifetime, stakeholders from administration, port-related businesses, and logistics businesses along the supply chain were engaged to reduce emissions from port-related road traffic through improving regional policy instruments in a holistic manner.

The second day of the final conference was used to hold an internal partner- and steering group meeting, followed by a physical visit of the border inspection post at Port of Antwerp. From the Hamburg side, stakeholders from the Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection joined the site-visit, as they are preparing the Hamburg 'Border One Stop Shop' project that brings all import and customs controls together at one location.

The Smooth Ports project continues to run until early 2023. Until then, the partners will continue to meet virtually, communicate with different stakeholder groups, and monitor the implementation of the action plans.

www.hafen-hamburg.de

Orisont, Koole extend partnership

Horisont Energi and Koole Terminals plan to develop a CO2 terminal in Port of Rotterdam.

The terminal and storage facility will handle both clean ammonia and CO2. Redevelopment of several hectares for tank storage, multimodal connections, and access to at least two deepsea jetties will allow for millions of tonnes of product throughput.

In autumn 2021, the two companies signed a memorandum of understanding to collaborate on the development of a terminal and storage facility for clean ammonia produced and shipped from the Barents Blue clean ammonia plant. The agreement will have a wider scope going forward, and now includes the intermediate storage of CO2 which will be permanently stored at Horisont Energi's planned offshore storage facilities in Norway.

"We are very excited to announce that our co-operation with Koole Terminals will include a CO2 terminal. The two companies have co-operated well during this first year, and it is essential for us to bring about solid relationships with key storage, handling, and transport partners in the region so

we can establish an end-to-end carbon capture and storage (CCS) service, while ensuring that our clean ammonia can reach all potential clients. This is an important step for Horisont Energi," said Bjørgulf Haukelidsæter Eidesen, CEO of Horisont Energi.

Port of Rotterdam is the major energy hub for Western Europe, with around 13 percent of the total energy demand in Europe entering the EU via Rotterdam. Koole Terminals is one of the leading storage and logistics operators at the port.

"We look forward to continuing our great collaboration with Horisont Energi. This partnership fits very well with Koole Terminals' sustainable energy strategy to facilitate the transition to a low-carbon future, and we are proud to work together with Horisont Energi to materialise their European distribution hub for renewable energy and CO2. Furthermore, it will accelerate Koole Terminals' international expansion plans to reach new markets," said Tamme Mekkes, Koole's business development director.

www.koole.com

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duisport, Antwerp-Bruges agree long-term partnership

High-ranking representatives of Germany's duisport and Belgium's Port of Antwerp-Bruges have signed a long-term co-operation agreement.

duisport CEO Markus Bangen and Jacques Vandermeiren, CEO of Port of Antwerp-Bruges, sealed the far-reaching partnership in the presence of Flemish prime minister Jan Jambon.

North Rhine-Westphalia's minister for the environment, nature conservation and transport, Oliver Krischer, as well as the vice-mayor of the City of Antwerp and president of the board of Port of Antwerp-Bruges, Annick De Ridder, attended the event, as did Josef Hovenjürgen, parliamentary state secretary in the ministry for home affairs, municipal affairs, building and digitization of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia.

At the heart of the agreement is the expansion of co-operation in the areas of energy transition, rail and hinterland connections, and port infrastructure. All three areas are of outstanding importance for the reliable supply of industry and the stabilisation of supply chains between Germany and Belgium and within Europe.

Hydrogen supply chain

The European energy system will increasingly focus on sustainable energy sources, with green hydrogen carriers playing a crucial role. The development of solutions for the import, storage and distribution of green hydrogen in various forms is therefore one of the main strategic pillars of the co-operation between the two ports. The goal is to build an international supply chain for hydrogen in which both partners become central hydrogen hubs for Europe.

To achieve this goal, duisport and Antwerp-Bruges want to establish a high-frequency rail shuttle in addition to planned pipeline connections and establish rail as a 'rolling pipeline'. The expansion of the hinterland network, the promotion of sustainable multimodal transport connections, and the steady shift to environmentally friendly modes of transport are substantial for the realization of the energy transition.

As both ports aim for climate neutrality by 2050, the development of environmentally-friendly port handling equipment is also part of the joint agreement.

For duisport, the co-operation with Port of Antwerp-Bruges is another important step in the expansion of its future network. Similar agreements were already concluded with the ports of Rotterdam and Amsterdam in May and June of this year.

"Our ports have a key role in their regions as leading logistics and industrial centres and are already linked by various multimodal connections. Against the background of the current global challenges, it is only logical that we sustainably strengthen our European partner network and co-operate even more closely," said duisport CEO Markus Bangen.

Jacques Vandermeiren, CEO of Port of Antwerp-Bruges, added: "To realise the ambitious plan to become a climate neutral continent, we have to guarantee European industry reliable and secure access to renewable energy sources. The import, transmission and distribution of green molecules needs short, mid and long term solutions. Developing a robust multimodal supply system will be fundamental to make the change happen. And we are pleased that duisport and Port of Antwerp-Bruges are combining forces to that end."

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For duisport, the co-operation with Port of Antwerp-Bruges follows similar agreements with the ports of Rotterdam and Amsterdam



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