

# Uniform Europe-wide system for tracking hazardous goods comes into being



Every hour sees thousands of transports of hazardous chemical goods being made between eastern and western Europe. The transporting of containers and tank cars is associated with very specific requirements regarding information. In this context a wide range of national, regional and operational systems currently exist that are not aligned with each other. Under the guidance of Saxony-Anhalt, the EU 'ChemLog Tracking & Tracing' project intends to create a uniform system for tracking transports of hazardous goods in intermodal transports between central and eastern Europe.

The project for the tracking of hazardous goods transports in intermodal transport from 2012 to 2014 will further strengthen the role of Central Germany as a logistics hub and as a gateway to Eastern Europe, explains Logistics Director of Dow Olefinverbund GmbH, Wolfgang Schnabel.

Schnabel, who is well networked in the European logistics sector, was the co-initiator of the previous ChemLog project that began in 2008. During the first phase, efforts focused on strengthening the chemicals logistics in Central Germany and on improving links with the growing markets in central and eastern Europe, as well as on the development of a central German association of terminals for combined transport at the chemicals locations of Leuna, Schkopau and the Port of Halle.

The central transport hub that is to be developed in this way should also bring together the transportation of chemicals goods to the east. Since the project generally involves unaccompanied containers, the new EU project is a continuation of the work of its predecessor, which was initiated by the EU in 2008 on the suggestion of the European Chemicals Regions Network, ECRN. In those days the president of the ECRN was the current State Premier of Saxony-Anhalt, Dr. Reiner Haseloff. Today the ECRN is led by the Minister of Economic Affairs of the same federal state, Prof. Birgitta Wolff.

Schnabel thinks there are great conditions for the success of the European project in Saxony-Anhalt, in the context of which a consortium has also been established, bringing together representatives from industrial associations, regions, research organizations and public authorities from Germany, Italy, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria, Slovenia and Slovakia. The Ministry of Economic Affairs of Saxony-Anhalt is responsible for guiding the project.

Over the years to come it is expected that an annual transport volume of 50 to 55 million tonnes of chemical goods will be handled in Saxony-Anhalt. While the chemicals industry in western Europe is strongly integrated and well networked in eastern Europe, more than 90 per cent of chemicals goods transports, and an increasing amount of hazardous goods, are made by road. This not only places a strain on the environment, it cannot continue over the long term and is not sustainable from the point of view of either traffic or transport, says Andreas Fiedler from the Halle company isw-GmbH, which coordinated the work of the ChemLog project on behalf of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Investment Bank of Saxony-Anhalt.

Fiedler is campaigning for as much transport as possible to go onto the railways. To create a uniform system for tracking transports of hazardous goods in intermodal transport, logistics experts are using a satellite-supported cross-border solution. "The specific requirements concerning the tracking of hazardous goods transports in central and eastern Europe are now being identified. Specific solutions are going to be tested in pilot projects," explains Schnabel. One opportunity is being provided by the Galileo test site of the Fraunhofer Institute for Factory Operations and Automation IFF in the regional capital of Saxony-Anhalt, Magdeburg, which is the only test site in Germany that studies the fields of safety and logistics. "Our project could offer the institute a specific area of research," says Schnabel, looking to the future. A cooperation with the Fraunhofer IFF to explore the practical way forward is also being pursued. The 'ChemLog Tracking & Tracing' project is unique in Europe. Schnabel, who has been working in the area of chemicals transports for almost 40 years, is also aware that there will be some big challenges, however, as the project not only involves sensitive data concerning goods, but sensitive data concerning customers as well. "We will have to create a reliable system that works independently of countries, companies or transporters," states Schnabel.

Schnabel goes on to explain how the role of Saxony-Anhalt as a logistics hub and gateway to the east as well as the considerable interest expressed by many sides speak in favour of the successful realisation of the 'ChemLog Tracking & Tracing' project. Support has not only been forthcoming from transport companies, from the German Association of the Chemicals Industry and from the scientific world, but also from the public sector and from state and federal ministries. The fact that the President of the ECRN comes from Saxony-Anhalt, and the Cluster Chemicals/Plastics Central Germany has accompanied the project from the start have also proven beneficial. Schnabel and Fiedler add that the project, which is being funded with 1.5 million Euros, will not be able to provide any fully developed solutions by 2014. "The most important preliminary work will be completed and the decisive data and access authorisations will be available, however. This will be followed by a pilot project. We will make the transport of hazardous chemicals goods more transparent, safer, more efficient, more environmentally friendly and more sustainable," continues Schnabel.

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28.10.2012

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