

newsletter

Issue 2 | August 2025



This edition includes a special supplement regarding eFTI4ALL Project as part of the ongoing cooperation between ATTO and TRANSPORT MALTA.

Smarter Freight. Greener Future.

Transport Malta is embracing the digital shift in logistics. Through the new eFTI Gateway, we're making **transport data faster, safer, and fully digital.**

This is our step towards a simpler, smarter, and more connected Europe, where hauliers and authorities share transport info in real time.

Less paperwork.
More efficiency.
A better way forward.

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eFTI4ALL

Chairman's Message

JOSEPH BUGEJA
CHAIRMAN, ATTO



I welcome you to the second edition of our ATTO newsletter, an opportunity to reflect on the past busy months and to look ahead with even more confidence.

Personally, as I reflect on our achievements, I cannot help but feel proud of the increasing momentum that we have continued to build both locally and at the EU level.

In Malta, ATTO continued to leverage its excellent relations with Transport Malta and the Ministry for Transport to launch a comprehensive study by KPMG. Further on, in this newsletter, you will read more about this vital project and how it will help quantify the trailer and logistics industry's contribution to Malta's GDP and future growth.

At the same time, we remained relentless in our work to put pressure on the urgent infrastructure upgrades that our expanding sector requires, particularly at Valletta and Gozo ports, as the current facilities continue to lag behind the rising demand. On that front, I'm pleased to share that Transport Malta and ATTO recently signed a formal cooperation agreement, reaffirming ongoing high-level dialogue.

This agreement was the climax of our first conference "Turning Challenges Into Opportunities," held this February which brought together all ATTO's members, transport-sector leaders and our associate partners including Bank of Valletta, Grimaldi Lines, Grande Navi Veloci, Valletta Gateway, Malta Enterprise, Sullivan Maritime and Transport Malta.

The discussions during this conference centred on digitalisation, decarbonisation, staffing and infrastructure. We remain grateful for your continued trust and active engagement.

ATTO also continued to be increasingly active at the EU level, building strong connections through the IRU and the Island Nations Advocacy Group to ensure Malta's voice is heard in Brussels.

On the 28th of May, ATTO met the European Parliament's TRAN Committee where we highlighted the critical driver shortage – 80% of our goods rely on road transport - and called for expedited work permit processes for non EU drivers. We also urged tailored support for island nations facing disproportionate ETS costs—about €408 per trailer between Malta and Genoa—and the formation of a combined transport task force.

I conclude by thanking all ATTO's sponsors, associated partners, the local authorities, the 16 active members and the Board for their dedication and commitment to ATTO.

Here's to translating our achievements into more concrete improvements, together. ○

International Hauliers at the heart of Europe's trade and transport future

DR IAN BORG

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TOURISM



Malta's strategic location at the centre of the Mediterranean positions us as a vital gateway for commerce, tourism, and industry. The international transport haulage sector plays a crucial role in sustaining our economy, securing connectivity, and reinforcing our global competitiveness. As an island state, our hauliers serve as essential lifelines - transporting vital goods to and from mainland Europe, supporting local businesses, and keeping our shelves stocked.

Despite embracing innovation - such as improved efficiency and reduced emissions through greater reliance on combined transport routes - Malta's geographic insularity and peripherality continue to present distinct challenges for our operators. Complex cross-border rules, rising costs, and port bottlenecks often hit hardest in small island economies. Even the management of tariff quotas can directly affect delivery schedules, price stability, and business confidence.

The geopolitical context has further exposed the strategic nature of transport. Whether facing supply disruptions, energy shocks, or instability in Europe's neighbourhood, international hauliers have kept goods moving - often at great cost. Their resilience must be matched with political recognition and practical support.

As a Government, we remain committed to strengthening Malta's connectivity with the European Union and the wider world. Ensuring that these connections are resilient, reliable, and adaptable to external pressures is a core priority - particularly in our engagement at EU level.

That includes ensuring that new legislation supports rather than strains our operators. The introduction of the EU ETS Directive, for instance, has raised legitimate concerns about increased operational costs - especially for Member States with no direct land links to the Single Market. In parallel, we must urgently simplify procedures, reduce administrative burdens, and streamline cross-border operations, particularly for smaller international hauliers who do not benefit from large compliance teams.

We also remain focused on strategic investment in infrastructure, close collaboration with stakeholders, and access to EU funding that reaches small and medium-sized operators - not only the largest logistics firms.

I commend ATTO's tireless advocacy in ensuring the voice of the sector is heard at the European level. International hauliers are not just the backbone of our transport system - they are a strategic pillar of Europe's economic security. Their needs must remain central to EU policymaking. ○

Complex cross-border rules, rising costs, and port bottlenecks often hit hardest in small island economies. Even the management of tariff quotas can directly affect delivery schedules, price stability, and business confidence.

Driving Malta's Future

The Strategic Role of Transport in a Small Island Economy

CHRIS BONETT

MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC WORKS



In policymaking circles, transport is too often treated as a technical afterthought or a sector that needs to be more regulated than understood. But for a small island economy like ours, where 98% of goods arrive by sea and road transport, hauliers such as yourselves are what keep our economy alive.

The operations of your members are tightly interlinked with the health of our supply chains and the competitiveness of our businesses. This is why, as a government, we view this sector as a key enabler of economic policy.

Yet at the European level, transport regulation is too often developed without sufficient regard for the geographic and economic realities of island states. The assumption embedded in much of the EU's legislative framework is that all Member States operate on a level playing field connected by land, and that firms have the ability to absorb compliance costs due to their scalability. This is not the reality we face in Malta. As such, we must keep a keen eye on developments in Brussels and remain constantly engaged in the policy process. The rules that emerge can have unintended consequences that strain the very systems they aim to strengthen.

Take the proposed Return of Vehicles obligation introduced under the Mobility Package, for example. Its aim was well-intentioned, but the one-size-fits-all design further distorted an already uneven playing field for Malta's operators. It was in this context that, as a government, we pressed for changes and ATTO played a central role in that push. Through the organisation's efforts, Malta was able to work alongside eight other Member States to challenge the legislation, ultimately securing changes that better reflect the realities we face. This outcome demonstrated that coordinated efforts between government

and the private sector can help us punch above our weight. The same logic applies beyond this directive. Whether we discuss emission targets or cabotage limits, the challenge is not the regulatory framework per se, but ensuring that regulation works for all. Malta cannot afford to be a passive recipient of frameworks designed for larger economies. We must continue shaping them from the outset. In this context, the role of organisations like ATTO becomes even more critical. This is why, as a government, we commend and consistently encourage ATTO's engagement in international forums.

However, this international presence must be accompanied by investment. That is why we are investing heavily in strengthening our port infrastructure, modernising roadside services, and planning for the long-term decarbonisation of road and maritime transport. These projects are part of a broader effort to build a transport sector that is both resilient and compliant with emerging international standards.

Government support will always be there for this sector, whose survival we regard as a matter of national security. That is why we will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with our operators and ATTO, not only in defending their interests in Brussels, but also in investing in the systems, skills, and infrastructure that will define the future. A strong transport sector is not a luxury; it is a foundational requirement for a functioning economy. ○

Driving Digital Transformation in EU Transport

Why eFTI4ALL Matters

KURT FARRUGIA

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER | TRANSPORT MALTA



In a world that's moving faster every day, it's no longer enough for the transport and logistics sector to keep up — we need to lead. That's where the eFTI4ALL project comes in. This ambitious initiative, backed by the European Union's Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), is not just about digitising freight transport information. It's about reshaping the very foundations of how goods move across the Union — making the process smarter, greener, and more efficient for everyone involved.

At its core, eFTI4ALL is building the infrastructure to enable seamless electronic communication between authorities and businesses across the EU. That means less paperwork, less waiting, and more time and resources focused where they matter most. It's the digital handshake that Europe's freight industry has been waiting for.

But let's be clear: this isn't just a tech upgrade. It's a bold step toward a future where trust, transparency, and sustainability define the transport ecosystem. From logistics companies and customs officers to port authorities and IT providers — eFTI4ALL brings them all to the same digital table.


MALTA'S LEADING ROLE IN THE ROADMAP PILOT

Among the early pioneers championing this digital transition is Malta, whose leadership in the Roadmap Pilot has been instrumental in proving what's possible. Presently, Transport Malta through the Sustainability, Digitalisation and International Affairs Unit is co-ordinating all related matters including the search for experts, procurement practise and discussions with all Stakeholders. Malta has also taken the lead of the Cost Modelling working party. Through a hands-on, collaborative approach, Maltese authorities, transport operators, and tech providers shall be paving down critical foundations for what a functioning eFTI ecosystem will look like in practice.

From mapping data exchange processes to integrating systems in compliance with the eFTI Regulation, Malta's intend is to demonstrate how even small states can lead with agility and vision. The lessons to be learned and achievable results will not only accelerate national readiness — they will be molding the blueprint for other Member States.

This initiative is about empowering stakeholders — large and small — providing them with the tools and confidence to transition into the digital age, without leaving anyone behind. And for the public? The ripple effects foreseen will be profound: fewer delays, reduced emissions, and stronger, more resilient supply chains that power our economies and everyday lives. So, as we move forward, we will not just be connecting systems — we shall be connecting visionaries. Innovators. Changemakers. This is more than digital freight. It's digital freedom. Welcome to the future of transport. Welcome to eFTI4ALL.

As we stand at the crossroads of tradition and transformation, eFTI4ALL is proving to be more than a project — it's a movement. One that dares to reimagine not just how we move goods, but how we move forward as a connected Europe. From the smallest island states like Malta, punching above their weight through innovation and resolve, to the vast continental corridors pulsing with trade — proving that a unified digital ecosystem is not only achievable, it's already unfolding.

This is about empowering every actor in the logistics chain to operate with agility, sustainability, and shared purpose. It's about laying the digital foundations for the next generation of European transport — one that's cleaner, smarter, and borderless by design. The path ahead isn't just paved with technology. It's illuminated by collaboration, courage, and an unshakable belief that we can do better. So let us not merely adapt to the future. Let us author it — together. 

eFTI4ALL: Connecting data. Empowering people. Transforming Europe.

eFTI4ALL Project



Co-funded by
the European Union

www.efti4all.eu



The ECMT Group on Road Transport, part of the International Transport Forum (ITF), plays a pivotal role in shaping and facilitating international road transport across its member countries. It drives international road transport forward by coordinating policies and managing a license system for seamless freight movement. It also sets high standards for safety and sustainability, updates member states on key regulations, and shares expert guidance to help countries align operations and improve efficiency.





Denmark's Status update on eFTI4ALL Project



LUKAS LUND UJVARI
ADVISOR
KONTOR FOR PLAN OG KLIMA /
PLANNING AND CLIMATE

Denmark is advancing steadily with the implementation of eFTI. We are currently assessing several models for establishing an eFTI Gate, including the possibility of a Nordic collaboration, with the goal to ensure that the gateway is both efficient and future-proof. These options are under evaluation, and we expect to determine our direction in the coming months.

Denmark has established contact with key national stakeholders in the context of implementing the eFTI Regulation. This includes business and employers' organisations, competent authorities with responsibilities for transport inspections, and DANAK, the national accreditation body. Two dialogue meetings have been held to inform participants about the eFTI framework and to discuss opportunities, challenges, and the planned implementation process.

About business and employers' organisations, Denmark is engaging in dialogue regarding the launch of pilot projects with relevant companies. Initial feedback has been positive, with several companies expressing clear interest in participating in testing activities related to the eFTI software. In parallel, work is ongoing to inform relevant economic operators about the forthcoming need for certified eFTI platforms, to ensure broad awareness and preparedness across the sector.

For public entities, the focus is on equipping the Danish police and other competent authorities with detailed information on the eFTI components and operational procedures. Efforts are also directed towards ensuring the effective coordination of future implementation activities, including testing and pilot phases, to support a consistent and informed rollout across inspection authorities.

On May 27-28, we had the pleasure of hosting the eFTI4ALL consortium meeting in Copenhagen, with around 40 participants. The meeting facilitated valuable knowledge sharing among partners.



ECMT- Malta's Perspective

The European Conference of Ministers of Transport is an organisation that aims to coordinate transport policy between member countries and improve international transport links. It is the organisation which gave birth to the International Transport Forum (ITF), an organisation within the OECD. Hauliers use the ECMT multilateral quota licenses to carry goods across the wider European context, extending from Portugal to Azerbaijan and including 43 different countries. Morocco is set to join the group next year. Malta has been a long-lasting member of the ECMT system.

The Group on Road Transport (RTG) regulates and develops this ECMT Multilateral Quota System through which licences are issued and managed. It reports on a yearly basis to the Summit of Ministers of the ITF which is held every May in Germany.

Recent developments of the system include the application of a Quality Charter which, in practice, applies the EU Transport Acquis to hauliers from non-EU hauliers with the intention of elevating the quality standard (market access, vehicles used, social regulations) across all ECMT Countries. Launch in 2015, this charter is now applied by all 43 member countries and is widely recognised as a trigger of quality improvements in the transport sector across the whole continent.

Following the introduction of the Charter, the RTG embarked on a project to digitalise the licensing system. Since 2017, Transport Malta has been leading this ambitious project by chairing the sub-group specifically created to usher the ECMT system to the digital era. A huge part of the work included convincing all 43 Member Countries to shift to the digital solution, and the actual development of the system with the chosen developers from Moldova. Moreover, Ing. Attard Pullicino also led the revision of the User Guide (the rule book) of the Road Transport Group to develop the licensing process and its enforcement to the Digital Solution, along with its approval from a GDPR perspective.

The Authority shall be hosting the Road Transport Group (RTG) of the International Transport Forum in Malta this coming October to mark the launch of the Digital ECMT Licensing System. This new system will come effective from December 2025 and will be the first fully digital licensing system in European transport. Malta's role

Malta joined the European Conference of Ministers of Transport in 2002, and was a big user of ECMT licences up to EU accession as all road haulage operations with the continent could be done only using these licences. Since then, the demand from the sector shrunk although recently we are seeing new interests in operating to Turkey, Serbia and other neighbouring countries. The inclusion of Morocco, and eventually other Northern-African countries in the licensing system could also offer new opportunities to hauliers operating to these countries given the interests and existing links with Tunisia and Algeria.



eFTI4EU

The eFTI4EU project involves eight EU member states: Austria, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, and Portugal. Additionally, the project has observer members: Ireland, Netherlands, Spain and Inland Navigation Europe.

DETAILED BREAKDOWN:

Partner Member States: Austria, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, and Portugal. Belgium, and namely the partner SERVICE PUBLIC DE WALLONIE (SPW), once part of the Consortium, retired in 2024.

Observer Members: Ireland, Inland Navigation Europe, Netherlands, and Spain. Lead Partner: The Ministry of Climate of Estonia.

STARTING DATE: 1ST APRIL 2023 PROJECT OVERVIEW:

The eFTI4EU project is a collaboration between these countries to implement the EU Regulation on Electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI). The project's goal is to facilitate the adoption of eFTI, which aims to streamline freight transport information and improve efficiency across the EU.

EFTI4EU AT A GLANCE:

eFTI4EU is a cooperation of a pan-European consortium of 22 partners, including 8 Member States (plus 4 Observers), united in their vision to pave the way for the implementation of Electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) architecture. The aim of the project is to create a unified approach to the operation of eFTI Gates, and to implement a reference architecture for exchanging logistics and transport data, which will be piloted through a series of use cases (both at national and cross-border level) in all the 8 Member States directly involved.

eFTI4EU is the first project making the EU Regulation 2020/1056 (eFTI) real. It is financed under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) program of the European Commission.

EFTI4ALL:

The eFTI4ALL project builds on the eFTI4EU project deliverables by using them as models and further contributes to the implementation of the eFTI Regulation by involving 5 additional Member States (Sweden, Denmark, Malta, Luxembourg, and Greece) for assistance with the eFTI Regulation implementation, with Poland involved in activities to raise awareness. Activities to make stakeholders aware of eFTI and to promote the implementation of eFTI will be carried out in a 6th Member State (Poland).

COUNTRIES INVOLVED IN EFTI4ALL:

Sweden, Denmark, Malta, Luxembourg, Greece, and Poland (Awareness Activities).

EFTI REGULATION:

The scope of eFTI Regulation encompasses several key areas related to the digital exchange of freight transport information. Primarily, it focuses on the legal and standardized framework for this exchange between economic operators and competent authorities controlling goods movements, in the context of EU and national regulations. This includes enabling authorities to accept and process freight documents electronically, improving transparency, efficiency, and compliance in the freight sector. eFTI Regulation promotes the implementation of technical solutions and processes aiming to modernize freight transport IT infrastructure.



Here's a more detailed breakdown of the scope:

1. **Digitalization of Freight Information:** eFTI Regulation: Projects aim to implement the EU Regulation on Electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI Regulation 2020/1056), which establishes a legal framework for digital freight information exchange.

Data Sharing: This involves sharing information like waybills, dangerous goods information, and waste movement data related to road, inland navigation, and rail transport.

B2A Data Exchange: Focuses on the exchange of information between businesses and authorities, particularly through registered platforms.
2. **Interoperability and Interconnectivity:** Integration with Existing Systems: Projects aim to enhance interoperability and interconnectivity between the eFTI environment and other ICT systems and platforms used for the operational management of freight transport operations.

Data Sharing Framework: Developing technical specifications for data sharing frameworks and implementation guidelines for public and private sectors.

Federation of Platforms: Creating interoperability between different platforms, even if they use different technologies.
3. **Enhancing Efficiency and Compliance:** Logistics Chain Integration: Developing solutions to integrate eFTI platforms into logistics chains, demonstrating improved efficiency in freight operations.

Reduction of Administrative Burdens: Focusing on reducing administrative burdens for businesses and authorities, especially for SMEs.

Digital Innovation Acceleration: Establishing best practices to accelerate the adoption of digital innovations by companies, including SMEs.
4. **Addressing Data Security and Privacy:** Data Sovereignty, Privacy, and Cybersecurity: Projects address aspects of data sovereignty, privacy, and cybersecurity in the context of digital freight information exchange.
5. **Specific Areas Covered by the eFTI Regulation:** Dangerous Goods: Sharing information related to dangerous goods transport.

Combined Transport: Sharing information related to combined transport operations. Waste Management: Sharing information related to waste movement.

The scope of eFTI remains limited to what was included in the Regulation (EU) 2020/1056 and in related Implementing Acts and Delegated Acts, namely the provisions on rates and conditions, dangerous goods, combined transport and waste management. The latter has recently been incorporated into the text of the Implementing Act on eFTI Platform specifications.



Estonia's Path Toward eFTI



MERIKE SEPP
MANAGER
DIGITAL LOGISTICS CENTRE OF
EXCELLENCE

For Estonia, the journey in the digitalisation of freight transport began already 15 years ago on the business side, when two passionate experts, Ulrika Hurt and Heiti Mering, the founders of Digilogistika Keskus (Digital Logistics Centre of Excellence), began promoting the single window initiative for freight information exchange. Their efforts laid the foundation for what has since become the EU-wide eFTI Regulation (EU) 2020/1056.

In 2022, Estonia conducted a national analysis of the eFTI Gate (formerly known as the National Access Point), exploring both legal and organisational frameworks. This helped define the country's architecture for data exchange and confirmed the Ministry of Climate as the coordinating authority. Today, Estonia is part of the eFTI4EU consortium, with the Ministry of Climate leading the initiative. Estonia coordinates the project alongside partners from eight other Member States.

Estonian story continues as Digilogistika Keskus plays a crucial role in the eFTI4ALL project, which builds on the groundwork laid by eFTI4EU, advancing the adoption and interoperability of the eFTI Regulation across Europe. The involvement includes coordinating efforts to develop and test interconnected eFTI data exchange environments, which encompass both eFTI Gates and eFTI Platforms.

Digilogistika Keskus works closely with stakeholders to onboard logistics and IT public and private partners to eFTI, reflecting on developments and collecting feedback to improve the implementation process. It also provides expert advice and technical guidance not only to Estonia's Ministry of Climate but also to all participating countries and stakeholders in both eFTI4EU and eFTI4ALL projects.

There is a clear benefit for businesses, and the practice by Estonian companies proves it—for example, companies working with e-CMR (the enabler of eFTI) already account for around 30% of domestic freight using digital transport documents. The Estonian-led initiative called Baltic Corridor involves 5 countries. It focuses on pilot testing, stakeholder engagement, and cross-border cooperation. A testbed for all other Member States has also been created in Estonia and is receiving its final polish. Estonia is undoubtedly fully committed to making eFTI a working reality, both nationally and across Europe.



Greece Currently Advances National eFTI Infrastructure Under Ministry of Development Coordination:



SOFOKLIS DAIS
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE
HEAD OF FREIGHT TRANSPORT AND
LOGISTICS RESEARCH LABORATORY
CERTH/HIT

Greece is making significant progress in implementing the electronic Freight Transport Information. (eFTI) Regulation through the eFTI4ALL project. Under the coordination of the Hellenic Ministry of Development and with the support of its affiliated entity CERTH/HIT, the country is developing its National eFTI Gateway.

The hellenic pilot will focus on multimodal freight flows through Greece to the TEN-T network, integrating use cases involving combined transport, dangerous goods and eCMR, in collaboration with key private stakeholders such as PCT S.A. and ICCS, OB Stream and Online Data. The private stakeholders are contributing their eFTI platforms and operational networks to the project. Strong collaboration is underway with shippers, freight forwarders and public authorities to ensure smooth adoption and effective demonstration of eFTI capabilities in Greece.

In parallel, targeted outreach and training activities are being organized to support SME engagement and build national capacity.

To this direction, CERTH/HIT and stakeholder ICCS presented the objectives of eFTI and early outcomes of the eFTI4ALL project at the ITS Hellas Conference in Athens (May 2025), raising awareness of the eFTI Regulation and its implications for both public authorities and logistics operators in Greece.



Malta's Road Map Overview



LAURA GALEA
ASSISTANT MANAGER
SUSTAINABILITY, DIGITALISATION &
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS UNIT
LAND TRANSPORT DIRECTORATE

Malta's involvement in the eFTI4ALL project, as a partner, is that of working towards the implementation of the eFTI regulation and contributing to the development of a harmonised, cross-border system of eFTI Gates.

Currently, Transport Malta is participating in the Road Map pilot phase together with other 4 Member States which include Denmark, Greece, Luxembourg and Sweden. During this period the selected Member States will identify requirements for national eFTI implementation, resource needs (financial and technical), pilots planned during the project, and requirements for the long-term operation of the eFTI exchange environment. These roadmaps create a solid information basis to analyse the starting point for the implementation of the eFTI exchange domain.

Ing. Ronald Attard Pullicino (Director) and Laura Galea (Assistant Manager) from the Sustainability, Digitalisation and International Affairs Unit have developed the Maltese Roadmap, by establishing the different stakeholders who will actually be utilising the eFTI gate counting Customs, Police, Local Enforcement officers and Transport Malta officers. Several alternatives are being scrutinised such as, the possibility of joining a Consortium, a Multitenancy option or the eventuality of creating Malta's own eFTI gate. Although the latter eventuality is far from being Malta's ideal course of action as we do not see the need to have our own gate, by dint of Malta's peripheral location.

Malta has also taken the lead of the Cost Model WP, where all possible alternatives already mentioned will be tested and their respective costs will be thoroughly evaluated and presented.

Simultaneously, consultations regarding the necessary IT requirements needed to implement the eFTI gates are being held internally, before having further discussions with MITA regarding the technical aspects of the eFTI regulations. MITA is the agency dedicated in assisting the Government in transforming technological innovations into real business solutions. Its unique approach combines an innovative array of ICT and project management services with focused delivery capabilities using tried and tested methodologies to help fulfil Government's strategies and projects, while maximising the benefits of investment in technology.

Stay tuned as interesting and exciting times lay ahead for all Transport Economic Operators in virtue of such an innovative and futuristic project which is being pioneered by Transport Malta.



eFTI4LIVE



MARCO GORINI
SENIOR CONSULTANT
INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT SYSTEM
MANAGER
CIRCLE GROUP

The eFTI4LIVE project builds on the foundation of eFTI4EU and eFTI4ALL initiatives, involving more Member States and new stakeholders. It advances the implementation of the eFTI Regulation (EU 2020/1056) to enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and support sustainability in freight transport. While eFTI4EU focused on establishing eFTI Gates with technical specifications, and eFTI4ALL connected logistics companies to these gates, eFTI4LIVE aims at addressing the missing link by involving National Accreditation Bodies for eFTI platform certification. eFTI4LIVE, if approved, will enlarge the base of participating Member States, including IT service providers and additional Competent Authorities (Spain, Netherlands, Czech, Slovenia), to develop, test, and implement eFTI Gates and Platforms.



eFTI does not replace e-CMR but complements



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STRATEGY & POLICY ADVISOR
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The importance of the consignment related documents (datasets) that are within the scope of the eFTI Regulation.

The initial scope of the EU 2020/1056 eFTI regulation includes 4 types of consignment related documents that are the most used and important in the relationship between transport service providers and their customers.

These transport documents include:

- consignment notes (CMR, Air waybill, CIM for rail, waybill for inland navigation)
- dangerous goods documents (ADR, eDG, RID, ADN)
- waste movement documents
- air-cargo CSD (Consignment Security Declaration).

The documents must comply with international regulations that define how to record the handover of goods and the required transport-related information. When a carrier accepts goods from a consignor (or previous carrier) at the place of loading, the same information must later be recorded by the consignee (or next carrier) upon receipt.

For each handover, the information recorded is signed by two parties so that it can be used by the transport service provider for the invoicing of the transport service.

The international regulations provide transport and logistics partners with the ability to use the information recorded to be used in courts in case of disputes between commercial partners. The same information can also be used by insurance companies to assess claims following transport incidents.

Road transport service provider is mandated to use the CMR for cross-border transports between 2 of the 55 countries that adopted the UNECE Geneva 1956 CMR Protocol.

Transport service providers are also mandated to maintain an archive of each consignment note for multiple compliance purposes such as border control (customs) and EU intracommunity VAT reporting.

• There are two key reasons identified by the EU why transport and logistics companies have been slow to adopt digital datasets over paper documents

The Digital Transport and Logistics Forum (DTLF), a group of 120 digital experts that



advice the European Commission (DG Move), have identified two essential reasons why transport and logistics companies delay the adoption of digital documents towards digital datasets:

1. The CMR and e-CMR protocols specify how data is shared between economic operators but not between economic operators and competent authorities of EU Member States. Until the EU eFTI regulation becomes fully applicable in July 2027, business-to-government data sharing is regulated differently for each EU MS.

Economic operators want an EU harmonized regulatory environment. This can be achieved by an eFTI Regulation whereby a carrier needs a single connection to share the same transport data with competent authorities of MS where doing business.

2. A typical road service provider has hundreds of different customers, consignors and consignees. A typical shipping company is likely to contract transport services with multiple carriers.

Economic operators want an EU Harmonized digital handover process. The eFTI regulation introduces a common dataset that is based on the UNEFACT Multimodal Transport Reference Data Model. It is expected that if sharing data with authorities will be harmonized across EU, then Economic Operators (EO) will also use the same data structures between each other for business-to-business purposes.

The EU eFTI regulation (sharing data with government authorities, B2G) does not replace the UNECE e-CMR regulations (sharing data between commercial parties, B2B) but complements it because as from July 2027, eFTI will have a European legal basis, backed by a trusted network of gates and platforms) to use electronic transport documents, or rather datasets, of which the same information can be used for B2B and B2G purposes.

• The importance of end-to-end digital transport and logistics processes confirmed by the Benelux e-CMR/eFTI pilot project. Service providers participating in the Benelux e-CMR/eFTI pilot (from 2017 until eFTI becomes fully applicable) have reported significant efficiency improvements. On average, they save €10 to €13 per transport document by replacing paper-based CMRs with end-to-end data sharing.

These end-to-end e-CMR data sharing processes allows each party to access near to real-time information about the status of their transports and shipments and use this information for immediate invoicing of the transport, even delivery of goods, when the consignee accepts the goods from the carrier. This is important for carriers providing services across EU because today's paper-based processes can result in an administrative burden where it can take multiple days, even weeks, before the CMR, signed by the consignee, gets back to the head office for correct invoicing.

e-Invoicing is important, but the ability to track and trace transport operations and the movement of the goods within consignments is by far -the- most important reason for shippers and carriers to invest in end-to-end consignment processes with their business partners.

This is especially relevant in the case of multimodal service providers offering their customers door-to-door services often including road feeder and delivery services.

Figure 1 includes a view of a TMS implementation of the Finland-to-Sweden-by-Ferry use case that has been presented by the European Commission during the "Friday DTLF Meetings".

By implementing digital records for each consignment movement (blue bars), near-to-real track and trace information can be captured at the source and used for planning and operations purposes. The waiting times of truck drivers can be minimized when accurate departure and arrival information can be shared.

The ability to integrate all internal and external information sources is a number one capability and priority for every shipper, forwarder, carrier, warehouse manager, and cargo handling agent.

eFTI is a must-have enabler.



Figure 1 – TMS-implementation of the Finland-to-Sweden-by-Ferry use case presented by the European Commission (DTLF March-April 2025)



Sweden's Status Update



JAN BERGSTRAND
SENIOR STRATEGIST
TRAFIKVERKET-THE SWEDISH
TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION

The project was officially launched with a kick-off meeting held on 25–26 November in Brussels. During the event, the project's objectives, organizational structure, and financial matters were presented. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) outlining the collaboration between eFTI4ALL and eFTI4EU was signed.

Following the agreement's signing, CINEA disbursed the pre-financing to the Swedish Transport Administration, which subsequently distributed the respective amounts to the project beneficiaries.

A dedicated repository has been established, allowing the Swedish Transport Administration (TRV) to monitor the project's progress. Ahola and the Greek Ministry of Development have requested amendments to the contract. Ahola wishes to include a subsidiary with data expertise as an affiliated entity, while Greece seeks to add the research institute CERTH as an affiliated entity. Both proposed changes are currently under negotiation.

A consortium meeting took place on 27–28 May in Copenhagen at the Danish Transport Agency. The meeting reviewed the status of deliverables across all work packages (WPs), including roadmaps, specifications, pilot projects, use cases, and dissemination activities.

The roadmap task under WP1, "Common eFTI Analysis and Specifications," has been completed. WP2, "eFTI Implementation," is actively progressing, with pilot projects being established. WP3, "Dissemination," has launched the project website and is tracking presentations, publications, and other outreach efforts to ensure dissemination KPIs are met. WP4, "Project Management," has implemented the necessary procedures to support timely and efficient governance of the project.

Project members can also benefit from existing gate architectures in Estonia, Finland, and France. Sweden intends to run two pilots with business perspective within the project. RISE coordinates the first, eFTI data sharing enabled VWTnet. Overall, they have followed the concept of establishing the TWIN node as the intermediary in B2G communication. TWIN provides the foundational digital infrastructure to operate the Virtual Watch Tower (VWT). The pilot is planned to explore eFTI in five transport chains. An important next step is to ensure that the TWIN node used in the VWT environment has the necessary capabilities to communicate with the eFTI gate(s). Dalarna University who coordinates the second pilot, A Nordic Road transport pilot of eCMR, are in a planning phase and have introduced the pilot in their network.

Sweden participates also in a Nordic use case study for a common gate possibility/approach lead by Trafikstyrselsen, DK.



The Copenhagen Experience

The 2nd eFTI4ALL Consortium Meeting was held between the 27th and 28th of May 2025 in Copenhagen – Denmark.

Across these 2 days stakeholders had the opportunity to propound their expertise, challenges, findings as well as their concerns regarding the eFTI projects in general, focusing mainly on the eFTI4ALL. An overview of the Road Map piloting projects were given by the 5 participating Member States: Denmark, Greece, Luxembourg, Malta and Sweden. In addition, presentations from several developers were exhibited.

The eFTI4ALL project also involves other key players such as the European Commission, the German Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport, the Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications. Other entities like Digilogistika Keskus (Estonia), 51Biz Luxembourg SARL, Circle SPA (Italy), and more, all indicate a broad range of stakeholders involved in eFTI implementation which will come into force as of 9th July 2027. eFTI was established by Regulation (EU) 2020/1056 – a regulation enacted as part of the Mobility Package in 2020. Representatives of the above entities participated in this meeting.

The project is part (50%) financed by the EU and has been approved through a CEF grant. The overall project budget estimate is €30,564,486, of which €15,282,243 will be funded by the EU. The budget for Transport Malta is estimated at €1,685,000 of which €842,500 funded by the EU.

The 2 days meeting was held on a hybrid modality making it significantly more appealing for delegates to attend, yet more than 30 delegates from across the continent and beyond, including Martinique, attended physically. Ms. Laura Galea (Assistant Manager) from the Sustainability, Digitalisation & International Affairs Unit within the Authority for Transport in Malta attended in-person while Ing. Ronald Attard Pullicino (Director) of the same Unit attended remotely and chaired the Cost Modelling working party.

Such gatherings are very fruitful, primarily as they create an optimal environment where views can be exchanged, constructive discussions are made, and alliances can be explored. Thanks to such a futuristic project Challenges are being turned into Opportunities.

Plans are already in the pipeline for the upcoming Consortium Meeting in November 2025 with Malta being nominated as the possible organiser.



The National Maritime Single Window



MARK CARUANA ARENA
SENIOR MANAGER - PORT
OPERATIONS
PORTS & YACHTING DIRECTORATE
PORT OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

The National Maritime Single Window (tmSW) is an electronic platform whereby local shipping agents and commercial operators submit notifications related to ships arriving and departing to and from Maltese ports and territorial waters. tmSW was launched in September 2021.

The system has been implemented in compliance with Directive 2010/65/EU of the European Parliament. The purpose of this Directive is to simplify and harmonise the administrative procedures applied to maritime transport by making the electronic transmission of the information standard and by rationalising reporting formalities. This Directive applies to the reporting formalities applicable to maritime transport for ships arriving in and departing from ports situated in Member States.

tmSW adopts the reporting only once principle whereby ships visiting our ports and territorial waters submit, through their local appointed agent, the information once. The system provides a user-friendly interface for the agents to submit the required documentation so that no undue delay is caused to ships. Together with Transport Malta, other Government entities including Customs, Immigration Police and Health are able to vet information in line with their remit and thereafter verify/authorise ship calls accordingly. The information submitted includes, but is not limited to, ship voyage information, International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) declaration, Waste declaration (in line with the Port Reception Facility (PRF) Directive, FALform Declarations (including crew list, passenger list, cargo declaration, dangerous goods declaration, etc.) and the Maritime Declaration of Health. Through the system, agents and operators are also able to file applications related to services whilst ships are at berth or anchored within the territorial waters of Malta. Such services incorporate diving operations, hull cleaning operations, cold and hot works on board ships, paint works and engine immobilisations. tmSW also integrates a billing function of all the related port charges with the Authority's central billing system in order to ensure that any related invoices are processed in a timely manner.

Further investment is being made and works are ongoing to integrate the National Maritime Single Window with the European Maritime Single Window (EMSW) in line with the new EU regulation 2019/1239. Such Regulation will replace Directive 2010/65/EU setting up the European Single Window and incorporates formalities established in the various EU Legislation, FAL convention and national requirements. The new integration will ensure full compliance with the EU obligations on reporting formalities. Discussions are also ongoing both internal as well as with other Government entities to integrate tmSW with the new VTS system, Customs Single Window (PoUS) and with the Malta Police Corps systems. This will reduce the burden on the officers of the Authority and also on other national entities, the operators and Local Shipping Agents.



It is indeed a pleasure for ATTO to continue to consolidate its working relationships with the Authority for Transport - TRANSPORT MALTA.

The two entities have identified various critical areas which entail close collaboration. A case in point is the challenging eFTI4ALL PROJECT which is housed in this newsletter.

The aim of the project is to create a unified approach to the operation of eFTI Gates, and to implement referee architecture for exchanging logistics and transport data, to be piloted through a series of use cases (both at national and cross-border level) in all 9 member states directly involved.

I sincerely thank all those involved at Transport Malta and encourage them to keep up the excellent work.



JOSEPH BUGEJA
Chairman- ATTO

Staying Ahead in a Shifting Landscape

BY ANTOINE VELLA
PRESIDENT, ATTO



Having spent most of my working life in transport and logistics, I've seen the sector evolve from a predictable, relationship-driven industry into one increasingly shaped by international regulation, digital systems, and fierce competition.

However, what has not changed is the need to keep moving — not just on the road, but as businesses.

According to a report by digital solutions platform Upplify, in early 2025, Europe saw a modest decline in freight rates: contract rates fell by 2.3 points quarter-on-quarter to 131.1 points, while spot rates dropped 3.8 points to 134.1.

Costs are also a challenge. The same report shows how in Q1 2025 diesel prices rose by 4.8% quarter-on-quarter, despite recent dips, driven by global volatility. Labour costs remain under pressure: IRU reports 426,000 unfilled driver positions across Europe.

Moreover, wages are nudging up by around 5% year-on-year in certain markets like Spain and Italy. According to the IRU, this driver shortage is forecast to grow by 17% over the next five years without action.

These dynamics matter in Malta. Rising fuel costs, driver shortages, and pressure on margins are real across the EU, over three-quarters of road freight companies say margin pressures are intensifying.

In Malta, we face added pressures — limited scale, rising costs, and long shipping routes. Yet our operators continue to find ways to compete. Their success stems from strategic investment: upgrading ageing fleets, adopting more fuel-

efficient vehicles, improving driver conditions, and embracing digital logistics platforms. These aren't just costs — they're investments in staying relevant.

As someone who has been in this sector long before the EU single market or digitised customs systems, I know how easy it is to look back. But the reality is unfolding ahead of us. We are not only competing with operators down the road, but with fleets in countries with vastly different cost structures.

We won't necessarily win on price. But we can lead on reliability, responsiveness, and professionalism. These values will always count.

At ATTO, we remain committed to supporting our members as they invest in the future. But we also believe that ATTO should not only be seen as a voice for the sector when things go wrong. It's also a space for shared experience — a platform where ideas, insights, and solutions can be exchanged for the benefit of all.

As we continue to face mounting external pressures — from rate compression to cost volatility and staffing challenges — the time has come to view one another not merely as competitors, but as partners in strengthening the industry we all depend on.

The stronger and more agile we become — together — the better placed we'll be to face the next wave of challenges and to shape the future of transport and logistics in Malta. ○

Think Global, Act Local

How ATTO Is Steering Malta's Transport Sector Forward

BY TONY MIFSUD
GENERAL SECRETARY, ATTO

A STRATEGIC BALANCING ACT

In the world of international road transport, success requires both vision and adaptability. This is especially true in Malta, where the Association of Tractor and Trailer Operators (ATTO) demonstrates how "Think Global, Act Local" can be more than a slogan—it's a strategic imperative.

ATTO's leadership recognises its responsibility to guide Malta's international road transport sector through increasingly complex challenges, ensuring hauliers remain competitive, compliant, and resilient amid evolving EU regulations. Bridging the gap between EU policymaking and local realities has become ATTO's mission and strength.

GLOBAL THINKING, LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION

Malta's EU membership offers access to a unified legislative framework supporting safety, efficiency, and transparency. One example is the mandatory upgrade to smart tachographs, which enhance driver monitoring and ensure compliance with working-time directives—an EU-wide baseline that encourages fairer competition.

Similarly, the new eFTI4All Regulation (Electronic Freight Transport Information) mandates digital freight documentation across Europe. While promising streamlined operations, it also requires significant IT investment—posing particular challenges for smaller markets like Malta.

This is where ATTO's role is critical. As a member of the International Road Transport Union (IRU), ATTO connects Maltese operators to a global network of training, certification, and policy resources. By localising IRU programmes on digitalisation, safety, and sustainability, ATTO ensures that Maltese hauliers are not only informed but equipped to meet international standards. Policy Advocacy: Island Realities Must Be Recognised

Some EU regulations, such as the Combined Transport Directive and Mobility Package I, mandate the return of vehicles to their country of establishment every eight weeks. While designed to ensure fairness, such rules can disproportionately burden island states like Malta and Ireland, where road transport is intrinsically linked to maritime logistics.

This is a clear case where "Think Global, Act Local" becomes policy advocacy. As European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen noted, a one-size-fits-all approach cannot address



the specific needs of island and peripheral regions.

Through its involvement with INAG (Island Nations Advocacy Group) and support from the IRU, ATTO continues to push for a more proportionate application of EU directives that reflect Malta's unique context. This advocacy is backed by strong partnerships with Malta's national government, MEPs, and European institutions.

Investing in Compliance: A National Imperative

With each new wave of technology and regulation—be it smart tachographs, paperless freight under eFTI, or transitioning to greener fleets—the cost of compliance rises. Meeting these standards requires investment, especially for smaller operators.

ATTO is actively calling for a comprehensive funding strategy at both the national and EU levels. Grants, incentives, and technical assistance are essential to ensure that Maltese hauliers can remain competitive and compliant. This is not just an economic concern—it is vital for maintaining the integrity of a critical national sector.

MAKING THE GLOBAL WORK FOR MALTA

What distinguishes ATTO is its ability to translate global policy into local action. Through its IRU affiliation, the association promotes best practices in safety, emissions reduction, and operator training—always mindful of Malta's specific scale and infrastructure.

ATTO is also primed to lead EU-backed pilot projects in digital freight, clean fuels, and cross-Mediterranean logistics corridors, positioning Malta as a testbed for innovation in transport.

A CROSSROADS OF OPPORTUNITY

As Europe's transport sector becomes more digital, sustainable, and integrated, ATTO is guiding Malta's operators into the future—without losing sight of their operational roots. By thinking globally and acting locally, ATTO provides the tools, training, and advocacy needed for Maltese hauliers not only to adapt—but to lead.

In doing so, ATTO offers a powerful model for how national associations, regardless of their country's size, can shape policy, enable innovation, and drive progress in the global transport ecosystem. ○

Defending Our Transport Sector National Interest Must Come First

MARK ANTHONY SAMMUT

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT | SPOKESPERSON FOR TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY



Malta's transport and logistics sector is not just an economic activity but a lifeline. Every imported good, exported product, and link in our supply chain relies on the efficiency, resilience, and dedication of our logistics infrastructure and hauliers. The men and women in this industry work long hours, face complex regulations, and carry the burden of keeping the country running. Their concerns deserve to be heard and addressed.

Given our limited geographic scale, cost-feasibility has always been a significant obstacle to implementing large-scale transit infrastructure. The European Union can truly make a difference by supporting Malta through targeted investment and strategic funding mechanisms that recognise our unique constraints and potential.

ATTO has been unwavering in defending the rights of Malta's operators, and I want to make it clear: they are not alone. I fully support ATTO's ongoing efforts to ensure fair treatment for our hauliers at both national and European level.

The recent European Court of Justice ruling against the "return of vehicle" requirement was a significant victory – one ATTO had long advocated for. This rule, if enforced, would have imposed heavy and unjustified burdens on Maltese operators. It would have undermined fleet efficiency, increased costs, and made it

harder to compete. The ECJ ruling confirms what ATTO, and many of us, have argued: peripheral and island states like Malta cannot be treated as if they were landlocked. Together with government, we are now calling for further exemptions for island-based operators under the upcoming revision of the Combined Transport Directive, ensuring they are not unfairly disadvantaged by rules designed for larger continental states. As a group of islands, we have also put forward concrete proposals to strengthen maritime connectivity. We have called for investment in EU-funded electric ferry vessels and other initiatives to foster deeper economic integration between Malta and Gozo.

Malta's insularity and peripheral location also create a mismatch between our reality and the current framework of EU climate policy. Take, for instance, the revised Emissions Trading System (ETS) rules. For a country with no land connections — where air travel is not a luxury but a lifeline — new aviation charges present a serious risk to affordability, competitiveness, and accessibility.

We are concerned that the one-size-fits-all approach embedded in some elements of the Green Deal may disproportionately impact insular Member States. Tourism, freight, medical mobility, and educational access all depend on affordable and reliable transport. A sustainable transition cannot come at the cost of social and economic cohesion.

ATTO has been unwavering in defending the rights of Malta's operators, and I want to make it clear: they are not alone. I fully support ATTO's ongoing efforts to ensure fair treatment for our hauliers at both national and European level.

The maritime ETS, in force since January 2024, also raises concerns. While the European Commission's preliminary monitoring suggests no widespread rerouting, longer-term effects on ports like Malta's Freeport remain uncertain. Studies by the Central Bank of Malta already warn of potential inflation and a decline in GDP stemming from increased import costs. We must remain vigilant and ensure that EU climate policy evolves in a way that balances ambition with proportionality.

But the fight is far from over. ATTO's work must now continue to focus on preventing similar disproportionate rules, addressing unfair competition from foreign hauliers operating with double standards, improving port efficiency, and demanding better coordination between port authorities, customs, and law enforcement. Enforcement must be consistent, fair, and rooted in a proper understanding of the pressures local operators face. I pledge to continue raising these matters in Parliament and in all related fora. Together with my colleagues, our MEPs, Government, and ATTO itself, we will continue to defend Malta's interests in this sector and stand against any disproportionate

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measures which might harm our competitiveness. Malta's national interest must always come first, and that includes defending the transport sector from unjust treatment or ill-designed legislation. Hauliers do not ask for favours; they ask for fairness. As policymakers, we are duty-bound to deliver.

ATTO has our full backing. Malta cannot afford to ignore the sector that quite literally keeps it moving. ○

ATTO MEMBERS

3 WAY TRANSPORT

ALFARAN

ATTRANS

BTD

CHALLENGER

CONCORDE

EUROBRIDGE

EUROFREIGHT

EXPRESS TRAILERS

FAHRENHEIT

FALCOTRANS

GMC

JET FREIGHT

PARNIS ENGLAND

S&T

WHITE BROTHERS



Valletta Gateway Terminals

NICK TAN

CEO, VALLETTA GATEWAY TERMINALS LTD



Launched in September 2023 by the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects, Mr. Chris Bonett, Malta's National Maritime Transport Strategy (NMTS) seeks to engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders to shape a realistic and actionable plan that supports the nation's long-term maritime vision for 2050.

This initiative comes at a crucial time, as Malta experiences accelerating economic and social growth. To sustain this momentum, the country must not only invest in a resilient maritime infrastructure that can boost productivity and meet rising national demands. It must also come up with a strategy that is clear to the stakeholders and allows for both the government and private sector, on their own or by partnering up, to contribute to the overall goals and vision of the NMTS.

While the NMTS is taking shape, the sector continues to face significant challenges such as the shortage of skilled professionals and labour within the maritime industry.


This is further compounded by limited training opportunities and a lack of awareness and promotion of maritime careers. Without the entrepreneurial spirit of pioneers breaking down walls and challenging the norm, the industry would not be able to break out of its shell and truly transform, living up to its potential as the maritime nation it could be.

Infrastructure constraints and inadequate infrastructure present another major hurdle. These limitations not only disrupt daily operations for port stakeholders but also hinder the organised and scalable development of the broader logistics chain, which spans port operations, warehousing, and transportation. The ripple effect trickles down to traffic congestion, higher costs to the end users and low productivity of the nation.

A forward-thinking approach is essential. The NMTS must address existing logistical bottlenecks and at the same time, seek out the answers to the question, "How would Malta's maritime industry play a key role in the supply chain of the nation and globally 30 years from now?" The answer lies in coordinated, cross-sectoral planning and long-term, sustained investment.

At Valletta Gateway Terminals (VGT), the growth in cargo volumes has made space availability a pressing concern, with ripple effects throughout the supply chain. In close collaboration with our Associate Partner, ATTO, VGT is actively working to resolve the current challenges of our clients, in particular the lack of space for export-bound trailers. Both short-term and long term solutions are essential to ensure that the needs of clients are served.

Expanding the terminal's footprint through a secondary area would unlock considerable benefits for the nation. It could open up new opportunities for more value-added services, strengthen the supply chain and meet the increasing demand as Malta continues to develop.

As a key stakeholder in Malta's maritime ecosystem, VGT is committed to playing an active role in advancing the NMTS. We see both the challenges and the opportunities and stand ready to contribute to a maritime sector that is efficient, inclusive, sustainable, and globally competitive—one that embodies the ambitions of Malta's 2050 strategy. 

Malta Enterprise Boosts Business Growth with New Support Schemes and Global Connections

Malta Enterprise, the country's national economic development agency, continues to play a pivotal role in driving Malta's business landscape forward. With a history dating back to the 1950s, the agency remains committed to helping businesses thrive through targeted support, innovative funding schemes, and international partnerships.

Acting as a key adviser to the government, Malta Enterprise collaborates closely with both public and private sector leaders to shape policies that nurture sustainable development. This proactive approach ensures that Malta's economy stays resilient and ready to capitalize on emerging sectors and opportunities.

One of Malta Enterprise's standout roles is serving as the national contact point for the Enterprise Europe Network, linking Maltese companies with counterparts across more than 60 countries. This global network unlocks new avenues for collaboration, innovation, and market expansion, making it easier than ever for local businesses to compete internationally.

Malta Enterprise offers a broad range of services tailored to businesses of all sizes and industries. From startups to established companies, the agency provides expert guidance and practical assistance designed to help businesses succeed and adapt in a rapidly changing market.

To further stimulate economic activity, Malta Enterprise recently updated several key funding schemes:

- The Smart & Sustainable Investment Grant promotes the adoption of greener, more efficient business practices.

- The INVEST scheme supports companies launching new projects, expanding operations, or taking over assets from businesses closing down.
- The R&D Support Scheme funds research and development projects, encouraging companies to innovate and bring new products to market.
- The Skills Development Scheme helps businesses invest in employee training to maintain a competitive and adaptable workforce.

These programs are designed to future-proof Maltese businesses and ensure their long-term success.

HOW TO ACCESS MALTA ENTERPRISE SUPPORT

Businesses interested in exploring these opportunities can find more information on Malta Enterprise's website at maltaenterprise.com/support. For personalized advice, the agency's team can be reached via email at info@maltaenterprise.com or by calling Freephone 153.

As Malta Enterprise continues to evolve its offerings, it remains a crucial partner for businesses aiming to grow, innovate, and compete on a global scale. ○

MALTA HOME FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Malta Enterprise is the country's economic development agency, tasked with attracting new foreign direct investment as well as facilitating the growth of existing operations. In 2021 it launched the 'Start in Malta' initiative aimed to supercharge the Maltese startup ecosystem in order to be the birthplace of many more startup success stories to come.



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MALTAENTERPRISE

How Financial Services Can Help Shape the Transportation Industry

KENNETH FARRUGIA
CEO – BANK OF VALLETTA



Transportation plays a critical role in modern industry and is a key contributor to many economies around the world. The efficient movement of supplies, goods and raw materials provides the necessary lubrication to the cogs and wheels that turn world economies. Without efficient transportation, production and supply networks wouldn't function as smoothly and economies will struggle to operate at optimal capacity.

There are various ways how transportation affects economies. It provides reliable methods of delivery, reducing delays and ensuring that businesses operate within planned timelines and deadlines. Land transport is often more affordable than other modes of transport, making it a preferred option for industries looking for cost-effectiveness. It also offers access to remote areas, where other modes of transport cannot reach. Finally, it provides employment to millions of people, contributing significantly to the GDP of many modern economies.

Within this context, the world of finance plays a key role in supporting this industry, essentially by providing funding, investment opportunities and risk management approaches that benefit the relevant operators in this dynamic industry. In essence, a financial institution provides funding for factories, warehouses, transportation fleets, as well as investing in roads and other infrastructure. It also offers credit facilities for companies to manage their costs, payroll functions and other ongoing expenses.

Another important aspect of this symbiosis comes from the support offered by financial services institutions to the employees working in the industry, especially when it comes to planning for their future. The changing dynamics of today's job market and the growing need for the provision of value beyond traditional remuneration packages is leading many operators to offer voluntary occupational pension schemes to

their employees. This not only offers financial benefits but also highlights an organisation's intent in investing in its people for the long term.

And finally, a few words on sustainability. Today's economic reality is one where ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) principles are increasingly shaping industries around the world. The transportation industry is also impacted by this reality. Companies are adopting sustainable and renewable technologies, reducing carbon emissions, and investing in green infrastructure. The financial services industry again plays an important role in pushing the green agenda. By offering preferential pricing to businesses for sustainable projects, the Banking world is acting as a catalyst in changing the world into a better place for current and future generations.

As we move forward, we will face new challenges, coming from both from national and international realities. Knowing that we can rely on each other to overcome these challenges wins half the battle and strong cooperation between parties will certainly lead to sustained success. ○

Reclaiming the Road

Making the Driving Profession Attractive Again & Why Island Nations require improved consideration in the application of EU Transport Policy

GER HYLAND
IRHA PRESIDENT



The Irish Road Haulage Association (IRHA) and ATTO share many common challenges as representatives of road transport professionals from island nations. Our unique geographic circumstances often demand a more nuanced and pragmatic application of EU transport policy and we are both committed to advocating for it.

This article highlights critical issues such as the pressures of tachograph compliance, the urgent need to modernize how we support professional drivers and the glaring oversight of island nations in the Combined Transport Directive. These are not isolated concerns; they are shared realities that unite us in purpose and voice.

Through ongoing cooperation with ATTO, we aim to bring greater visibility to these issues and ensure that EU legislation reflects the operational realities of all Member States, particularly those on the periphery. I commend the strength of our partnership and look forward to continuing our joint efforts in pursuit of a fairer, more inclusive transport framework.

The Tacho Trap – Addressing “Tachograph Anxiety” and the Image of the Profession

The professional driving sector has long struggled to attract and retain new talent, particularly younger drivers. There are many factors at play, but one cannot ignore the mounting psychological toll exacted by rigid and often complicated tachograph (tacho) rules across the EU. Among the community

of Irish and Maltese drivers—those from island nations—this issue is not merely administrative, it's existential, as currently a level playing field is being denied to the Island Nations.

Recent changes following the Court of Justice of the EU ruling in Joined Cases C-541/20 to C-554/20, which overturned the mandatory eight-week return-to-base rule, were welcomed. However, ambiguity still clouds the implementation of driving and rest time (D&R) provisions under the EU Mobility Package I. These rules, although well-intentioned, too often convert logistics professionals into time-obsessed rule calculators.

For drivers heading home to Ireland or Malta, a missed ferry due to inflexible D&R regulations can mean up to 48 hours of additional wait time. This is not merely inconvenient; it is an unnecessary punishment. When derogations designed to “enable a driver to rest at home” fail to consider such basic geographic and dynamic realities, we must ask: were island nations even considered in the drafting of these rules. Quite obviously not when you consider the current Ferry Mode only being available since 2020?

Moreover, the culture around tachograph compliance generates what many drivers describe as “tacho anxiety”—an ever-present stressor that undermines health, safety and job satisfaction. Drivers feel the paradox: racing to rest and waiting to rush. Break rules are treated with the rigidity of a machine, punishing even minor deviations. For instance, a 14-minute coffee break doesn’t count; only 15 will do. Anything less adds back to the day and any more than 15 just makes the day longer. It’s no surprise that such bureaucracy drives good people out of the profession.

One veteran driver summed it up: “If I were asked why I’m retiring early, I’d say the nonsense of the CPC and the rigidity of the Tacho have destroyed the simple pleasure of the job.” This is not just anecdotal. The IRU Truck Driver Barometer 2024 shows that while younger drivers (18–24) still view the job positively (with a Net Promoter Score of +44 in France), enthusiasm collapses among older drivers (–29 for the 55+ age group). The reason? Overregulation, declining respect, and dwindling autonomy. We must modernize how we view and regulate professional drivers. Not as risks to be managed, but as professionals to be supported.

It’s time for the European Commission, DG MOVE, and other regulatory bodies to revisit the rules with empathy. As ESPORG and Edenred Mobility’s work on driver wellbeing highlights, mental health and working conditions are as critical as CO₂ targets or cross-border enforcement.

Island Nations and the Missing Link – Why the Combined Transport Directive Can’t Stall

On another front, island nations are again being left behind—this time in the EU’s slow progress on updating the Combined Transport Directive (CTD). According to MEP Flavio Tosi, rapporteur on the CTD, no political will exists to review the definition of Combined Transport. It currently does not automatically apply to transport operations from Island Nations. Our hauliers therefore do not get the treatment they deserve in terms of cabotage exemption, week-end ban or even State aids.

For road hauliers in countries like Ireland and Malta, combined transport isn’t just a “green” option—it’s a necessity. Our connectivity depends on seamless transitions between road, ferry, and occasionally rail. Yet the current CTD draft fails to reflect the operational needs of intermodal logistics from peripheral Member States. It risks becoming a regulatory exercise that serves neither hauliers nor the climate agenda. One needs to acknowledge the positive contribution to both the green agenda and the multimodal model that the unaccompanied trailer provides, by attributing it with Combined Transport status.

Worse still, delays in finalizing the directive send the wrong message: that island nations are an afterthought in EU logistics policy. A study commissioned by the European Parliament promises to provide terminal mapping, TEN-T connections and last-mile insights. But action must follow insight. As Tosi himself notes, the CTD must “promote combined transport where it could have a greater impact.” (Interview with Railfreight.com published on 27th June). That means loads from or to islands, which means us.

CONCLUSION: A CALL FOR PRAGMATISM AND INCLUSION

The Irish Road Haulage Association calls on EU legislators to deliver reforms that make sense on the ground—and on the road. We ask:

- For a revision of D&R time interpretations that includes input from island nations.
- For harmonized tachograph enforcement across Member States, with allowances for operational realities of Island Nations drivers.
- For timely, inclusive progress on the Combined Transport Directive that supports—not sidelines—peripheral logistics actors.

The road ahead needs not be lonely or stressful. But that will depend on whether drivers from all Member States (mainland or island) are finally given the respect, flexibility, and support they deserve. ○

Grimaldi Group

Driving Innovation and Sustainability Across Global Shipping

DR EUGENIO GRIMALDI
EXECUTIVE MANAGER, GRUPPO GRIMALDI



That of the Grimaldi Group is a remarkable Italian success story with a truly global reach. It is the achievement of a family of Neapolitan entrepreneurs whose connection to the maritime industry dates back to the Middle Ages, yet today it is deeply rooted in the present—and, more importantly, boldly oriented toward the future.

The company employs 20,000 people and operates a fleet of more than 130 vessels serving 150 ports in 60 countries across five continents. It is the largest shipping group in Italy and the world's leading operator in the maritime transport of rolling cargo.

In recent years, the Group has achieved several major milestones: from launching and strengthening short- and deep-sea services, to acquiring ports and investing in terminals and shipping agencies. Most notably, Grimaldi ships sailing seas around the world are now increasingly innovative and environmentally friendly.

The scale of the Group's ambitious fleet renewal is evident in the nearly \$5 billion invested between 2018 and 2025 in 48 new vessels of various types — including ro-ro, ro-pax, ro-ro multipurpose, and car carriers. As of now, the Group has 26 new ships on order, scheduled for delivery between 2025 and 2030.

Each of the new Grimaldi vessel series is designed to maximize both transport capacity and environmental efficiency, thanks to fully customized design and a wide range of innovative technologies on board. These include: propulsion and hull shape optimisation; state-of-the-art electronically controlled engines; the use of renewable energy via solar panels; battery packs for Zero Emission performance in port; an Air Lubrication System to reduce hull resistance by creating a layer of micro-bubbles under the hull; and the application of biocide-free silicone paints.

Not by chance, the Group owns and operates the world's largest and most eco-friendly short-sea ro-ro ships—14 "Eco" vessels belonging to the GG5G class. With a loading capacity of 7,800 linear meters of rolling cargo, i.e. over 500 trailers, these ships can carry twice the freight of previous-generation ro-ro vessels—without increasing fuel consumption.

In other words, they halve CO₂ emissions per unit transported during navigation, and reduce emissions to zero while docked, thanks to lithium mega-batteries and solar panels.

The nine ro-pax vessels under construction will be able to run on ammonia too, a zero-carbon fuel, while other new vessels—including all the 17 car carriers under construction—will also be "Ammonia Ready," meaning they are designed to be converted in the future to use ammonia as a propulsion fuel.

In addition to the design and commissioning of state-of-the-art, eco-friendly vessels, significant retrofitting work has been carried out on much of the existing fleet—for example on the Grimaldi Lines ro-pax flagships Cruise Roma and Cruise Barcelona, which in 2019 became the first ferries in the Mediterranean equipped with Zero Emission in Port® technology.

In partnership with the University of Naples Federico II, the Group has developed and patented a system to enhance the



environmental performance of onboard exhaust gas cleaning systems. These systems can now also act as “vacuum cleaners” of the sea, capable of removing microplastics and other pollutants from the sea.

Nor is the fleet the only focus of Grimaldi’s green investments: these have also extended to several of its terminals, where solar panels, wind turbines, and intelligent LED lighting systems have been installed to further reduce environmental impact of shipping-related activities. ○

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Naming Ceremony In Genoa For Gnv Orion 26th Ship In Next-Generation Modern Fleet

PIERFRANCESCO VAGO
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN

MATTEO CATANI
CEO



Genoa, July 3, 2025 – Today, under the iconic “Lanterna” in Genoa, GNV Orion was officially named. It is the 26th next-generation ferry of GNV, part of the MSC Group. Moored alongside its sister ship GNV Polaris, Orion is the second vessel delivered to the company as part of a fleet-wide modernization and expansion plan, which will see the arrival of six more next-generation, LNG-powered ferries by 2030.

“Orion and Polaris mark the first decisive step in an important fleet renewal program—totaling eight new vessels compared to the current 26—which has required over 1 billion euros in investments. Within five years, a significant portion of the fleet will be completely renewed, with an increase of around 60% in tonnage. This is a remarkable figure that highlights the MSC Group’s strong commitment not only to GNV, but to the entire Italian transport system, in which shipping plays a crucial role—particularly in maintaining connections with other countries,” said Pierfrancesco Vago, Executive Chairman of GNV.

The traditional naming ceremony took place in the port of Genoa, the historic headquarters of the company and a symbolic location where it all began in 1992. Over the past few years, GNV has grown significantly from this base, increasing the number of vessels it operates by over 50% and expanding its market share. Today, the company operates 33 routes across 8 countries bordering the Mediterranean and is one of the leading ferry operators connecting Italy, Spain, and North Africa.

“Ferries are not just means of transport, but true strategic infrastructure capable of connecting regions and creating value for local communities. We feel a strong sense of responsibility for the social role we play as enablers of shared growth opportunities. Thanks to the support of the MSC Group, our plan includes the delivery of eight ferries by 2030, enabling us to further strengthen our market share both in Italy and internationally. If innovation is the driving force behind this

excellence-oriented development plan, our people are its beating heart.” said Matteo Catani, CEO of GNV.

GNV Orion, moored between two other vessels of the fleet — the brand-new GNV Polaris and Splendid — was named by an exceptional godmother: Federica Pellegrini, Italy’s greatest swimmer, Olympic gold medalist in Beijing and four-time world champion. With her extraordinary talent and determination, she built a career marked by outstanding achievements, becoming one of the most accomplished athletes in the history of global swimming.

The highlights of the celebration were marked by the blaring horns of the three ships and the music performed by the Carlo Felice Opera House Orchestra of Genoa, accompanying key moments such as the traditional bottle breaking against the ship’s bow and the parade of GNV Orion’s officers.

The event was attended by representatives of local and national institutions, including Edoardo Rixi, Deputy Minister of Infrastructure and Transport; Marco Bucci, President of the Liguria Region; and Silvia Salis, Mayor of Genoa. Also present were key figures from the MSC Group, including Pierfrancesco Vago, Chairman of GNV, and Matteo Catani, CEO of the ferry company.

GNV Orion: featuring the latest Technologies and Passenger Comfort



Under the command of Salvatore Provenzano and with its 109 crew members, GNV Orion stands as a prime example of innovation and sustainability in the ferry sector. Built at the Guangzhou Shipyard International (GSI) in Canton, China, GNV Orion has a gross tonnage of approximately 52,000 tons, a length of 218 meters, a beam of 29.60 meters, and can reach a maximum speed of 25 knots. Equipped with 433 cabins, the vessel can accommodate 1,700 passengers and offers 3,080 linear meters of cargo capacity, making it one of the most spacious and high-capacity ro-pax ships currently operating in the Mediterranean.

Like the other seven new vessels included in GNV's fleet renewal plan, GNV Orion is equipped with advanced environmental technologies that allow it to reduce CO₂ emissions by over 30% per unit of transportable cargo compared to previous-generation ships. It is prepared for shore power connection (cold-ironing) and fitted with state-of-the-art systems, including advanced energy-efficiency technologies such as heat recovery systems, inverters to optimize electrical performance, full LED lighting, optimized hull, bulbous bow, propellers, and rudders, and silicone-based hull coating to minimize fuel consumption.

Onboard GNV Orion, both passengers and drivers can enjoy a safe and comfortable journey, thanks to a wide range of services designed to make the crossing a truly memorable experience—combining convenience, relax, and attention to detail. Every space is carefully designed to ensure functionality and maximum comfort for all types of passengers, with a cutting-edge hospitality model that includes dedicated spaces for every age group: from children's play areas, which include after-dinner entertainment during high season, to relaxation zones for adults like the Seaview Lounge, and a retail area for onboard shopping. There are also dedicated spaces for pets. All meals are freshly prepared onboard, with special attention

given to menus and ingredient quality. The Market Place offers fresh dishes and live cooking shows for an excellent culinary experience. Food and beverage areas are further enhanced by the Pizza and Steak House—an evolution of the traditional Pizza Corner—which blends modern cuisine with Italian culinary tradition.

Finally, GNV Orion features advanced communication technologies, including high-speed Wi-Fi and digital signage, with Braille signage to ensure a fully inclusive and accessible experience for all.

Horizon 2030: 60% of new additional Tonnage for One of the Most Modern and Spacious Fleets in the Mediterranean

Following the delivery of GNV Polaris and GNV Orion, GNV's fleet renewal and expansion plan foresees the addition of two more newly built vessels by early 2026: GNV Virgo and GNV Aurora, both powered by LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas). These vessels will allow for a 50% reduction in CO₂ emissions per unit of transportable cargo compared to previous-generation ships.

They will be followed by four additional LNG-powered ro-pax vessels, bringing the total to eight new ferries by 2030, all equipped with cutting-edge environmental technologies. Construction of this second series of ships is set to begin in 2026, with the first vessel expected for delivery in early 2028, followed by the others at six-month intervals.

These upcoming vessels will have a gross tonnage of approximately 71,300 tons, a length of 237 meters, a beam of 33 meters, and will be able to accommodate up to 2,500 people (including passengers and crew). They will feature over 500 cabins and offer 3,500 linear meters of garage space. In terms of size, these will be the largest ships in the company's history and the highest-capacity vessels operating in the Mediterranean.



Sullivan Maritime Ltd

A Trusted Partner Representing Grimaldi with Excellence

KARL SULLIVAN
DIRECTOR



For over a century, the Sullivan family has played a defining role in Malta's maritime industry. Spanning four generations, their legacy extends across shipping, hospitality, and finance sectors that have flourished thanks to Malta's strategic location and rich maritime tradition. Today, Sullivan Maritime Ltd stands as a proud continuation of that legacy, serving as the dedicated agent for Grimaldi Group, one of the leading names in global shipping.

Sullivan Maritime acts as the vital link between Grimaldi Group and its diverse client base. At the heart of this role is a deep commitment to providing efficient and professional services tailored to the unique needs of every customer. A specialised booking and documentation team ensures that cargo coordination is seamless, accurate, and delivered on time, every time.

Accuracy and efficiency are paramount in shipping, and Sullivan Maritime takes this responsibility seriously. By investing in integrated IT systems developed in close collaboration with Grimaldi Group, Sullivan Maritime has significantly streamlined the data exchange process. This not only reduces the potential for error but also enhances the reliability and speed with which services are delivered.

Sullivan Maritime's operations team ensures that all pre-arrival procedures are carried out meticulously. In constant communication with the terminal operator, the team guarantees the safe and timely berthing of vessels. This attention to operational detail reflects the company's unwavering professionalism and dedication to maintaining its standards.

Strong relationships are the cornerstone of long-term success. Sullivan Maritime regularly facilitates meetings between Grimaldi Group representatives, clients, and local authorities, helping to nurture and sustain partnerships that span over 50

years. These personal interactions reinforce mutual trust and underline the importance of collaboration in a competitive global environment.

The Sullivan family name has become synonymous with shipping excellence in Malta. Through Sullivan Maritime Ltd, that reputation continues to grow with a commitment to a reliable service and a firm belief in investing in people. Representing Grimaldi Group is not just a role; it is a responsibility carried out with integrity, precision, and pride.

As one of the sector's key players, Sullivan Maritime's close collaboration with ATTO continues to grow from strength to strength. This relationship, rooted in the shared commitment to the RoRo industry, has been further formalised through the recent signing of an Associate Partner Agreement, reinforcing the strong ties between both parties.

As the maritime world evolves, Sullivan Maritime remains firmly anchored in its values, offering a steady hand in a fast-moving industry, connecting carriers, clients, and communities through service that stands the test of time. ○

Representing Grimaldi Group is not just a role; it is a responsibility carried out with integrity, precision, and pride.

eFTI regulation

What Malta's road transport operators need to know

RALUCA MARIAN
IRU EU ADVOCACY DIRECTOR



The EU's drive to digitalise freight transport compliance is moving forward, with important implications for Maltese operators. The Electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) Regulation, adopted in 2020, aims to enable a harmonised and secure exchange of transport-related compliance information in digital format across the European Union. For Malta, a small island nation that relies heavily on efficient multimodal connections, this development presents both valuable opportunities and clear challenges.

The eFTI Regulation, formally Regulation (EU) 2020/1056, will provide the harmonised EU framework needed for road freight operators to use digital proof of compliance rather than paper-based ones. The regulation covers key areas such as cabotage, combined transport, waste shipments and the transport of dangerous goods. Importantly, it provides a legal framework ensuring that national authorities across the EU accept digital proof of compliance from July 2027, once the regulation becomes fully operational.

IRU recently assessed the latest developments in the implementation of the eFTI Regulation during a dedicated webinar with its members. The first three implementing and delegated acts, which define how authorities access digital data, list relevant national laws, and establish a common dataset, entered into force in January 2025. These measures lay the groundwork for the authorities' side of the equation. Now that they are in place, the countdown to the July 2027 application date has officially begun.

For Malta, the shift to digital freight compliance is particularly relevant. Given its geographic position, most Maltese freight operations involve multimodal transport chains that include road and sea. The eFTI framework will help simplify documentation and speed up enforcement by enabling authorities to verify information digitally and instantly. This should help reduce delays, lower administrative burdens and support smoother integration with mainland EU logistics flows.

The regulation does not require operators to adopt eFTI systems immediately. The use of eFTI remains voluntary for transport companies. But from 2027 onwards, competent authorities will be legally obliged to accept digital documents, provided they meet eFTI requirements. Operators will need to work with certified eFTI platforms and be able to provide the data in both

machine-readable and human-readable formats, such as a PDF that can be viewed on tablets or printed if necessary.

For Maltese companies, many of which are small and medium-sized enterprises, the transition to eFTI offers a chance to modernise processes and reduce costs over time. However, it also requires investment in digital systems and coordination with service providers to ensure data can be managed and exchanged properly. Importantly, eFTI does not replace existing business tools like e-CMR, but works in parallel with them. Integrating eFTI with systems already in use will be a crucial step.

Maltese authorities will also have a critical role to play. National systems must be updated to allow enforcement bodies to access and validate eFTI data. This includes preparing customs, roadside inspectors and port officials to process eFTI-compliant digital documents. The benefits of the regulation would otherwise be delayed or diminished. It is essential for Maltese road carriers to enter the dialogue early to see how eFTI will be implemented and get involved in testing.

The wider use of eFTI is expected to encourage further adoption of digital solutions, including e-CMR, which remain underused despite their legal acceptance. For Malta, joining the e-CMR family could help transport companies prepare for the shift to eFTI and ensure they are not left behind in the digital transition. IRU encourages all road transport operators in Malta to start evaluating their digital capabilities, identify where investment may be needed, and engage with digital service providers. IRU will continue to work with its members and EU institutions to support a smooth and practical rollout of eFTI, with particular attention to the needs of smaller and island-based operators.

Malta has the opportunity to benefit from a smarter, faster, and more connected freight system. Early preparation is the key to making the most of eFTI. ○

Road freight transport and logistics taking Malta into the future

MARC BILLIET

IRU ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR –EU GOODS TRANSPORT



Malta, one of the smallest EU countries, is a Mediterranean island nation with long-standing strategic importance for European and global trade. As a key hub between the European mainland and non-EU partners, it plays a vital role in regional connectivity.

Although often seen as reliant solely on maritime and air transport, Malta also has a dynamic road goods transport and logistics sector. Its carriers exemplify “co-modality”: freight modes working efficiently together to benefit the economy and citizens.

The Maltese government has recognised the value of its road carriers, particularly by supporting them during the Mobility Package 1 negotiations. As an island nation, Malta faces additional hurdles to ensure its carriers remain competitive in the EU Single Market. A recent visit to the islands earlier this year made me realise that there are other important developments currently on the table or on the horizon which Malta and its road carriers will have to tackle to take the country into a carbon-neutral, economically successful and socially acceptable future.

The EU is looking to the road freight transport and logistics sector to help meet its target of becoming the first carbon-neutral region by 2050. Maltese carriers will also need to contribute, but they can only succeed if the Maltese government ensures sufficient support to ease the transition to carbon neutrality in both domestic and intra-EU markets. Carriers should not be expected to invest solely in zero-emission vehicles, which remain costly and are not yet suitable for all operations. Instead, they should be encouraged to optimise their decarbonisation efforts using their existing fleets during the transition.

The continued success of Maltese road freight carriers will depend not only on turning decarbonisation challenges into opportunities, but also on maintaining access to skilled professionals. This means that enablers must be created to make the Maltese road freight transport and logistics industry

more attractive. Developing training and knowledge-sharing programmes in Malta – led by government, industry and the education sector – can become a key facilitator in this respect.

It is also crucial not to underestimate the importance of enabling and deploying tools to support road freight carriers and their drivers in their daily work. Digitalisation can further optimise processes in the freight transport and logistics chain, while also reducing the administrative burden of proving compliance with the numerous EU and national regulations governing freight, vehicle use, and staff. Digitalisation must evolve into tools that are accessible to the vast majority of road carriers in Malta and the EU, which are small and medium-sized enterprises.

With its relatively small road carrier industry, creative and innovative mindset, and the advantage of a tight-knit community, Malta is perfectly positioned to serve as a laboratory for developing and testing digital solutions in the business-to-business domain. It is also an ideal place to foster communication between businesses, authorities and governments.

As the EU’s Electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) Regulation moves into full implementation and testing, Malta has the opportunity to play a leading role in turning theory into practice. In this context, it is high time for Malta to enable the use of e-CMR, which should prove to be a significant operational facilitator for road freight and multimodal transport. It is inspiring to see how small countries and their carriers can create opportunities to tackle vast challenges and turn them into advantages. IRU will continue to lend its support to Maltese carriers and their representative association, ATTC, as they move towards the future. ○

Malta Customs Operations and the EU Reform Agenda

JOSEPH CARUANA
COMMISSIONER FOR TAX AND CUSTOMS



The Malta Tax and Customs Administration is currently navigating a pivotal period of transformation, guided by its 2023–2025 Strategic Plan. This roadmap defined four strategic domains—the customer, efficiency and effectiveness, agility and intelligence, and the workforce—as the cornerstones of its modernisation agenda. These priorities reflect a deep commitment to rethinking the way Customs services are delivered, ensuring they are fit for the evolving demands of global trade.

This national effort is closely aligned with the EU Customs Reform, a bold initiative to future-proof customs operations across all Member States. Driven by the need to respond to complex, fast-paced supply chains and the exponential rise in e-commerce, the reform seeks to fundamentally reshape how customs administrations manage, control, and facilitate trade across the Union.

At the heart of the EU reform are three transformative pillars:

- o Forging a new partnership with business based on trust and shared responsibility.
- o Enabling smarter and more targeted customs controls through enhanced use of data and analytics; and
- o Fully digitalising customs procedures to streamline operations and improve responsiveness.

One of the most significant components of this reform is the proposed creation of a new EU Customs Authority, which will oversee the coordination and governance of the EU Customs Union. Alongside this, the development of a unified EU Customs Data Hub—a centralised digital gateway for customs and trade data—marks a shift away from fragmented, declaration-based systems towards a single, real-time data-driven model. This will enable Member States and businesses to submit data once, with seamless verification across the supply chain. The result will be greater transparency, improved risk management, and more agile decision-making.

Malta Customs is actively embracing this direction. Although challenges persist—particularly the full implementation of the Union Customs Code (UCC) and the continued reliance on manual or semi-automated systems—significant strides are being made. The Department is focused on modernising its infrastructure, refining risk-based processes, and enhancing

service delivery. Accelerating digitalisation is seen as a critical enabler, not only to increase efficiency but also to keep pace with the complexity of international trade.

One key dimension of this reform is workforce transformation. With recruitment and retention challenges increasingly evident, Malta Customs is exploring innovative strategies to build a digitally proficient and resilient workforce. Upskilling initiatives, technology-enabled workflows, and career pathways tailored to a new operating environment are central to this agenda. The goal is clear: to cultivate a forward-thinking, agile customs administration capable of meeting tomorrow's challenges.

Notably, the UCC reform includes the abolition of the €150 duty relief threshold and the introduction of a new “bucketing system” for low-value e-commerce consignments. These measures aim to promote a fairer, more predictable import regime, one that ensures control and revenue protection while reducing the administrative burden for both customs and traders.

Moreover, enhancements to the Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programme—through the new “Trust & Check” model—reflect a smarter, risk-based approach to compliance. By rewarding trusted operators with simplified procedures and fewer interventions, Malta Customs can allocate resources more efficiently, while supporting a seamless trading experience for businesses.

Although full deployment of UCC systems remains in progress, Malta Customs continues to lay the groundwork for digital integration. Ongoing investments in IT infrastructure, coupled with strategic collaboration at the EU level, demonstrate a sustained commitment to delivering a robust, adaptive, and user-oriented customs service. ○



ASSOCIATION OF TRACTOR AND TRAILER OPERATORS

ATTO Unveils New and Refreshed Logo

The new year 2025 promised several events and initiatives that would underscore ATTO's determination to tackle the mounting pressures faced by Malta's tractor and trailer operators.

This is why ATTO wanted to kick off the new year with the unveiling of a new visual identity, a rebrand that would reflect a forward-looking organisation, ready to be more active and outward-looking with respect to the looming challenges related to EU regulation, driver shortages, infrastructure gaps, and island-specific costs continued to reshape the business landscape.

ATTO's new logo was unveiled during a meeting held on the 18th of February for all members, associate partners and industry stakeholders.

In a brief speech, ATTO's Chairman Joseph Bugeja noted that the revamped logo symbolised both continuity and renewal.

"Our sector remained a critical pillar of Malta's economy," he said, "yet operators still shouldered disproportionate burdens. This rebrand marked our readiness to push harder for pragmatic solutions with government and European partners." ○



ATTO Engages EU TRAN Committee on Urgent Transport Issues Impacting Malta

One of this year's highlights was ATTO's high-level meeting with the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN) on the 28th May 2025 held in Malta which focused on the growing challenges facing the country's international trailer operators.

During the committee meeting, ATTO Chairman Joseph Bugeja described the worsening driver shortage as "no longer just a logistics problem – it's a matter of national interest," with over 80% of Malta's goods reliant on international road transport and called for a streamlined mechanism to issue work permits for qualified third-country national (TCN) drivers.

"These drivers contribute significantly to our economy and tax base without burdening national infrastructure," he said, while also acknowledging recent improvements in administrative processes and thanking Identità Malta and Jobsplus for their support.

ATTO also raised concerns about the impact of the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS), which adds an estimated €408 in extra costs per trailer for round-trip journeys between Malta and Genoa. "We are not seeking exemptions," Mr Bugeja clarified, "but we urge the EU to adopt measures that reflect the logistical realities of island states."

A key proposal was the formation of an EU task force to address the stalled reform of combined transport regulations. "This discussion has dragged on for too long," he said. "Island states must be central to the reform process."

This meeting follows months of growing momentum for ATTO's island-state transport agenda, including collaboration with counterparts in Ireland and Cyprus, and the successful hosting of the "Turning Challenges Into Opportunities" conference earlier this year.

Mr Bugeja concluded by thanking MEP Dr Daniel Attard for his continued support and for facilitating this first-ever visit by the EU TRAN Committee to Malta. "We remain committed to ensuring Malta is treated as an equal partner in Europe's transport ecosystem." ○





KPMG Sectoral Study To Understand Better The Industry's Challenges and Opportunities

In April of this year, ATTO hosted a focus group session as part of an in-depth sectoral study being conducted by KPMG on behalf of the Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Public Works. The study will shed new light on the current road haulage industry in Malta while placing a strong emphasis on the importance of strategic adaptation in the face of mounting regulatory and economic pressures.

The economic significance of the sector is undeniable: it contributes €48 million in gross value added, €25 million in gross operating surplus, and employs over 800 full-time equivalents. Trailer and tractor operators – 85% of whom are members of ATTO – play a crucial role in servicing Malta's trade and supply chains.

A report shared during this focus group flags several threats to the sustainability of the industry, namely disproportionate impacts from EU legislation such as the "Mobility Package," emissions trading systems, and requirements for digital compliance and fleet decarbonisation.

This confirms how operators are increasingly faced with higher compliance costs, uncertainty, and difficulties adapting to rapid regulatory and technological changes.

The study will examine decarbonisation, digitalisation, supply chain resilience, and protectionism - global forces that are transforming how logistics operate within the EU.

Malta's unique insular nature makes these shifts particularly challenging, especially as infrastructure upgrades and fleet renewal come at a significant cost.

It is hoped that the study will highlight areas of opportunity, such as improving digital readiness, lobbying for tailored EU regulatory treatment that reflects Malta's insularity, and harnessing technology to enhance efficiency. Greater collaboration among hauliers and continued dialogue with policymakers are also recommended to safeguard the sector's competitiveness and long-term viability.

"ATTO welcomes the study as a much-needed step in providing factual data and context to support future action. It will give better direction to policymakers to account for the distinct characteristics of Malta's transport realities and ensure that future legislation does not unfairly disadvantage local operators," says Joseph Bugeja.

"The industry stands at a crossroads. This study is in line with ATTO's efforts to continue ensuring that the voice of Malta's hauliers is heard and respected at both national and European levels."



Malta's Role in the ECMT Road Transport Group

The ECMT Group on Road Transport part of the International Transport Forum (ITF), plays a pivotal role in shaping and facilitating international road transport across its member countries. It drives international road transport forward by coordinating policies and managing a license system for seamless freight movement. It also sets high standards for safety and sustainability, updates member states on key regulations, and shares expert guidance to help countries align operations and improve efficiency.

Strengthening Cross-Border Access & Cooperation

Malta continues to play an active and influential role in the ECMT Group on Road Transport (RTG), a key international body that manages and develops the ECMT Multilateral Quota System.

This system, governed by the International Transport Forum (ITF) under the OECD, facilitates international road haulage operations across 43 European and Eurasian countries—from Portugal to Azerbaijan. Morocco is expected to join the system in 2026, expanding the network even further.

The RTG is responsible for regulating this licence-based system, which allows hauliers to operate across borders with a single permit. It also reports annually to the ITF Summit of Transport Ministers, held each May in Germany.

One of the system's most significant recent advancements has been the application of a Quality Charter, which enforces EU-level standards on non-EU hauliers. This aims to create a more level playing field across all ECMT member states by standardising market access rules, vehicle specifications, and social regulations.

MALTA'S HISTORICAL AND ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

Before joining the European Union, Malta was a major user of ECMT licences, as these were the only means for local hauliers

to access continental markets. After EU accession, reliance on ECMT permits declined. However, in recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in using these licences—particularly for operations to countries like Turkey, Serbia, and beyond.

Looking ahead, the anticipated inclusion of Morocco—and potentially other North African countries such as Tunisia and Algeria—within the ECMT system presents new and promising opportunities for Maltese hauliers. There is already growing interest and existing logistical links with some of these markets, and the expansion of the ECMT network could provide a more streamlined and cost-effective means of accessing them.

HOW?

Single Permit, Wider Reach: Hauliers would be able to operate in these new territories using the same ECMT multilateral licence, removing the need for country-specific permits.

Simplified Border Procedures: Entry and transit processes would be harmonised under ECMT rules, reducing red tape and delays.

Lower Operational Costs: Less paperwork and fewer permit fees would translate into leaner, more cost-efficient operations.

New Trade Routes: North Africa's emergence as a trade and manufacturing hub opens up new lanes of opportunity—particularly in automotive, agri-food, and textiles.

Existing Business Links: Malta's cultural and commercial ties with countries like Tunisia could be leveraged to establish partnerships and early-mover advantages in new corridors.

A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN DIGITAL INNOVATION

Malta's contribution to the ECMT extends beyond policy participation. Since 2017, the Maltese delegate has served as Vice-Chair of the RTG and chairs the subgroup responsible for the digitalisation of the ECMT system.

This ambitious project is now nearing completion, with the new digital platform set to launch on January 1, 2026. The shift to a digital system will modernise how licences are issued, managed, and monitored—enhancing transparency and efficiency across the board.

STRATEGIC BENEFITS FOR MALTA

Active participation in the RTG has brought Malta significant strategic benefits. The forum provides a direct communication channel with senior officials from transport ministries across the ECMT region. This network has often proved invaluable—whether to resolve specific issues faced by Maltese hauliers abroad, clarify enforcement actions, or rally support on EU transport-related matters.

As ATTO continues its work in representing and supporting Maltese operators, the ECMT system—and Malta's strong standing within it—remains a key pillar in ensuring our hauliers have access to international markets, are protected against unjust treatment, and remain aligned with evolving standards and practices. ○

This ambitious project is now nearing completion, with the new digital platform set to launch on January 1, 2026.





Decarbonisation and Digitalisation Take Centre Stage at ATTO's First International Conference

ATTO's first international transport and logistics conference brought together key stakeholders from Malta and beyond to discuss the pressing challenges and opportunities facing the industry, with decarbonisation and digitalisation emerging as dominant themes.

Opening the conference, ATTO Chairman Joseph Bugeja reflected on the sector's evolution and ATTO's role in shaping policy and driving constructive dialogue with authorities. "The haulage sector has made significant progress through collaboration and perseverance," he said. "As we enter an era of sustainability and digital transformation, ATTO remains committed to safeguarding the interests of our members."

Mr Bugeja noted ATTO's recent milestones, including increased membership, stronger international ties, and deeper engagement with policymakers, while reaffirming the association's commitment to infrastructure improvement and regulatory adaptation.

Transport Minister Chris Bonett also addressed the conference, highlighting the importance of unity and strategic investment. "The challenges facing transport require the kind of proactive, policy-driven approach ATTO has consistently shown," he said, stressing that a modern, competitive logistics sector is essential for Malta's connectivity and growth.

A key highlight of the event was the signing of the first official Cooperation Agreement between ATTO and Transport Malta. The agreement, signed by Mr Bugeja and Transport Malta CEO Kurt Farrugia, formalises closer collaboration in strengthening Malta's transport sector.

Discussions during the conference focused on the EU's decarbonisation agenda and the push for digitalisation. While sustainability is a priority, stakeholders stressed the need for pragmatic policies, investment in infrastructure, and regulatory clarity to enable a smooth transition.

In his closing remarks, ATTO General Secretary Tony Mifsud emphasised the importance of a unified voice. "We must ensure Malta's needs are recognised at European level. Only through collective effort can we build a resilient, future-ready transport industry." ○









Maltese International Trailer Operators discuss ways how to make EU & Local Funding more reachable to their Sector

Maltese transport and logistics companies are very keen to identify best options to make use of EU and local funding opportunities to modernise their operations and reduce their environmental impact.

This message emerged during a seminar organised by the Association of Tractors and Trailers Operators (ATTO) for its members to help them explore how they can benefit from available EU schemes to work more sustainably and competitively.

The seminar was also addressed by several high-profile speakers, namely Hon. Stefan Zrinzo Azzopardi, Minister for EU Funds, Shadow Minister Hon. David Agius, Claude Sammut, Director General, EU Funds, Cain Grech Sargent, Chief Business Development Officer at Malta Enterprise and Rodrick Zerafa, CEO, Servizzi Ewropej f'Malta.

In their respective interventions, all speakers underscored the strategic importance of supporting Maltese hauliers in overcoming structural and operational barriers through smarter use of available EU funding streams.

In his welcome address, ATTO Chairman Joseph Bugeja emphasised the importance of collective national efforts in protecting the industry from burdensome legislation.

He referred specifically to the EU proposed Directive regarding the return of tractor units to their base in Malta every 8 weeks, which ATTO and the Ministry for Transport successfully lobbied against and highlighted that Maltese international trailer operators continue to face unique challenges compared to their mainland counterparts.



“Our geographic insularity imposes specific constraints — from dependency on ferry connections, to the high cost of sustainable fuels, and inflexible driver regulations. The current EU framework does not sufficiently account for these realities. This is a critical moment for the European Commission to recognise and act on these disparities,” he said.

Ing. Ronald Attard Pullicino, Director at Transport Malta, underlined the potential consequences had the Return of Vehicles been implemented locally.

“Had the Directive been applied to Malta, transport companies would have faced an estimated 11% rise in operating costs — a burden that would have been passed on to consumers through higher prices,” he said.

He also addressed the sector's hesitation in applying for funding, attributing it partly to perceptions that the process is long and bureaucratic.

“While the process can indeed be demanding and resource-intensive, there is scope to design tailored schemes that can support the sector in its transition towards greener, digitalised, and more innovative practices,” he added.

In a concluding remark, Mr Bugeja added, “ATTO's strength lies in unity and both the private sector and public authorities need to continue working collaboratively to ensure that Malta's logistics sector, on which Malta's economic growth depends, can continue to innovate, operate more sustainably and remain competitive in a rapidly evolving European transport landscape.”



Had the Directive been applied to Malta, transport companies would have faced an estimated 11% rise in operating costs — a burden that would have been passed on to consumers through higher prices

News

'Only unity can protect our transport and logistics sector', association chairman says

A year ago, JOSEPH BUGGIA was appointed chairman of ATTO, the association that represents Maltese tractor and trailer operators that connect Malta to mainland Europe daily. One of ATTO's principal commitments was to raise awareness of the transport and logistics sector and its importance to Malta's economy. Buggia speaks to The Malta Independent on Sunday on challenges and progress.

It has been a very challenging year but it is not a day of gloom and despair. We have achieved several important milestones, most notably, the passing of the Transport and Logistics Bill, which is a landmark for the sector.



The campaign to highlight the sector's importance has been a long and arduous process. We have made significant progress through dialogue with the government and various stakeholders. The Transport and Logistics Bill is a testament to the sector's importance to the economy.

THE CORPORATE TIMES

Friday, January 26, 2025

Corporate Bonds driving record growth in Malta's Capital Markets - page 4
America first, world second: Trump's bold gambit set to replace global order - page 7



ATTO urges less bureaucracy on TCN permits to address driver shortages

The Association of Tractor and Trailer Operators (ATTO) is calling for reduced bureaucracy in the work permit process for third-country nationals to tackle the critical shortage of heavy goods vehicle (HGV) drivers currently impacting Malta's trade operations.

The issue is not only limited to Malta. A recent report on driver shortage carried out by the International Road Transport Union (IRU) revealed that a third of over three million third-country nationals (TCNs) is in demand.

"However, the lengthy and bureaucratic work permit process in Malta is placing the sector at a huge disadvantage in securing qualified HGV drivers," added Buggia.

He pointed out that with approximately 80 per cent of goods movement in Malta depending on road transport, the shortage of drivers has now become a national issue.

"As operators continue to struggle to find drivers, the sector's competitiveness is being eroded. It is not just a matter of finding drivers, but of finding them in a timely and cost-effective manner," he added.

ATTO has been advocating for a streamlined work permit process for TCNs, which would allow operators to secure drivers more efficiently and at a lower cost.

"We are not asking for a complete overhaul, but for a more efficient and less bureaucratic process that would allow us to compete in the global market," Buggia stated.

The association has been in dialogue with the government and various stakeholders to address this issue. They are hopeful that a solution will be found soon.

"We are committed to working with the government to find a solution that would benefit the sector and the country as a whole," Buggia concluded.

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How the Association of Groupage Operators is Shaping the Industry's Future in Malta

Since its inception in the 1990s, the Association of Groupage Bond Operators (AGO) has united Malta's groupage freight forwarding industry under one umbrella.

At the time, Malta operated under a strict customs regime, where all imports from outside the country were subject to rigorous inspections. The freight forwarding sector was concentrated under government-controlled bonds, making it easier for customs to monitor and regulate imports.

Malta's accession to the European Union in 2004 marked a significant turning point. With the introduction of the free movement of goods within the EU, trade was liberalized, making it far more efficient for importers and manufacturers to conduct business across member states.

Prior to the establishment of the Hal Far Complex, groupage bond operations were based at Fort Ricasoli—an inadequate and outdated facility. The move to Hal Far was therefore welcomed as a step forward, offering a better-managed complex that significantly improved the control and flow of goods within Malta's supply chain.

Strategically located on the TEN-T road network connecting the Freeport to Malta's main seaport in Valletta, the Hal Far Complex offers easier access for freight forwarders and local hauliers (burdnara). This setup enables efficient collection and distribution of goods arriving via consolidated shipments, helping to reduce road congestion.

Additionally, it allows Customs to carry out inspections and releases more effectively for cargo from non-EU countries. Originally, AGO was primarily responsible for the upkeep and

maintenance of the Hal Far Complex. Over the years, however, the association has fostered a strong collaboration with Malta Customs, contributing to the streamlining of operational procedures at the complex—benefiting the industry as a whole.

In recent years, AGO has been actively lobbying the Malta Tax & Customs Authority (MTCA) to enhance infrastructure and facilities at Hal Far. Some structural improvements have been completed, and further upgrades—such as enhanced security systems—are currently in progress. Gate control has already improved, and advocacy continues for more modern, digital systems to further optimize operations.

One of the most pressing issues faced by AGO members and the industry today is the lack of available space. It is important to recognize that the volume of imported cargo today is several times greater than it was 30 years ago. This challenge was recently underscored during a visit by the Prime Minister and the Minister for Transport, and it remains a top priority on AGO's agenda.

As an association, AGO remains committed to working closely with other industry stakeholders to strengthen and modernize Malta's supply chain.

Given Malta's geographic limitations as an island nation, it is essential that collaboration continues to be fostered to improve efficiency and competitiveness, supporting AGO's belief in its vital role in shaping the future vision of Malta's logistics and freight forwarding sector. ○

Reflecting on Three-Way's Journey

Notes from the Trade

ANDREW ABELA

MANAGING DIRECTOR, THREE-WAY MALTA

Those of us in the logistics and transport sector know that success rarely arrives with noise. It comes gradually—through early mornings, late deadlines, equipment failures, route detours, and client calls that don't wait for office hours. When I founded Three-Way Malta in the early 2000s, I had no illusion that this would be a linear journey. It hasn't been, and I suspect that's true for most of us in this business.



Our entry into the industry was pragmatic. The demand for reliable, flexible, and timely freight services was growing steadily in Malta, particularly in the retail and industrial sectors. We began with a strategy to slowly infiltrate into the cereal bulk sector since storage space in Malta is always costing more and more it was the right time for us to enter this sector, by collecting, shipping and deliver the amount needed to our clients instead of storing huge amounts, but our aim from the outset was always to build capacity that would match international expectations.

One of the first lessons we learned—something many in the trade will relate to—was that fleet investment must move in parallel with client needs, not ahead or behind it. Early on, we added tail-lift, Bulk tipping trailers, liquid bulk trailers and temperature-controlled vehicles because clients asked for them. Later, headroom trailers, pallet systems, and curtain-siders became standard. Our choices were based on utility, not marketing.

Technology introduced its own wave of changes. While Malta was slower than some mainland markets in adopting transport management systems, we made the shift early. For many in the sector, these tools were a cost; we saw them as risk control. Tracking, route optimisation, and proof-of-delivery protocols are no longer value-adds—they're part of the minimum expected

standard. We've had to make peace with that reality and keep moving.

The real turning point for us—perhaps for the whole industry—came during the pandemic and its aftermath. COVID disrupted everything: personnel availability, ferry schedules, customs flow, and cross-border predictability. Those of us with lean, adaptable structures fared better. During that time. Not because it was the trend, but because client risk had changed, and we needed to respond.

Trade professionals understand the real work doesn't lie in branding or fleet photos—it lies in process control, relationship maintenance, and regulatory foresight. We've worked hard not only to keep our operations moving, but to align with new post-Brexit customs protocols, tighter environmental standards, and growing calls for carbon-conscious freight practices. No operator can afford to sit these out.

Looking around the region now, I'm encouraged by how Maltese freight operators are evolving. There's more collaboration, more investment in training, and more cross-border planning. The Mediterranean isn't an easy market—we all know this—but it offers unique proximity and access if you're set up for it.

Three-Way's journey, like many others in this field, has been one of quiet scaling. No shortcuts, no big announcements—just an ongoing commitment to build capabilities that meet what the trade demands. If there's a takeaway I'd share with any colleague in logistics, it's this: stay close to your operations, listen to what's changing at loading bays and client sites, and don't confuse movement with progress.

Thank you to all our partners, peers, and even competitors and last but not least to ATTO – the Association of Tractor & Trailer Operators who keep pushing the standards upward. The road ahead is still under construction—but we're all travelling it together. ○



Driving Logistics Forward

Alfaran Trailers & the Backbone of Maltese Freight

In the Mediterranean logistics arena, few names hold the legacy and operational credibility of Alfaran Trailers. Established as a modest family transport business in Malta nearly a century ago, Alfaran has grown into a well-rounded logistics provider supporting both local and international freight demands with unmatched consistency. With four generations of experience behind it, the company today represents not only the evolution of a business but also the transformation of the Maltese freight industry itself.

Based in Hal Far, a key industrial zone on the island, Alfaran Trailers operates with a clear focus: offering clients integrated, dependable, and competitively priced transport solutions across land, sea, and air. At the centre of its services is a robust road freight network. Operating over 20 tractor units and more than 50 semi-trailers—including tautliners, flatbeds, and mega trailers—Alfaran provides regular weekly pickups across mainland Europe. This capacity allows for both scheduled and urgent haulage, making it a trusted partner for manufacturers, importers, and distributors requiring real-time flexibility and reliability.

What sets Alfaran apart is its ability to offer true end-to-end freight solutions. While many in the sector rely on subcontracted links, Alfaran owns and controls every part of its supply chain. This vertical integration includes a 20,000-square-metre warehousing and logistics facility in Hal Far, providing secure cargo storage, cross-docking capabilities, and efficient trailer parking. For clients, this translates into smoother coordination, reduced lead times, and better cost efficiency.

Its capabilities extend well beyond road freight. Alfaran's sea freight services, developed through years of international collaboration, support both FCL and LCL shipments across a range of container types. Whether handling standard units or specialised reefers and flat racks, the company maintains the agility to serve diverse industry needs. This sea freight network has proven vital in reinforcing Malta's connectivity to European, North African, and Middle Eastern ports, enabling businesses on the island to remain competitive on a global scale.

For time-critical consignments, Alfaran offers dedicated air freight services. Drawing on a network of global airline partners and freight handlers, the company facilitates swift, traceable shipments from origin to destination. In sectors such as pharmaceuticals, automotive, and electronics—where time is often as valuable as the cargo itself—this offering provides a dependable, high-speed alternative to traditional modes.

Alfaran's domestic services complement its international scope. From palletised last-mile deliveries to coordinated unloading

and customer handling, the company supports full-cycle logistics on the ground. The ability to manage smaller, split, or groupage shipments allows clients to scale operations fluidly, without facing the high costs often associated with partial loads.

At the core of Alfaran's business philosophy is a commitment to dependability, customer responsiveness, and transparent operations. This is evident not only in the quality of its services but also in the way it engages with clients—offering real-time updates, custom freight planning, and responsive support at every stage. The result is not just service delivery but partnership—a quality increasingly rare in today's fragmented logistics landscape.

Over the decades, Alfaran has remained privately owned and deeply embedded in Malta's economic fabric. But its vision is anything but insular. With a well-maintained fleet, a scalable infrastructure base, and the flexibility to adapt to new market

conditions, the company is actively investing in its future. Sustainability, fleet innovation, and digital transformation are now priorities as Alfaran prepares to meet the growing demands of a sector shaped by e-commerce, environmental standards, and global uncertainty.

For many businesses in and around Malta, Alfaran Trailers is more than a service provider—it is a logistics partner rooted in heritage but powered by modern ambition. Its continued success offers a blueprint for family-owned logistics firms across Europe: stay true to your values, invest in your capabilities, and never stop moving forward. ○



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Alfaran Ltd. delivers innovative road freight solutions, providing efficient and reliable goods transportation across Europe. By utilizing advanced logistics and state-of-the-art technology, Alfaran Ltd. streamlines delivery routes, minimizes transit times, and strengthens cargo security, offering seamless and cost-effective road freight services for businesses across the region.



ATTRANS Expands as It Turns 50

ATTRANS is a family-owned transport group founded in 1976 by Philip Attard Snr. Over nearly five decades, the company has grown from its headquarters in Malta to establish a strong presence across Europe, with key operations in The Netherlands and Italy.

As we approach our 50th anniversary in 2026, ATTRANS—the island's longest-standing international logistics operator—is proud to mark this milestone with the opening of a brand-new depot near Genova, Italy. Located approximately 20 km from the city, this new 11,000 sq m facility replaces an existing site and will include truck parking, a cross-docking area, warehousing space, a repair centre, and a range of other services.

Notably, ATTRANS was the first operator to open a facility in Genova fifteen years ago.

Today, Attrans Italia, located in Genova, serves as our main planning hub and fleet service centre, playing a critical role in the movement of goods to and from Malta and Tunisia.

Elsewhere in Europe, Attrans BV, based in Alblasterdam in the Netherlands, manages service planning for operations across the continent. Further strengthening our regional footprint, ATTRANS North Africa BV, located on the Dutch–Belgian border, owns and operates its own fleet of equipment serving the Benelux, UK, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria corridors.

This strategically built network—established under the leadership of Philip Attard Jnr and the management teams at each office—has allowed us to offer local and international clients a trusted, seamless logistics solution not only to and from Malta, but throughout Europe and North Africa.

ATTRANS continues to invest in its fleet, acquiring the latest Euro 6-compliant tractor units and trailers. Our dry fleet consists primarily of mega trailers, including box trailers and curtain-siders.

For temperature-sensitive cargo, we operate dual-temperature-controlled reefer trailers. These allow for precise control over dual temperature zones, enabling the transport of pharmaceuticals at 2–8°C and 15–25°C, or food products at -20°C or 2–4°C. The flexibility of dual-temperature units enhances our service capacity, particularly when transporting similar types of goods in different conditions.

Quality is at the core of everything we do. ATTRANS has implemented a robust Quality Management System (QMS) based on the ISO 9001 standard, which has been accredited since 2014. This framework ensures we consistently meet customer and stakeholder needs while striving for continual improvement.

Given our significant involvement in the pharmaceutical sector, we also adhere to Good Distribution Practice (GDP) standards. This quality system safeguards the integrity and safety of pharmaceutical products throughout the distribution process—from manufacturer to end-user—by enforcing stringent controls on storage, handling, transportation, and documentation.

In line with our commitment to sustainability, ATTRANS adopts a hands-on approach to environmental responsibility.

Unlike many companies that offset carbon emissions through third-party tree-planting programs, we maintain our own olive grove at our main base in Żebbuġ - a locality whose name fittingly means "olives" in Maltese. We also plant olive trees on other company-owned land and have installed solar panels across our facilities to generate renewable energy and reduce our carbon footprint. ○

ATTRANS
International Transport

BTD Transport

A Gozitan Specialist With Deep Local Roots

Owned by Benjamin Cauchi, BCT (Ben Cauchi Transport) is a trusted logistics and transport company based in Kerċem, Gozo.

Founded as a family-run business, BTD has steadily grown into a reliable name in the island's freight and haulage sector. With a strong reputation for punctuality and professionalism, the company has become a go-to partner for businesses requiring dependable inter-island logistics.

Rooted in Gozo's tight-knit community, BTD Transport began with a single truck and a commitment to serve local contractors and merchants. Over the years, it has expanded its fleet and service offerings to meet the growing demands of Gozo's construction and commercial sectors.

It offers general freight transport between Gozo and Malta and also international road haulage between Malta and Europe. It offers construction material delivery and palletized goods logistics for retail and wholesale clients.

Operating from Villa Peprina in Kerċem's Triq Ghajn Tuta, BTD Transport continues to support Gozo's infrastructure and economy with tailored logistics solutions.

For inquiries, they can be reached at +356 9991 8284.





Challenger Transport

Keeping It Moving All the Time, Come Rain or Shine"... A Note from the Road

SILVIO MAGRO,
MANAGING DIRECTOR, CHALLENGER TRANSPORT

Silvio Magro always had a passion for trucks and in 1987, he bought his very first one.

"When I founded Challenger in 1993, my aim was not to build something big but to build something reliable."

Mr Magro, who is Managing Director of Challenger International Transport Ltd recalls how at the time, Malta's transport and logistics landscape was very different, with limited routes, heavy paperwork and no digital systems.

"However, what mattered then still matters now: being there for our clients, come rain or shine; understanding their needs; and doing exactly what we say we will do."

That's how Challenger began — with one clear goal: to connect Malta to mainland Europe efficiently, consistently, and with a personal touch.

"We started small, operating out of Żabbar, focusing heavily on one of Malta's most vital links: the Malta–Reggio Calabria corridor. This ro-ro route between Malta and Sicily is more than just a ferry service — it's a lifeline for businesses importing and exporting goods across the region. From there, we coordinate road transport through Italy, on to France, Germany, and beyond, reaching Spain and Eastern Europe."

"Over the years, we've handled everything from retail products and machinery to raw materials and food. No two shipments are the same — and that's part of what makes this job both challenging and deeply rewarding."



Challenger International Transport offer full truckload (FTL) and groupage services, working hard to make the process seamless — from booking right through to delivery.

"One thing has not changed: how we deal with clients. I still speak directly with most of them. I don't believe in layers of middlemen or automated replies. When you call Challenger, you talk to someone who knows your shipment, your deadline, and your business — often, that someone is me," he adds.

Mr Magro admits that there is no magic formula and the company never claims to be Malta's biggest freight company.

"That's intentional. What we do claim is dependability. We keep things moving, solve problems and adapt according to the shipment. However, we always deliver, even when the logistics world around us gets messy — which, let's be honest, is more often than not."

Mr Magro is proud with the fact that the company is run by a team whom he trusts like family.

"We keep the company lean because that's how we stay responsive. We work with solid partners across Italy and Europe who understand our standards and help us uphold them on every trip."

"We're not in this for headlines and you won't see us plastered across social media or trade show booths. We grew because our clients stay with us and recommend us to others. That kind of trust cannot be bought; it can only be earned." ○

Logistics with a Human Touch

Inside EuroBridge's Customer-First Model

In the competitive world of freight forwarding where speed, compliance and trust rule the supply chain, EuroBridge Shipping Services Ltd has quietly positioned itself as Malta's indispensable link to mainland Europe.

This year, EuroBridge celebrates 30 years of service. Founded in 1995 in collaboration with an Italian freight company, EuroBridge began by offering regular transport services between Malta and Italy. Over time, it expanded into a full-service logistics operation managing groupage, full truckloads, warehousing, customs clearance, air and sea freight and inland transport. Its Italian roots gave it a strong foothold in one of Malta's most important trade corridors, a foundation that continues to support its broader European network today.

From its modern logistics facility in Qormi with over 7,000 square meters of space housing administrative offices and warehouse capacity in Malta and overseas, EuroBridge handles a wide range of cargo from consumables to industrial equipment. Its operations extend across much of Europe with strong ties to Italy, the UK, Germany and the Benelux region. Groupage services from Milan remain a cornerstone of its offering, supported by strategic ferry and road links that ensure timely door-to-door delivery between Malta and the continent.

EuroBridge's ability to offer integrated logistics is one of its key strengths. Clients benefit from a single point of contact managing the entire supply chain, from initial pickup in Europe to customs processing in Malta and final delivery at destination. For time-sensitive or regulated cargo, this coordination is not a luxury; it is a promise customers count on. Underpinning this success has been the expert guidance and solid hard work of

David Abela, whose vision and relentless drive have made him a catalyst of change and innovative solutions for the benefit of the client. His commitment to advancing the company while ensuring customer satisfaction has shaped EuroBridge's culture of reliability and care.

In an industry often driven by volume, EuroBridge has chosen precision, reliability and long-term relationships. The company is ISO 9001 certified, holds AEO status and carries Malta's Equality Mark, reflecting its commitment to high operational standards and workplace values.

Despite its substantial footprint, EuroBridge maintains a low public profile, preferring to let its results speak for themselves. "We have built our business on consistency, not visibility," one senior manager notes. "Most of our clients have been with us for years. That loyalty is earned by doing the job right every time." EuroBridge has also invested heavily in infrastructure and technology, positioning itself for continued growth in a changing logistics landscape. It is exploring further expansion of services between Malta and the UK and enhancing the digitalisation of booking and tracking systems to better serve global clients.

Perhaps what sets EuroBridge apart most is its culture. Staff are empowered, customer-focused and deeply experienced, with many having worked with the company for over a decade. The company prioritises development and a sense of belonging within the team, values that are felt in every client interaction. In a sector dominated by large international players, EuroBridge stands as proof that regional expertise, operational discipline and personal service still matter. As EuroBridge – Yours to Count On remains committed to shaping a sustainable and efficient future for trade. EuroBridge, the green company, isn't just moving cargo. It is the bridge delivering logistics with a human touch, staying true to its roots as yours to count on. ○





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The Great Driver Drought

Europe's Freight Challenge, and Malta's Daily Balancing Act

JONATHAN VELLA

CEO OF CONCORDE INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT FORWARDERS MALTA



Across Europe, one statistic keeps logistics managers awake at night: about 426,000 heavy-goods-vehicle (HGV) driving jobs sit vacant today, a number the International Road Transport Union (IRU) says is still climbing. (source iru.org) With no quick influx of talent on the horizon, every link in the continent's supply chain, from Rotterdam's mega-ports to the ferry quays feeding Malta, has learned to live on the edge of a staffing gap.

IRU's latest survey paints a stark picture. More than a third of current European drivers are already over 55, and roughly 550,000 of them will retire before 2030. Meanwhile, only 4 % of newcomers are under 25, and women account for barely 3 % of the cab workforce, leaving an ever-narrowing funnel of recruits. The result is a chronic mismatch between freight demand buoyed by e-commerce and near-shoring and the number of people legally allowed to haul that freight.

Wages have risen in response, yet entry barriers remain steep: a commercial licence can cost over €4,000 in many member states, and firms complain of "permit ping-pong" when drivers cross borders. As unfilled shifts propagate through carrier networks, mainland shippers can often reshuffle assets. Island operators rarely have that luxury.

Europe's driver shortage is structural, not cyclical, and different capitals are testing different fixes:

- Germany's § 81a "fast-track" visa lets an employer pre-clear a foreign hire so the embassy issues a work visa in as little as one month instead of a whole quarter.
- Poland recognises many non-EU licences after a short Driver CPC ("Code 95") refresher that can be completed in five classroom days, slicing onboarding costs for carriers fishing in the global talent pool.
- Diversity drives are accelerating, with programmes such as XPO Logistics' Female Driver Academy offering 12-16 week paid training to expand the woefully small pool of female HGV drivers.

Taken together, these initiatives are early sketches of an EU-wide talent policy, but they are hardly uniform. Where some countries wield a welcome mat, others await stacks of paperwork in triplicate.

Malta illustrates how the continental crisis mutates inside an island context. Every pallet of lettuce or microchip ultimately rolls off a trailer that must cross open water, so one missing driver often means an entire sailing slot lost. Local schools turn out only a handful of new HGV licence-holders each quarter, while bureaucratic hurdles leave third-country recruits waiting nearly 18 weeks for permits; four times the German fast-track.

Industry body ATTO Malta recently warned Parliament's TRAN committee that permit delays and new cost burdens from the EU Emissions Trading System could "compromise island food security." ATTO is lobbying Brussels for an island-state clause in the forthcoming Mobility Package revisions so that ferry-reliant hauliers are not penalised by mainland-oriented cabotage rules, a fight bolstered when the EU Court of Justice struck down the eight-week "vehicle-return" mandate Malta had argued was disproportionate. (source newsbook.com.mt)

Despite the constraints, Maltese carriers still have room to act inside the single market:

- Digitise first. AI-powered freight platforms such as Ontruck have shown they can shrink empty running from more than 40 % to around 15 %, effectively adding capacity without adding cabs. (source ontruck.com)
- Leverage short-course licensing abroad. A partnership with Polish training providers that deliver the five-day Code 95 refresher could move vetted recruits onto Maltese rosters weeks sooner than domestic paperwork allows.
- Press for reciprocal permit recognition. If a driver has already passed Germany's rigorous vetting, duplicating every medical and theory test in Malta adds cost with no safety dividend. Transparent reciprocity inside the EU would widen the recruitment net overnight.

Yet the toolbox is filling: faster visas, shorter refreshers, inclusive recruiting, and digital orchestration. What remains is the political will to apply the tools evenly and the agility of operators to adopt them quickly

A SHARED EUROPEAN STAKES GAME

Europe's driver drought is testing the resilience of the single market itself. For the mainland, it means fluctuating freight rates and spot-market volatility. For smaller maritime member states, it is existential, with just-in-time deliveries one missed sailing away from spoilage. Yet the toolbox is filling: faster visas, shorter refreshers, inclusive recruiting, and digital orchestration. What remains is the political will to apply the tools evenly and the agility of operators to adopt them quickly.

Malta, by necessity, is a living lab for these ideas. If the island can pair EU-level recognition with local tech adoption and targeted outreach, it will not only secure its own supply lines but offer a template for other hard-to-reach regions. Europe's freight machine has no single silver bullet, but every successful pilot widens the lane toward a future where the trailer leaves on time because there's always a qualified driver in the cab.

This article, "The Great Driver Drought: Europe's Freight Challenge, and Malta's Daily Balancing Act," was researched and written solely by the undersigned author. All statistics, regulatory references, and case examples cited herein were gathered from publicly available sources, including the International Road Transport Union (IRU), European Commission legislative texts, national transport ministries, industry white papers, and reputable trade-press reports between March and June 2025. Every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of those sources at the time of writing.

The interpretations, analyses, and opinions expressed are entirely the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the views of ATTO Malta, its members, or any other affiliated organisation. Any remaining errors or omissions are the author's responsibility. Readers are encouraged to consult the original documents before acting on the information contained in this article.

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Eurofreight A Legacy Of Performance

EuroFreight excels in developing tailored supply chain solutions aligned precisely with your unique requirements. Our commitment ensures meticulous execution from inception to completion, prioritising exceptional customer satisfaction.



Founded in 1999 to play a strategic role in regional trade between Europe and Malta, Euro Freight Services Ltd has been quietly establishing itself as one of Malta's more experienced and adaptable freight forwarders, offering multimodal transport services by land, air, and sea.

Euro Freight's strength lies in its combination of local knowledge and regional capability and, as a Maltese-owned and family-run operation, the company continues to bring a level of personalisation and agility that many larger firms struggle to match, supporting clients across diverse sectors, from fast-moving consumer goods, raw materials, machinery and etc.

"We're close enough to the customer to listen, and agile enough to act," says Quentin Zara, Euro Freight's Chief Operating Officer.

Beyond transport, the company offers integrated customs and compliance support — particularly valuable for businesses unfamiliar with EU or third-country import procedures.

In a competitive field, Euro Freight's distinguishing trait may simply be its scale: large enough to deliver complex solutions, but small enough to stay responsive. For Zara, that's intentional.

"The logistics business is about movement, but it's also about trust. We've built ours by staying close to both." ○





Express Trailers Marks 10 Years of Sustainability with Major Green Investments



Express Trailers is celebrating a decade of sustainable growth, marking 10 years since the company began its green journey with a strong commitment to environmental responsibility and investment in cleaner technologies.



The journey began in 2015 with the upgrade of its fleet to EURO VI standards, a move that set the foundation for consistent environmental progress. By the end of 2024, these efforts contributed to a CO₂ emissions reduction of over 90 tons.

The company recently reaffirmed its green commitment with several impactful initiatives, including the installation of the island's largest industrial spray booth. This advanced facility features a cutting-edge air filtration system that reduces airborne pollutants during painting while optimising material usage and lowering operational waste.

"Sustainability is more than equipment—it's about embedding values across every part of our business," said CEO Etienne Attard. He emphasised how aligning with the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) enabled Express Trailers to reassess and enhance its Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) policies.

The company's culture of sustainability is also reinforced through internal initiatives, including employee training and engagement to foster environmental awareness at all levels.



This year, Express Trailers further expanded its eco-friendly fleet, investing in electric courier vehicles, ten new refrigerated trailers, and ten standard trailers, all built to the latest low-emission standards.

A key milestone in this journey was the addition of trailers equipped with Carrier Transicold's advanced Vector refrigeration units. These units, powered by Carrier's all-electric E-Drive™ architecture and Stage V-compliant diesel engines, offer fuel savings of up to 30% and significantly lower carbon emissions. "Reliability and sustainability guided our decision," said Antoine Vella, Director and Head of International Operations.

"With fewer moving parts and advanced components, the risk of refrigerant leakage is greatly reduced, while cooling

performance and energy efficiency are enhanced—especially when connected to our depot's electric infrastructure."

Carrier's 24/7 oneCALL™ support, combined with Express Trailers' in-house maintenance capabilities, ensures continuous, reliable service for temperature-sensitive deliveries.

"Our latest investments highlight our determination to stay ahead of the curve by reducing our carbon footprint, supporting the cold chain, and offering reliable, sustainable logistics," added Attard.

"With these milestones, Express Trailers continues to reinforce its vision for a cleaner, more efficient future—one that benefits both the environment and its customers," he concluded. ○

» HIRE



DIESEL POWER

» LEASE



LI-ION ELECTIC POWER

» SALE



LPG POWER



Fahrenheit Logistics Ltd

Pioneering Malta's Road Transport and Logistics Sector



Established nearly 30 years ago, Fahrenheit Logistics Ltd has evolved from a modest freight forwarder into one of Malta's leading providers of international road transport and logistics solutions.

As a key member within Famalco Group, Fahrenheit has consistently demonstrated resilience, adaptability, and innovation—qualities that have underpinned its steady expansion in the competitive European logistics landscape.

Operating a robust fleet of vehicles, Fahrenheit specializes in the transportation of fresh produce and industrial goods across Malta and mainland Europe. Its strategic positioning as Malta's link to continental supply chains has made it a trusted partner for manufacturers, importers, and exporters. The company's reputation for service excellence is built on its ability to deliver time-sensitive cargo, supported by streamlined customs clearance and warehousing capabilities.

In recent years, Fahrenheit Logistics has embraced digital transformation and strategic partnerships to bolster its market presence. This shift towards digitalization underscores Fahrenheit's commitment to meeting the evolving needs of its clients with innovative, future-ready solutions.

Another milestone is the celebration of a decade-long partnership with several well recognised partners across the EU. These collaborations have facilitated efficient cargo transport between Malta and EU countries supporting vital industrial supply chains and reinforcing Fahrenheit's role as a cornerstone of Malta's export-import infrastructure.

Significantly, Fahrenheit Logistics has recently expanded its European footprint with the addition of a new logistics centre in Breda Netherlands - "Famalco Huis". This BREEAM certified distribution hub reflects the company's commitment to sustainable development and marks a strategic step forward, enabling the company to offer scalable, cost-efficient logistics services within mainland Europe.

Looking ahead to 2025, Fahrenheit Logistics is poised to celebrate its 30th anniversary, a testament to its enduring commitment to quality, innovation, and strategic growth.

With a clear vision and strong partnerships, Fahrenheit continues to drive Malta's logistics sector forward, delivering reliable and forward-thinking transport solutions. ○



GMC Transport's Perspective

Turning eFTI Challenges into a Competitive Edge

At GMC Transport, we've always believed that staying ahead means embracing change — not resisting it. The move towards electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) across Europe is one of the biggest digital transitions our industry has faced. While it's easy to focus on the hurdles, we see this shift as a real opportunity — provided it's approached with both realism and readiness.

GMC
TRANSPORT CO LTD

Like many operators, especially those managing mixed fleets or operating across varied jurisdictions, we understand how daunting the switch from paper-based systems to eFTI can be. For SMEs in particular, the initial investment in software, training, and onboard technologies isn't trivial.

But from our own experience, delaying the transition can create bigger challenges down the road. That's why GMC Transport is working to phase in digital systems in a way that aligns with our operational flow, not against it.

One of the biggest surprises in this journey has been the gap between the promise of interoperability and the current fragmented reality. Cross-border operations still face inconsistencies in data formats and enforcement readiness. Our teams regularly work through these mismatches, and we've learned that early communication with partners and authorities is key.

We also believe industry-wide coordination — and not just compliance — is the path to smoother implementation.

With digitalisation comes the responsibility of safeguarding sensitive data. At GMC Transport, we've had to reframe our thinking: cybersecurity isn't an IT issue, it's a transport issue. We've started investing in the tools and skills needed to ensure data protection — not just for our own peace of mind, but for the trust of our clients and partners.

Technology is only as strong as the people using it. From our drivers to our office staff, we've seen firsthand how critical proper training is to avoid disruptions. We've found that involving employees early in the process builds not only confidence, but also helps flag practical issues before they escalate. That insight has shaped how we roll out new digital tools — gradually, with hands-on support.

The shift to eFTI is not optional — but how we respond to it is. This is why at GMC Transport, we remain committed to turning this challenge into an advantage.

We are advocating for smarter regulation, collaborating with industry partners, and investing in the tools that will make us more agile and transparent in the long run. The road is bumpy, yes — but we're not just passengers. We're driving the change.



CONNECTING ... THE DOTS FOR GENERATIONS

Pharmaceutical & Healthcare

Local Transportation

Frozen, Perishable & Chilled Foods

Customs Clearance

General Cargo

Container Services



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falcotrans.com

Falcotrans

Malta's Force in European Cold Chain Logistics

JONATHAN FALZON
DIRECTOR



Marsa, Malta — In the high-stakes world of cold chain logistics, where a few degrees can spell the difference between a safe delivery and spoiled goods, Falcotrans Ltd has quietly built a reputation as one of Malta's most dependable and discreet logistics players.



Established in 1986, the company began as a modest operation in Marsa, serving a handful of local clients. Today, it stands at the heart of Malta's temperature-sensitive transport sector, connecting the island to mainland Europe through a tightly managed network of refrigerated transport routes.

"Precision is everything," says Mr. Jonathan Falzon Director at Falcotrans. "You're not just delivering boxes — you're delivering vaccines, fresh food, and high-value cargo that people depend on. There's no room for guesswork."

Falcotrans' core operations are based at Flagstone Wharf in Marsa, just minutes from Malta's central cargo terminals. From there, its fleet of refrigerated trucks and custom-equipped trailers delivers goods across Europe, including to All Europe and the UK.

What makes Falcotrans distinctive is its mastery of the cold chain — the process of transporting goods at controlled temperatures from start to finish. The company is trusted to handle pharmaceuticals, perishable foods, chemicals, and other goods that require strict environmental control.

Each vehicle is equipped with real-time GPS tracking and temperature monitoring systems, enabling clients to monitor their shipments throughout the entire journey. This level of visibility is not merely a competitive advantage but a fundamental requirement in today's highly regulated logistics industry.

"We work to European standards because that's what the industry demands," the coordinator explains. "Whether it's vaccines or chilled dairy, clients want full transparency and full confidence."

In addition to cross-border freight, Falcotrans provides customs clearance, container services, and last-mile delivery in Malta — offering a full end-to-end logistics solution for importers and exporters.

TRUSTED BY CRITICAL SECTORS

Falcotrans serves a range of industries, but its core strength lies in two particularly sensitive sectors: healthcare and food distribution.

With extensive experience in the transportation of pharmaceuticals, including time- and temperature-sensitive medicines, the company has established itself as a trusted logistics partner for numerous Maltese and European firms. The company holds ISO 9001 and Good Distribution Practice (GDP) certifications, reflecting its commitment to maintaining rigorous quality standards and full compliance with industry regulations.

Likewise, in the food logistics space, Falcotrans handles chilled and frozen goods from suppliers in Italy and central Europe, distributing them efficiently across Malta's supermarket networks.

THE ROAD AHEAD

As demand for cold chain logistics rises — driven by e-commerce, pharmaceutical growth, and global food supply chains — Falcotrans is well-positioned to scale. The company plans to expand its fleet and deepen its partnerships across Europe, all while maintaining the personalized service that has defined it for nearly four decades. Falcotrans remains committed to delivering seamless, reliable, and temperature-controlled logistics solutions while consistently honouring its commitments with professionalism and efficiency. ○

Positioning Malta as the Leading Logistics Hub in the Mediterranean

OLVIN GALEA
CEO – JET FREIGHT LIMITED



Malta has long been recognised for its strategic location at the heart of the Mediterranean. Yet, in an era where global logistics is rapidly evolving, especially with the rise of AI and digital transformation, it's time to reimagine Malta's role—not just as a gateway, but as the logistics nerve centre of the Mediterranean basin.

A NATURAL ADVANTAGE

Few countries enjoy the geographical blessings Malta does. Positioned between Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East—and just a few nautical miles from major international shipping lanes—Malta is uniquely placed to serve as a central point for transshipment, warehousing, and onward distribution.

The Malta Freeport is already a major player in regional logistics, handling millions of TEUs annually and offering regular connections to Europe, North Africa, and beyond. Daily departures to Italy and short sea routes make it possible to reach any European destination within 7 days—often faster than ports further west.

But location alone isn't enough. To become a true logistics leader, policy, infrastructure, and technology must work in harmony.

THE OPPORTUNITY: RESILIENCE & REACH

The global supply chain is facing unprecedented shifts: regional conflicts, trade disruptions, and a rising need for flexibility have all highlighted the importance of resilient hubs that can adapt and serve both European and African markets.

Malta can be this hub.

By leveraging its Freeport for container storage and manipulation, Malta can act as a buffer zone—receiving cargo from Asia or the Middle East, storing it safely in bonded warehouses, and delivering it just-in-time to Europe or Africa when market or political conditions allow.

This is a smart, future-ready model that supports agility in trade.

KEY ENABLERS FOR GROWTH

To unlock this potential, Malta must address a few key areas:

- **Customs Efficiency:**
Our systems must fully recognise and process EORI numbers from all EU member states. This will streamline the movement of goods through Malta, ensuring seamless distribution across Europe.
- **Freeport Charges & Incentives:**
A review of port handling fees and storage costs is essential. Competitive pricing—combined with value-added services—can make Malta more attractive to international shippers and freight forwarders.
- **Digitalisation & AI Integration:**
Embracing AI-driven customs clearance, real-time cargo tracking, and predictive demand planning can give Malta a technological edge and reduce delays.
- **Expanded Infrastructure:**
With limited space, Malta must invest wisely in multi-level warehousing, vertical logistics zones, and multimodal connectivity (including better links between port, airport, and road transport).
- **Workforce Development:**
Logistics is not only about trucks and ships—it's about people. Creating a skilled workforce, supported by industry-education partnerships, is key to building a resilient and innovative sector.

A CALL TO ACTION

Malta has the location. It has the infrastructure. And it has the ambition. Now, we need the right customs reforms, logistics-friendly legislation, and a clear national strategy to position ourselves as the natural Mediterranean choice for global logistics. Let's make Malta the first port of call for Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East—not only for ships but for opportunity. ○



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Parnis England Trucking Malta



Parnis England **Trucking**

A Legacy of Excellence and a Call for Industry Reform

OVER A CENTURY OF RELIABILITY — AND A CLEAR VISION FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Malta, June 2025 — As Parnis England Trucking Malta marks a year since its 40th anniversary celebrations, the company reflects not only on a rich legacy but also on the urgent need for reform in the European transport industry. While many operational and structural challenges persist, there is a growing imperative for the sector to improve margins to enable vital investment in sustainable logistics solutions.

“The transport sector cannot meet tomorrow’s demands without fair and viable margins today,” says Stephen Parnis England, CEO. “Yet excessive local costs and unjustified surcharges—particularly from ferry operators—continue to weigh heavily on operators.”

A key concern is the unchanged Bunker Adjustment Factor (BAF) surcharge, which remains at 2022 levels despite a halving in low-sulphur fuel prices. Meanwhile, shipping lines have been quick to raise the ETS (Emissions Trading Scheme) surcharge on a quarterly basis.

“These charges are passed on to the end user, but they leave freight operators with little room to adjust their own rates in line with rising costs,” Parnis England explains. “This imbalance undermines profitability and delays investment in cleaner, more efficient transport systems.”

Despite these constraints, Parnis England Trucking Malta has continued to invest in fleet upgrades, IT systems, and service quality—staying true to a family tradition of innovation and service excellence.

DRIVING EXCELLENCE ACROSS GENERATIONS

Rooted in the heart of the Mediterranean, Parnis England Trucking Malta and its parent company WJ Parnis England have been shaping the island’s logistics landscape for more than a



century. Founded in 1899, WJ Parnis England began as a modest import-export operation and evolved into one of Malta’s most trusted names in shipping, customs brokerage, and supply chain management.

“We have always believed in adapting to change,” says Parnis England. “Our longevity is proof of our agility and deep understanding of the market.”

The creation of Parnis England Trucking Malta was a strategic extension of this vision, providing a dedicated transport service that quickly earned a reputation for reliability and professionalism.

A SEAMLESS UK-MALTA LINK

Among the company’s standout achievements is its highly efficient trailer service between the UK and Malta. In a time of mounting cross-border complexity, Parnis England Trucking offers a streamlined and dependable logistics corridor that supports manufacturers, distributors, and retailers across Europe.

With weekly departures, real-time tracking, and comprehensive customs handling, this corridor has become a lifeline for many businesses navigating Brexit and supply chain volatility.

RESILIENCE, REFORM, AND THE ROAD AHEAD

Parnis England Trucking has weathered industry disruptions—from economic turbulence to shifting environmental regulations—by investing in fuel-efficient vehicles, embracing digital transformation, and adapting with agility. However, the company cautions that future progress depends on structural reform in the industry.

“We are proud of our heritage, but we are also future-focused,” concludes Parnis England. “For our sector to thrive sustainably, we need transparency, fairer cost structures, and a coordinated effort to address inefficiencies in the logistics chain. We are ready to do our part—but the whole industry must move together.” ○

Malta's Logistics Sector in 2025

Stretched, Strained, and Still Standing

JEREMY BUSUTTIL
CEO, S&T SERVICES LTD

As 2025 is well underway, logistics operators in Malta find themselves navigating increasingly rough waters. From infrastructural constraints to regulatory pressure, the sector, an essential lifeline for an island nation, continues to carry the weight of an entire country's supply chain while balancing rising costs, tight margins, and growing regulatory expectations.

A COUNTRY DEPENDENT ON MOVEMENT

Unlike continental states, Malta doesn't have the luxury of overland alternatives or economies of scale. Every item, from construction materials to foodstuffs to medical supplies, arrives by ship and is moved by truck. This geographic reality makes logistics the invisible backbone of Maltese society and economy. Yet, despite its vital role, the industry is facing mounting challenges with limited systemic support.

THE INVISIBLE CRISIS: SPACE FOR TRAILERS AND HUBS

While authorities have spent years tightening regulations on logistics operations, the availability of adequate space to support these same activities has been largely ignored. The growing scarcity of dedicated trailer-friendly hubs and staging areas is causing operational bottlenecks across the country. Even in designated industrial zones, logistics operators struggle to find sufficient space for parking, prolonged stays, loading bays, and safe manoeuvring.

What's needed is not more regulation, but more collaboration. Regulatory bodies must shift focus from punitive actions and contraventions to strategic support, creating zones and infrastructure that reflect the current and future needs of the industry. Without real solutions and alternatives, operators are being held to increasingly higher standards without the tools to meet them.

LABOUR SHORTAGES AND THE SHIFTING WORKFORCE

The industry is also experiencing a profound demographic shift. The Maltese labour pool is aging and increasingly turning away from transport and logistics roles. In their place, third-country nationals (TCNs) have become essential. These individuals form the backbone of today's fleet drivers, warehouse operatives, and support staff. However, the process to recruit, retain, and properly integrate TCNs remains complicated and often administratively burdensome.

The issue is not one of preference, it's one of survival. Without the ability to attract foreign talent, Malta's logistics industry would simply not have the manpower required to function. Policymakers need to streamline and support employment frameworks that reflect this unavoidable dependency, rather than ignore it.



THE GREEN DEAL: NOBLE GOALS, MISALIGNED REALITIES

Another growing concern is the European Green Deal. While its environmental goals are laudable, its implementation has not been adapted to the unique realities of island nations like Malta. Emission targets, alternative fuel obligations, and fleet modernization pressures are being applied uniformly across Europe, ignoring the lack of local alternatives and Malta's total dependence on maritime and road transport.

Operators are already stretched thin, working on wafer-thin margins to keep prices stable. The financial burden of complying with these environmental standards, without practical or financial support, will inevitably ripple through the economy. With no domestic production and no other links, any added cost to shipping or trucking is eventually passed on to the consumer. In short: the people of Malta & Gozo will be the ones paying the price if logistics companies are pushed to the breaking point. Keeping the Country Moving, But for How Long?

Despite all this, Malta's logistics companies continue to adapt. Through innovation, lean operations, and a deep-rooted sense of responsibility, we are doing everything in our power to keep costs low and supply chains efficient. But we cannot do it alone. It's time for regulators, urban planners, and policymakers to move beyond enforcement and toward partnership. They must understand the operational challenges we face and join us in developing long-term, sustainable solutions. Only then can Malta continue to grow while ensuring that goods, services, and opportunity keep moving, by sea, by truck, and by vision. ○



White Brothers Ltd

A Powerhouse in Heavy Transport and Logistics

The island nation of Malta plays a vital role in regional trade and transport. At the centre of its logistics and infrastructure network stands White Brothers Ltd, a family-run company that has grown steadily over the past 80 years to become one of the country's most respected names in heavy transport and integrated logistics.

Founded in the 1940s by Angelo Ciantar, the business began with a single American-made truck from the White Motor Company—a purchase that inspired its enduring nickname, “Tal-White.” Today, White Brothers Ltd is recognized across multiple sectors including construction, energy, pharmaceuticals, maritime, and aviation as a dependable partner in critical logistics operations.

From its headquarters, in the industrial hub of Marsa, the Company manages complex assignments that require specialized transport equipment and engineering expertise. Its extensive fleet includes heavy-duty tractor units, extendable trailers, reach-stackers, a whole range of forklifts and cranes

with lifting capacities up to 150 tons — machinery that allows for seamless handling of oversized cargo, such as large power transformers, heavy industry machinery, and even helicopters.

These capabilities have supported some of Malta's most significant infrastructure and industrial projects, including the delivery of a 300MVA transformer to a power station and the inland movement of an AW139 twin-engine aircraft. Behind each of these operations there is an internal logistics planning team and a crew of experienced operators who convey expertise with Malta's regulatory environment and geographic constraints. White Brothers Ltd also offers a suite of end-to-end logistics services that complement its transport operations. From

bonded warehousing and vacuum sealing, the company provides integrated solutions that cater to the demands of international clients. Its freight forwarding arm, White Freight Services Ltd, enables seamless movement of goods beyond Malta's shores, with road, air and ocean freight services tailored to each cargo's specifications.

What distinguishes White Brothers is its long-standing commitment to both innovation and tradition. Under the leadership of second-generation Managing Director, Mario Ciantar, the company continues to evolve — modernizing its fleet, training staff, and embracing technology to meet the demands of global trade while retaining the personal touch of a family-owned business.

As Malta accelerates its energy transformation and expands its logistics infrastructure, White Brothers Ltd remains a key player in the country's economic development. Its unique combination of local knowledge, technical capability, and reliability positions the Company not just as a logistics provider, but as a strategic partner in Malta's evolving transport ecosystem. ○



Our Members

