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FEBRUARY/MARCH 2025

# Welcome to Dubai!



**Records tumble as Dubai welcomes the world's biggest freight forwarding conference back for a second time**

RECORDS continue to be made, with last year's record-breaking WCA World Conference in Dubai bested by this year's follow-up.

In its 14th iteration, the Conference, again hosted in Dubai, welcomed more than 4,700 attendees, continuing the network's trend of assembling the world's largest number of freight forwarders all in one place, with some 80,000+ meetings having been prebooked.

Welcoming guests, WCAworld founder and chairman David Yokeum called out to members, asking that they always reach out and ask, "what the network could

do for them".

Teeing off the event, as has become customary, golfing members took to the greens first thing on Tuesday morning, although a breakaway crew decided to test their mettle in the Gulf heat, participating in a 90-kilometre cycle around Dubai.

One participant, who shall not be named, later admitted that they probably should have put some hours in so as to get their cycling legs back before the big day.

Only later were old friends fully reunited with the opening night's cocktail party - indeed, such is the familial atmosphere provoked by

WCAworld that crowds were gathering long before the gates to the exhibition hall opened.

Standing alongside Yokeum and WCAworld CEO Dan March, CIO of Freightscope, Sripad Bharati, said this year would see the network pushing ahead with its AI ventures.

Speaking about WCAworld's engagement with technology, Bharati stressed that it was not about replacing people but was rather "about unleashing the power of the network," thereby allowing members to more than hold their own against the multinationals.

Senior vice president for the US



**14<sup>th</sup>**  
**WORLDWIDE CONFERENCE**  
25 FEB - 1 MAR 2025  
DUBAI, UAE

at World Insurance (WIS), Jason Odgers told attendees, "success for members, is success for us," adding that WIS' participation with WCAworld was because they wanted to keep "SMEs on a level footing with multinationals".

As the second day came to a close, the best that the forwarding sector has to offer convened for the annual awards ceremony (full winner details on pages 6 & 7).

And with a host of one-on-one

meetings, special guest speakers, and various workshops to follow, not to mention the famed WCAworld Football Tournament, there remained a lot for attendees to get their teeth into.

Reiterating what he sees as WCAworld's guiding mantra, Yokeum said that WCA will always be "more than a network".

He added: "Talk to us, tell us what you need; we have some of the sharpest minds in the business."

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# City and desert tours

DELEGATES from the 14th WCA Worldwide Conference kicked off their conference week with a day tour exploring the city sites of Dubai. From the Souk Madinat to Burj Al Arab they were able to see all that Dubai has to offer. While they viewed the newest sights inside the city another group went out to the desert to see the city from a different perspective. Travelling in style on dune buggies and camels they reached the desert camp where they shared traditional Arabic tea and sweets. Both days out were a great opportunity to discuss business, forge new partnerships and experience new things together.



# WCA Golf tournament

DURING the 14th WCA Worldwide Conference, 95 golfers headed to the Jumeriah Golf Estates Fire Course for the 2025 WCA Golf Tournament. Despite the unexpectedly wet and windy weather, it was a great day out which saw many new partnerships formed on the course.

Congratulations to the players in the winning team - Matt Shields, Stuart Tatters, John Pennypacker and Branden Lourdes.



# Here we meet again!

THE 14th WCA Worldwide Conference 2025 officially opened with the Welcome Cocktail Reception on Tuesday night. A highlight of the WCAworld events calendar, the reception was, as always, the perfect place to reconnect with long standing partners and meet potential new ones. With 4,700 delegates in attendance, it kicked off the conference in style and gave an opportunity for WCAworld Chairman David Yokeum and CEO Dan March to thank all the events sponsors, without whom the event would not be possible.



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# Biggest Mistakes Forwarders Make

Practical simple low-cost loss prevention



by Greg Kritz,  
Executive VP

IN my time as a freight forwarder, goes wrong. I was stunned by the level of financial risk we forwarders assumed for so little money in return. We put our financial necks on the line every time we advance freight charges, arrange trucking, present ourselves as the shipper on the master, handle a customs clearance, engage as an agent, arrange storage, and the list goes on.

One of the toughest aspects of forwarding is the expectation of many shippers to hold their forwarders responsible for anything and everything that goes wrong, despite forwarders having so little control.

After decades of seeing claims against forwarders, it has become crystal clear that forwarders are not truly financially liable for much that

“ After decades of seeing claims against forwarders, it has become crystal clear that forwarders are not truly financially liable for much that goes wrong ”

are often useless if not accessible, or, if they are

They just need to do a better job of taking the necessary steps to protect themselves before things do go wrong.

Mistakes and miscalculations are inevitable, but they don't have to be costly. Here are the three biggest mistakes forwarders tend to make that land them into financial trouble. Alongside the mistakes are a few practical best practices proven to protect the forwarder.

**Mistake # 1: Failure to update and clearly communicate terms and conditions of service**

Most forwarders have some sort of trading conditions, but they are often useless if not accessible, or, if they are

inadequate and inconsistent across all trade documents.

Trade attorneys recommend that forwarders have their trading conditions reviewed not less than every five years. If you don't have access to a good trade attorney, reach out to your insurance provider, or to the WCA. These are your first and most important line of defense. It tops the list.

Making your trading terms accessible is of equal importance to having good trading terms. Sure – we know they won't read them, but their lawyer will assert that had your terms been accessible, the client would have read them and never had agreed.

Here are some simple low-cost best practices to consider.

Include all of your trading terms – house bills, house airway bill, standard trading conditions, etc.. prominently on the home page of your website. Also include them by link in email signatures, in every quote, on the onboarding documents, addendum to powers of attorney and credit applications. It's shocking how easy this is and how infrequently it is practiced.

**Mistake # 2: Sitting on a potential claim until it escalates**

Who likes conflict? It often seems easier to ignore a problem until it fixes itself. Or, we fear filing a claim will raise insurance rates. In most circumstances, speaking from 40 years' experience, ignoring a potential financial loss only makes the financial loss bigger down the road. Then once it reaches your insurer, they'll decline for violation of the reporting timeline clause.

Best Practice: If you think you might have a claim, reach out to your insurance provider immediately. Don't wait. In addition, have a trade lawyer at your ready that you can go to with potential problems. If you have insurance, let the insurer direct you and save the legal fees.

A popular example of when immediate action is necessary happens whenever a consignee abandons a shipment. Move quickly to get that product off the dock and into a warehouse where it won't accumulate demurrage and detention. Failure to mitigate the risk often results in someone trying to stick the local forwarder with the charges. BUT, do not let them. This leads us to Mistake #3.

**Mistake # 3: Taking ownership of a problem that isn't yours**

Looking back to Mistake #2, forwarders commonly assume responsibility for situations that are not commercially theirs. Once you've taken ownership, the expectation from all parties is that you are bearing responsibility for the expenses. If you have properly updated and disclosed your trading conditions, you likely bear little to no financial responsibility. In which case you can send this email: "Dear seller/agent, your buyer has abandoned the freight. YOU have a problem. Here are your options. Note below our financial liability is limited to..."

We encourage our members to stand boldly behind their terms and conditions. And from that stance, you can then freely make commercial financial considerations as you deem appropriate.

For a complete list of "Biggest Mistakes and Best Practices" please drop us a line at [info@worldinsuranceagency.com](mailto:info@worldinsuranceagency.com)



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# JTM looks east and west in search of growth

AUTOMATION and digitalisation continue to dominate discussions on enhancing modern supply chains. For forwarders, the transition to digital operations has been fraught with challenges, not least the costs of implementation. However, in recent years, a wave of service providers has emerged, levelling the playing field for the small and medium-sized forwarders that form the backbone of the industry.

Managing Partners of Portugal-based JTM Group, Joao Val and Carlos Magalhaes, tell Voice of the Independent (VOTI) that automation and digitalisation of logistics processes are key trends shaping the industry's future and global supply chains. For the pair, these trends have driven JTM to invest in technology that they and their team believe will best "optimise its operations, improve efficiency and offer a more agile service to

**"JTM is focused on niche markets such as the transportation of pharmaceutical products, live animals and project cargo"**

customers." But if automation and digitalisation are about improving services, in which verticals do they both see these efficiencies being deployed?

"JTM is focused on niche markets such as the transportation of pharmaceutical products, live animals and project cargo, where the demand for specialised services is growing," they tell VOTI. "The aeronautical industry is also an important focus for JTM. With the growth of the aerospace sector and the demand for the transportation of aeronautical components,

JTM is investing in specialised logistics solutions to meet this demand. Our air transportation services are designed to ensure the safety and integrity of aeronautical products as well as offer fast and efficient delivery times."

Geographically, JTM sees Latin America as one of its

strongest growth markets. The company has maintained a strong presence there since its founding in 2011, with its largest partnerships and operations on the continent. As a result, Val and Magalhaes says these partnerships will be key to driving future growth. "Therefore, JTM will continue to focus on where it already has a consolidated presence and where it can maximise its growth potential with actual partners," they add.

However, Val and Magalhaes are not blind to the current global challenges. Like the rest of the world, JTM has faced a range of difficulties over the past year.

"These," the pair say, "include adapting to new market demands and the need to implement stricter security measures due to the rise of global cyber threats. Currently, JTM is closely monitoring geopolitical and economic developments that may impact its operations. The instability in Ukraine and political changes in the US, with all the talk of trade wars and customs tariffs, are factors that generate concern. To overcome these challenges, JTM is diversifying its

transportation routes and strengthening its partnerships with suppliers and clients, ensuring greater resilience in times of uncertainty."

Despite these difficulties, the company has continued to experience significant growth, particularly in e-commerce logistics and project cargo. These shifts have prompted JTM to reassess its business strategies and invest in innovation. In 2025, the company expects to continue expanding its international presence, with its new headquarters in Portugal serving as a central hub. The facility, with a capacity of 200 employees, underscores JTM's commitment to growth. This expansion follows the recent opening of a new office in Turkey, which, Val and Magalhaes note, "has been operating for a year already."

"And recently we, of course, became a member of WCA to strengthen relationships with local and global agents," the pair



**JOAO VAL (LEFT) AND CARLOS MAGALHAES**  
JTM Group

continue. "This strategic decision aims to consolidate our presence in the region and explore new emerging markets. Turkey, with its privileged geographical location, serves as a connection point between Europe and Asia, allowing JTM to access new business opportunities and expand our customer network. Joining WCAworld not only facilitates logistics and transportation in the region, but also allows JTM to offer more personalised and efficient services."

So, what's next? In addition to solidifying its presence in Turkey, JTM is exploring expansion into the Middle East, a region that presents significant growth potential, particularly in trade and logistics.

"JTM is carefully evaluating market opportunities and strategic partnerships that can be established to ensure a successful entry into this new territory," they add. "These initiatives are expected to start yielding positive results in the next two to three years."

"Recently, we inaugurated a new headquarters in Portugal. This new headquarters will serve as a central hub for our operations, allowing us to improve the efficiency and coordination of our logistics services. The new headquarters will also enable us to expand our team and offer a modern and welcoming work environment for our employees."

# AGO: If the client grows, we grow

WITH offices on both sides of the Canada-US border, AGO Transportation is perhaps more aware than many of the possible damage that looming US tariffs on its northern neighbour – and the likely reciprocal tariffs issued out of Ottawa – could have on regional trade. Speaking to Voice of the Independent, vice president of AGO Sandra Faraj says that the possibility of these tariffs sits atop the pile as "the most pressing issue on everyone's mind these days". Has the prospect left Faraj and the team concerned over how they do business?

"We have not been rethinking how we do business per se – thankfully we offer such a wide array of services that we are not solely dependent on what happens with the tariffs," she says. "Most of our business is referral so I think we are doing something right! We also have partners across the US and across the globe that will allow us to work with our current client base to help them should they decide to move their assembly and/or manufacturing to the US or any other country for that matter."

This, Faraj notes, "is why we are part of WCA". Being part of the network, she continues, allows AGO to have representation – through agents and friends – all over the world, which in turn helps not only the company but the company's clients

grow. It is the case, she says, that AGO's approach to business has always been to look at the clients' entire business model and advise them, offering the help they need to grow.

"You cannot help a client prosper if you do not know their entire model," Faraj says. "For example, if a client imports goods from Asia, manufactures a product and then exports it to the US, they can claim back the potential duties they paid on import. You would be surprised how many clients do not know this."

Nor is this the only example. Another, she says, is AGO's capacity to get discounts for small package services to and from Canada. The company achieves this by placing all of its clients on its account, which allows it to supply the necessary volumes to secure impressive discounts with the multinationals, bigger discounts than those an individual AGO client could attain by "going directly to those companies".

Faraj concludes: "Our philosophy is that if the client grows, we grow and it's a win/win. No business can succeed if it's not a win/win for both sides. This honesty and transparency have allowed us to develop and grow a very loyal client base who knows that they can contact us to get the best advice possible even if we don't stand to profit."

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AFRICA: Candice Holmes and Ernest Tumelo Mokoena collect the award for Exclusive Logistics Solutions



THE Hall of Fame award was awarded this year to Frederic Mercier of Mathez Freight. A member for over 25 years, Fred has not only been instrumental in suggesting many improvements and products for the network, but has also acted as a mentor to new agent members. An amazing advocate for independent forwarders, all WCAworld staff and members congratulate Fred!



awards



WINNER: Globus Transitos Pvt. Ltd. a proud team with the overall winning award

WCA Best Partner Awards 2024		
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Europe	Unsworth UK Ltd	Charles Kendall Freight QCS-Quick Cargo Service GmbH
India Sub Continent	Globus Transitos Pvt. Ltd.	Skyways Air Services Pvt. Ltd. Dart Global Logistics Pvt. Ltd.
Latin America	DC Logistics Brasil	AMTRANS LOGISTICA E TRANSPORTES INTERNACIONAIS LTDA ILS Cargo Transportes Internacionais Ltda
Middle East	EMIRATES Logistics LLC	MRC Shipping & Logistics LLC Ordan Cargo Ltd.
North America	1UP CARGO	Radiant Global Logistics, Inc. Delta Express Inc. Express Air Freight
TOP AGENT 2024	Globus Transitos Pvt. Ltd.	



EUROPE: Thomas Kuehn and Alin Dincu from Unsworth pick up the trophy



LATIN AMERICA: DC Logistics Ivo Mafra accepts the award

(where four agents are listed in a region, this is due to a tie on votes)

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ASIA: Emmett Zheng and Jay Ning from BSI take the winners trophy for the Asia region



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# Challenges and opportunities aplenty for forwarders

CHALLENGES and opportunities have emerged for forwarders over the past year amidst a wave of evolving trade regulations, shifting trade practices—particularly from the world's sole superpower—fluctuating fuel prices and rising geopolitical tensions. For the Managing Director of Group7, Günther Jocher, these challenges have shaped the global supply chain, leaving forwarders to do what they do best.

"The past year has been shaped by both challenges and opportunities in freight forwarding," Jocher tells Voice of the Independent (VOTI). "Disruptions in global trade routes have reinforced the need for flexible and resilient transport solutions. At the same time, demand for air and ocean freight has remained strong, requiring us to continuously optimise capacity and transit times. Looking ahead to 2025, we anticipate a continued focus

**"The past year has been shaped by both challenges and opportunities in freight forwarding"**

on digitalisation, sustainable logistics and diversified supply chains. Group7 will remain focused on providing flexible and tailor-made solutions to help our customers while ensuring reliability and efficiency in their supply chains."

For Group7, Jocher says part of the company's remit is to continuously and actively monitor developments that may impact its business. Doing so, he explains, allows the company to adapt and diversify its transport routes to optimise freight flows while enhancing risk management strategies. "Our strong relationships with ocean carriers, airlines and trucking partners allow us to offer flexible solutions and mitigate disruptions for our customers and agent partners," Jocher adds.

Jocher exudes calm in the face of what some have described as the market's "present dynamism", while

others have more bluntly called the "chaos" that has typified the post-Covid era. From the pandemic to the war in Ukraine, attacks against commercial shipping in the Red Sea, economic problems in China and the newly installed US administration's approach to world trade—which has, politely speaking, ruffled the feathers of not just those in Beijing but also long-standing US partners—forwarders have faced considerable uncertainty. Against this backdrop, Group7 has remained undeterred, continuing to strengthen its German footprint to ensure its customers have access to "flexible and efficient freight forwarding solutions".

That focus on flexibility prompted the development and opening of the company's new headquarters in Munich, comprising a 5,000-square-metre office complex alongside a massive 60,000-square-metre multi-user logistics facility. Describing the facility, Jocher says the warehouse has been constructed and fully equipped to support Group7's air, ocean and road freight operations. He adds

that this "ensures seamless integration across all transport modes. We are continuously evaluating opportunities in strategic markets to align with evolving customer needs."

He continues: "Group7 is consistently investing in the expansion of its air and ocean freight services as well as enhancing our European trucking network. By strengthening partnerships with leading carriers, we are increasing capacity and offering more stable rates to our customers. Additionally, we are further developing consolidation solutions to optimise freight flows, reduce costs and improve efficiency. These initiatives are already delivering benefits and will continue to enhance our service portfolio throughout 2025 and beyond. Furthermore, we are expanding our specialised vertical solutions including Aerospace, E-Commerce, Project and Pharma logistics to meet the

growing demands of these dynamic industries."

The company has also built a solid reputation in pharmaceutical logistics, having continuously tailored its operations to the needs of the pharma and healthcare sectors. This includes implementing GDP-certified 24/7 emergency logistics, temperature-controlled storage and deliveries and double-staffed drivers. Alongside this, the team maintains access to a fleet of vehicles for short-notice emergency deliveries. Expectations are that forwarders in this sector will only experience increasing pressure, with market research predicting an average annual growth of six per cent for pharma products worldwide through 2028. Jocher has previously noted that the expansion of global vaccine distribution over recent years will have a lasting impact on overall pharmaceutical logistics.

If pharma represents one



**GÜNTHER JOCHER**  
Group7

of Group7's key areas, where does Jocher see opportunities moving forward?

"Key growth areas in freight forwarding include the rising demand for consolidation services, sustainable transport solutions and resilient supply chains," Jocher tells VOTI. "As a flexible, family-owned company, Group7 quickly adapts to changing market needs. The nearshoring trend is driving demand for regional and cross-border trucking solutions, and we are expanding our network to provide seamless door-to-door transport. Additionally, we are leveraging digital tools and AI to optimise routing, improve visibility and enhance operational efficiency."

## 22 per cent growth show Marinair's plan is working

"IT'S a good sign," says Marinair chief executive officer Pavlos Poutos when asked about 2024's 22 percent volume growth. Speaking to Voice of the Independent, Poutos says that the numbers are indicative of the success of the plan implemented by the company to offset not only three years of war in Ukraine but a now 15-month assault against commercial shipping in the Red Sea.

"In recent years we have invested in new systems and software as we move towards the digitalisation of our services," Poutos continues. "We have understood that markets are looking for similar solutions to those that we can offer them and are now giving access to our partners and clients to our new, online pricing tool, myMCS," Poutos adding that the app is providing customers access to pricing and services all within one minute.

Looking forward, he says the most important issue for the company is to develop both its services and its people in existing locations. That, however, does not mean that Poutos and the team are not looking to expand its geographical footprint.

"There is a plan to develop new offices in new locations based upon market needs and, of course, the needs of our services" he says. "Starting from the Balkan countries we believe offers us good potential as geographically it can connect European capabilities and services, combining with all the transport modes."

Returning to the issue of growth and the

remarkable surge recorded over the course of last year, Poutos notes that volumes in its sea transport sector increased. This came against that backdrop of consternation with the Suez Canal all of which, he adds, means that the services to the region have "changed a lot".

"Transport times are longer than before and the costs are higher too," Poutos says. "Therefore, it has been very interesting to create new logistics services and options while at the same time we have been trying to keep costs as low as possible."

What then for the year ahead? Poutos says that he believes 2025 is very much shaping up to be a year of "potential" for Marinair. This, he says, is largely down to the transformation of the business, which began in 2019, is in good progress, adding, "the building of our company's mentality and culture will lead the organisation in the next expansion plan".



**PAVLOS POUTOS**  
Marinair

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# Robust defence sector spend brings India's Jeena opportunities

DEFENCE sector demand represents a key growth market for Jeena, which is celebrating 125 years of business. Speaking to Voice of the Independent (VOTI) as part of that anniversary, the company's chief executive Prediman Koul and head of corporate strategy Ayesha Katgara say this opportunity has become particularly pronounced within the changing landscape that is its domestic market.

"We recognise significant opportunities in the defence exports and imports sectors, particularly as India establishes itself as a major defence equipment manufacturer," say Koul and Katgara. "Whether it's the movement of equipment, consumables, raw materials for production, or maintaining inventory of hardware abroad, Jeena plays a crucial role in streamlining defence operations."

Opening 2025, the Indian government announced a 9.5 per cent increase in its defence budget, with Koul and Katgara noting that this upturn in funding came with not only a "strong emphasis" on modernising the country's military force but a focus on ensuring India was somewhat more self-reliant in

this sphere. The pair add that the "Make in India" initiative was working to drive domestic production while also streamlining the defence logistics sector.

"We are well-positioned to support the seamless functioning of the defence supply chain, from procurement to final deployment," say Koul and Katgara. "Our objective is to become the

preferred logistics partner for specialised domain logistics and supply chain solutions. Our dedicated Centre of Excellence is a robust step towards actively expanding our capabilities to meet the rising demand."

Amidst the increasing attention on its work in the defence sector, Jeena continues to maintain a strong focus on its other core activities, not least of which is its work in the project logistics scene where,

as Koul and Katgara say, it has been active "for decades," the pair adding that project remains a "critical part of our operations".

They add: "At Jeena, we have developed a strategic approach to project logistics, with the core premise of strengthening our operational mode. To meet complex project logistics requirements, Jeena offers

specialised services, including Breakbulk, Charter Services, and Over-Dimensional Cargo."

And it remains vigilant to other opportunities that will help it drive growth. It has not only expanded its footprint across Asia but has made headway in reinforcing what Koul and Katgara describe as the company's "stronghold in Australia".

"This strategic move reflects our unwavering commitment to enhancing service capabilities, optimising supply chain efficiencies, and meeting the evolving needs of our global customer base," the pair say. "Jeena, to serve our customers and tap new markets, is exploring expanding our footprint in the US and Vietnam along with further strengthening our footprint in India and Australia. Our legacy, built on reliability and excellence, continues to guide our journey toward a future filled with promise and possibility."

While many talk of the geopolitical tensions facing the world – and the team at Jeena are only too cognisant of this – Koul and Katgara believe that it bears paying attention to the changing landscape in Europe, noting the de-industrialisation of major European economies. What, though, about the policy shifts taking place under the return US commander in chief?

"The implementation of US trade tariffs presents both challenges and opportunities for the logistics sector," continue Koul and Katgara.



PREDIMAN KOUL  
Jeena



AYESHA KATGARA  
Jeena

"According to S&P Global Ratings, India could be particularly vulnerable to trade retaliation, potentially affecting shipments, transportation, and overall costs. At the same time, significant opportunities arise as India and the US work towards expanding bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030, with a trade agreement under negotiation for 2025 aimed at reducing tariffs, improving market access, and fostering fair trade. By staying vigilant and proactive, Jeena is well-positioned to capitalise on emerging opportunities, navigate the complexities of the current geopolitical and economic landscapes and continue delivering exceptional service to our global customer base."

That customer-centricity has spurred its engagement with next-generation digital and AI technologies, which it has sought to leverage so as to streamline operations, thereby "elevating" the customer experience. Koul and Katgara say that by integrating

man-machine learning, multimodal AI, and advanced automation, the company has been able to enhance its real-time collaboration, which in turn facilitates an improvement in the decision-making process, ultimately leading to optimised end-to-end logistics solutions.

"Our TMS advanced technology platform provides end-to-end visibility and control over the transportation of goods across the supply chain," they say. "It digitally manages the entire logistics process, from planning, execution, and tracking to delivery and billing. Multi-pick-up and multi-drop deliveries can also be easily planned and managed on the system. The platform fully manages and digitalises deliveries. These initiatives are not only driving operational efficiency at Jeena but also positioning us at the forefront of the ever-evolving logistics landscape. We are committed to delivering smarter, faster, and more reliable services to our customers worldwide, ensuring we meet and exceed their expectations."

# QCS targets European consolidation over global expansion

THE 2020s have been marked by substantial growth for Quick Cargo Service (QCS). In the last three years alone, the European operator has trebled its continental footprint, expanding from four to 12 offices, with the Germany-headquartered forwarder focused on consolidating its regional dominance.

Among its recent additions are new offices in the Czech Republic and Austria, while its Hungarian operation has seen significant growth over the past two years. To cap it all off, last November, the company celebrated its 50th anniversary.

Speaking to Voice of the Independent (VOTI) ahead of the WCA Worldwide Conference, taking place this week (27 February to 2 March), QCS' chief executive officer, Stephan Haltmayer, says part of that growth has been driven by the

relationships it has developed as a member of the WCAworld network.

"Our expansion strategy has included collaborating with high-potential agents through the WCA, which has contributed to our success," Haltmayer adds. "This growth has elevated us from a top 10 privately owned German freight forwarder to a robust player across Europe."

Asked about the possibility of expanding beyond Europe, Haltmayer tells VOTI the company "has no plans" to become a multinational. Instead, he says the focus remains on strengthening its position within Europe,

thereby enhancing its collective buying power.

"Despite remaining a neutral freight forwarder in each country, our unified network offers considerable strategic advantages," he continues. "In recent years, we have made substantial investments to establish a comprehensive European network. This includes the implementation of a unified software system and the development of a

centralised clearing house for all QCS offices. These initiatives are designed to streamline our operations and enhance service delivery across our network."

Business plans for expanding QCS' position in Europe originally envisioned the process taking three years. However, the setup of this expanded network was completed in just one and a half years, with Haltmayer praising the "exceptional performance" of QCS' country managers.

"Although the broader world economy and political climate have presented challenges, Germany continues to drive our growth as the economic engine of Europe," Haltmayer says. Looking ahead, he adds that the plan is to incorporate two more European countries into the network this year. Doing so, he says, "will allow us to further enrich our portfolio and provide additional value-added services to our esteemed customers and agents. By continuing to focus on strategic growth within Europe, QCS aims to



Stephan Haltmayer  
Quick Cargo Service (QCS)

enhance its market position and meet the evolving needs of the logistics sector."

With the company now welcoming its third generation of Haltmayers to the operation, the sense is of a business on a steady course. Speaking to VOTI in the build-up to the anniversary, Allan Christensen, Managing Director and Partner at QCS Denmark, echoed Haltmayer's appreciation of WCAworld, noting that the partnership QCS has built with WCAworld has been instrumental to its success.

He said: "You know, using WCA members is a real positive for us as it means we know that the partners we are dealing with come with a sense of security. Namely, that security is they can be trusted to do the job properly. It is about safety and trust and while trust you can build, having the safety of the knowledge that as a WCA member, the prospective partner will meet certain minimal standards is a good starting point."

**"We are well-positioned to support the seamless functioning of the defence supply chain"**

**"Our expansion strategy has included collaborating with high-potential agents through the WCA"**



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# Mathez Freight expands as art logistics booms



**FREDERIC MERCIER**  
Mathez Freight

LESS than two years after its opening, Mathez Freight's latest art logistics warehouse has reached full capacity.

This is no small achievement, given the facility boasts some 1,000 square metres of storage space. Art, it seems, is a "busy scene,"

according to the president of the company's executive board, Frederic Mercier.

Speaking to Voice of the Independent (VOTI) ahead of the 2025 WCA Worldwide Conference, Mercier says the focus has now shifted to a new art logistics warehouse in the south of France. Like its predecessor, the project is no minor undertaking, given the stringent security, temperature control and customs storage requirements necessary for handling and transporting works valued in the millions. However, as Mercier notes, the French Riviera, known for its luxury, is home to an abundance of billionaires.

"The south of France has its billionaires, and these billionaires have their needs," Mercier says. "For some, it can be cars, others houses, others apartments, and for others still, it can be art. And these people buy these

items like you do shopping at the supermarket. Our team does the packing, the transfers, the installing, and sometimes when they do not have enough walls to store their art, they also turn to us."

With business booming, Mathez Freight is firmly in expansion mode. Since the start of 2025, the company has leased an empty warehouse, which Mercier and his team are now preparing to serve as a customs-bonded site, complete with the

necessary security and temperature controls. Asked how it compares to the facility opened less than two years ago, Mercier is clear: "It will be four times bigger."

"Right now, the strategy is good and in place, so [alongside developing the warehouse] we are busy consolidating all of our niche business offerings," Mercier adds.

Among these niche services is a growing focus on luxury logistics. Mathez Freight has introduced a new service offering customs and registration for yachts, reinforcing its presence in the high-end market. "And it's growing pretty well," Mercier notes. Additionally,

the company has expanded into luxury car logistics, handling more than 500 high-end vehicles, including Ferraris and Lamborghinis.

"From our side, fighting like cats and dogs for €5 is no way to make a living and no way to make a living for small and medium-sized enterprises," Mercier continues. "Instead, the focus should be on automotive and specialised markets because these cannot be as easily automated, which means humans can provide the added value that SMEs tend to fare better with. I would say, do not aim for the middle of the target – by which I mean the obvious customers – try instead for the triple 20, it's much better than the centre."

## Market Uncertainty and Global Trade Challenges

Looking beyond Mathez Freight's own expansion, Mercier is closely watching developments in global trade, particularly the Suez Canal and the potential resumption of transits through it. He argues that while reopening the route would reduce transit times and avoid the longer journey around Africa, it would also create significant disruption for ocean freight carriers operating between East Asia and Europe.



"Shipping lines have used their massive profits to buy new ships," Mercier says. "These are coming online with new deliveries arriving. With the longer transits around Africa, vessels are adding some two weeks to scheduled services. But if you put more vessels in at the same point you resume services through Suez and thus reduce the transit times, you increase the overall ocean freight capacity and the market finds itself... well, it's not very great right now with a slow market and average demand. Add to this more capacity, you will push freight rates very far down. This would push the carriers into crisis."

When asked how he feels about such a scenario, Mercier does not mince his words. "It would be a very good thing when you consider the indecent profits made by container lines during the pandemic." However, he also cautions that while lower freight rates might seem appealing, such a situation could trigger a wider crisis in the global logistics sector, potentially disadvantaging SMEs in the long run.

## Aerospace Growth Sparks Optimism

Ending on a positive note, Mercier highlights a bright spot in Mathez Freight's recent performance. "Aerospace," he says, "has grown big time. We grew this service from four people to 18 people, it is a sector growing very fast for us. But I won't tell you why as it is a secret. What I will end on is... it is growing very, very well."

## It's all about the next generation

CHARLES Kendall Freight's director of Asia and the Middle East, Keno Cheung is hoping to set the template for the next generation of forwarders having landed the Young Executive Award at The Hong Kong's NextGen Logistician Awards 2024.

Cheung first landed a young achiever award in 2013, that time from The Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport Hong Kong. Speaking to Voice of the Independent on the sidelines of 2025's WCA Worldwide Conference, Cheung says his win back then showed it was possible for independents to go head-to-head with the multinationals and come out on top.

Asked about his win at the tail end of 2024, Cheung says it was "bigger" because it was endorsed by the government in Hong Kong, adding "it's recognition for this achievement of mine and I am looking to pass the torch, to motivate the next generation to join the industry."



**KENO CHEUNG**  
Charles Kendall Freight

**"humans can provide the added value that SMEs tend to fare better with"**

## Contacts

Production & Design:

**Mandy Warren**

[mwarren@worldlogisticsmedia.com](mailto:mwarren@worldlogisticsmedia.com)

Editorial Team:

**Editor**

[editorial@worldlogisticsmedia.com](mailto:editorial@worldlogisticsmedia.com)

UK Office  
Talon House, 6 Blackthorne Road,  
Colnbrook, Berks, SL3 0AL, UK  
Phone: +44 7736 034153