

ROAD MARKINGS

*EVERYTHING ECTA DOES SUPPORTS ITS AIM OF
ELIMINATING ACCIDENTS IN THE CHEMICAL SUPPLY CHAIN.
AND IT IS DOING A LOT*

The European Chemical Transport Association (ECTA) celebrates its 20th anniversary this year and, if anything, its activities are more important than ever. Rising volumes of trade, the complex regulatory environment, external pressures from societal changes, along with the promise offered by Industry 4.0 concepts all mean that transport companies need the advice and guidance the Association can provide.

That advice and guidance all helps the sector to work towards ECTA's overriding target: to achieve zero accidents in the transport of chemicals across Europe.

But ECTA does not work in a vacuum. As managing director Peter Devos says, ECTA is part of a broad network of trade bodies and it works closely not just with the European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic) and the

European Petrochemical Association (EPCA) but also the European Federation of Tank Cleaning Organisations (EFTCO) and other groups on specific topics that have a bearing on its members' chemical logistics activities.

"Our success is related to this network," Peter Devos stresses. "It keeps the radar open to what is happening elsewhere."



That radar is necessary, since ECTA's members are involved in some disparate activities, not just local and regional transport in road tankers but also the distribution of palletised goods and less-than-truckload packaged goods, up to the international movement of chemicals in freight containers and tank containers by intermodal transport.

Further, while the actual transport of goods is the core to the haulage business, it is just part of a broader range of logistics operations. ECTA plans to recognise this later this year, with a new logo and 'Chemical Logistics' tagline to be launched at its annual meeting in Düsseldorf in November.

MEET THE TEAM

Devos was appointed as managing director on 1 November 2016, following the sudden and untimely death of Marc Twisk. ECTA also took a step back to see how its operations needed to be staffed and appointed Evert de Jong as its Responsible Care coordinator. De Jong has

been involved in the development of the Responsible Care programme and in Cefic's Safety and Quality Assessment Systems (SQAS) for many years while in his former role at the De Rijke Group.

There is, though, no formal boundary between the roles of Devos and de Jong, as they both see Responsible Care – and its monitoring through SQAS – as the very bedrock of ECTA's mission. "Responsible Care is part of almost everything we do," Mr de Jong stresses. "There are huge overlaps with corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability. Responsible Care touches on all parts of logistics management."

The partnership at the top of ECTA's management also brings different experience: de Jong has had a career in logistics, while Devos comes to ECTA after an extensive career in chemical production and supply chain management at Monsanto. The team is completed by Dolorès Guion, deputy managing director, who holds the reins together. The management team also works closely with ECTA president Andreas Zink, director of LKW Walter, and the ECTA board members.

MANAGING CHANGE

Over the past year, the new ECTA team has made further progress on a number of ongoing work programmes. New guidelines on the management of change (MOC) have been drafted, the existing 'ECTA Codes' have been fine-tuned, and new best practice guidelines related to the cleaning of dry bulk polymer tank trailers have been published, the latter in collaboration with Cefic and EFTCO.

It has been widely accepted that effective management of change plays a crucial role in maintaining safety in any industrial installation and the same is true of the logistics sector. Two years ago a team was brought together to discuss the relevant issues and has put together what Mr de Jong describes as a "high-level document" designed to get sometimes complex concepts across to users in a comprehensible way. The guidance explains that, when incidents are investigated, MOC shortcomings are frequently found. "Providing guidance on how change can be managed safely is therefore a key enabler in striving for zero transport incidents/accidents by the industry," it says. »



“ECTA'S OVERRIDING TARGET IS TO ACHIEVE ZERO ACCIDENTS IN THE TRANSPORT OF CHEMICALS IN EUROPE”

However, while the need for MOC processes is well established in the chemical manufacturing industries, there is little guidance available to cover the logistics component in the chemical supply chain. The joint Cefic/ECTA MOC guidance attempts to fill that gap. Evert de Jong says that the document provides very wide coverage, not just on technical aspects but also as regards procedures, corporate organisation and training of personnel.

The guidance document includes an Excel-based tool that poses questions, prompting the user on those items that are applicable to the operation under review. Mr de Jong acknowledges that taking MOC concepts onboard can create a little more work for managers in the supply chain but stresses that the process of doing so can create a lot of evidence on what is actually going on in the organisation.

The tool can also help logistics service providers respond to questions from external parties – not just their customers but also government agencies, insurers and others. It also helps dutyholders learn and draw lessons from incidents based on previous changes along the supply chain.

Peter Devos says that more robust MOC processes will help achieve ECTA's objective of zero accidents but notes that, given the lack of attention paid by supply chain operators to this aspect thus far, it will require a learning curve and a longer journey for LSPs to come up to speed. And speed is an issue: today's instant communication means that change can happen before it can be anticipated.

EMERGING ISSUES

ECTA works on other issues that impact its members. One emerging risk is the potential for the use of silo trucks for smuggling migrants and refugees, with the attendant risk of asphyxiation. “We just don't want that,” Evert de Jong says.

A kick-off meeting was held in November 2016 with a follow-up session in January 2017, and a first draft of a guidance document on the issue was prepared in the second quarter. ECTA intends to follow this up further ahead of its annual meeting.

However, the issue team understands that it has to tread carefully. “We don't want to give too much information to the criminals behind the movement of people,” de Jong says. As a result, »



it is likely that any final guidance document will not include the finer details of technical best practices. This knowledge may be better circulated to members on a confidential basis.

ECTA is also keeping a watching brief on the implications of 'Industry 4.0' processes in the chemical supply chain. This raises the potential for new and faster ways of communicating between shippers, carriers and final customers – something that is reflected in the make-up of the ECTA management team – as well as greater collaboration and dialogue.

Companies will need to develop internal digital strategies to take advantage of the opportunities offered by Cloud computing, the Internet of Things (IoT) and mobile communications; ECTA should not get involved too technically in these aspects, Peter Devos says, but in terms of inter-company processes there is a role for the Association in fostering the means of collaboration.

As Peter Devos says, "The question is: how can we exchange information faster and smarter between the various chemical logistics stakeholders to serve the end customer better?" Sharing data will require trust and, on a practical level, common interoperable data exchange platforms. It will also be vital to have the participation of other organisations – and it is illustrative that a number of them, including the European Federation of Chemical Distributors (Feccd) and EPCA itself have had the topic on their annual meetings this year.

GET PLUGGED IN

That participation is also evident in a first digital project to develop an electronic version of the European Cleaning Document (ECD). The ECD, introduced in 2005, was developed by EFTCO in collaboration with ECTA and Cefic in order to satisfy the needs of cleaning stations, transport companies and chemical, feed and food manufacturing companies and their customers. It ensures that tanks are cleaned properly, in light of their prior cargo, which demands that an up-to-date safety data sheet (SDS) is available to the cleaning station. The ECD is proof that the cleaning process has been carried out in accordance with the



relevant requirements, and provides evidence that such assurance is passed on down the chain.

While the ECD was seen as a major step forward, the current paper-based process no longer meets all current challenges and expectations within a modern and integrated logistics supply chain. ECTA, EFTCO and Essenscia-Cefic got together in January 2017 to look at how new technologies could be applied to the digitalisation of the ECD and transform it into an electronic, 'e-ECD' document.

Progress has been rapid and it is anticipated that the e-ECD will be able to be tested in early 2018. While Peter Devos says this is "quite ground-breaking", its development has raised awareness of the extent of work still to be done. It also reveals how much it costs to develop such a system, and Devos is clear that it needs to show value for the community. "It's about sharing the right data among the right actors, at the right

time with the right technology, to take smarter and safer community decisions," he says. "It is very practical and can make a real difference."

Mr Devos is also clear that such a system cannot be left to a third-party IT developer on its own. Solutions have to come from within the community – technology is useless unless it embedded inside new digital processes. ECTA has a role to play to get the platform adopted by its members – through coordination rather than actively promoting it – with the aim of improving efficiency, compliance and safety.

Perhaps most significantly, work on the e-ECD could provide a model for future platforms. "We don't want to dream, we want to move forward step by step to future use cases," Peter Devos says, citing in particular the concept of a digital CMR consignment note. This will raise further issues of security and trust, as it will have to carry more sensitive data, not least from a commercial point of »

Above: Peter Devos

view, as well as track and trace data on vehicles and potentially harmful consignments.

YET MORE WORK

One piece of work that has been completed this year is the latest update to the ECTA-Cefic Guidelines for Standardised Coding of Transport Events – the ‘ECTA Codes’. This third edition, developed at the request of a number of LSPs and shippers, adds extra codes for date and

time to code ‘early deliveries’, while making some minor textual corrections. The revised Guidelines aim to improve the precision of chemical transport reporting across the logistics chain, ECTA says.

In collaboration with Cefic and EFTCO, new best practice guidelines have also been developed for the cleaning of dry bulk polymer tank trailers. “For many years, all of the polymer suppliers and transport companies have identified their own specific cleaning

requirements resulting in slightly different practices,” ECTA says. “This differentiation might create confusion for the haulier, the cleaning station and the supplier.”

The new guidelines aim to ensure that the cleaning process is optimised and that any potential cross-contamination from previous loads can be minimised.

Also on the agenda for 2017, given that driver shortage is an imminent issue, ECTA and Cefic embarked on a new Issue team working around »





driver availability and competency and recently launched an internal survey among their members. Coming up in 2018 is work to update the best practice guidelines for sub-contractors, something that “is long due for revision,” as Evert de Jong says.

Also on the cards for next year is a revision to the CO₂ calculations in the Responsible Care key performance indicators (KPI). “These reports are important,” Evert de Jong says, “but there have been questions over the methodology.” A range of stakeholders were invited to a meeting in May 2017 on the initiative of Cefic. There was broad support for a revision of the calculation method and, pending finalisation, this may be introduced in 2018.

“We are looking for consistent KPI reporting,” Mr de Jong continues, “but each reporting company is different. This needs to be recognised in the system. Steps are now being taken and we look forward to an even better process.”

SAFETY IN MIND

What all these guidelines, initiatives and programmes have in common is that they

all support ECTA's goal of zero accidents, through practical implementation and support of Responsible Care, as monitored by SQAS.

Mr de Jong believes that there is a tendency to take SQAS for granted but it should be recognised that it has had a profound impact in driving continuous improvement in the chemical supply chain for the past 20 years, by providing a consistent method for measuring safety and quality performance and benchmarking each operator's performance against its peers and the industry as a whole.

That continuous improvement is achieved not least through regular revisions to the SQAS questionnaires; each revision process – undertaken at intervals of three years – identifies gaps in coverage and also those questions that are no longer useful. This means that the questionnaires themselves set a bar and raise that bar on a regular basis

The value of SQAS can be gauged by the fact that there is growing interest in its approach outside Europe – versions have been implemented in recent years in the Middle East and in China, for instance. Devos also describes SQAS as a “cornerstone” in the cooperation between Cefic and ECTA. However, he is also

aware that it has to evolve to adapt to new commercial realities.

In particular, Mr de Jong says, SQAS will have to reflect new ways of working emerging from the Industry 4.0 revolution. While he does not expect the questionnaires to consider how companies apply digitised systems, it will surely have to encompass data security concerns.

“Information will become more visible, raising security issues,” Peter Devos says. SQAS will need to question operators on how they are managing information security – it will have to define a minimum standard for robust processes.

The next 20 years are likely to see even more revolutionary changes in the transport industry, certainly revolving around electronic and autonomous vehicles but possibly in ways we cannot yet imagine. Those involved in the chemical supply chain can be comforted by the idea that ECTA will be there to apply its expertise to helping them navigate a route through those changes. HCB www.ecta.com

Previous page: Peter Devos, Dolorès Guion and ECTA Board Member Alberto Marenzana:
Above: Evert de Jong