AUTOSUP

Preparing the ground for AUTOnomous Multimodal SUPply Chains

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1ST ONLINE WEBINAR MEETING MINUTES

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ONLINE

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Document Summary Information

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Location	ONLINE
Distribution	i.e. AUTOSUP Consortium / WP1 participants /…
Minutes taker	[Andreas Kortenhaus (ESC)
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1 Introduction

The first AUTOSUP webinar on "**How can EU policy foster collaboration and data sharing in multimodal freight transport?**", organized by the European Shippers' Council (ESC) and ALICE, has taken place on 28 April 2025, 13:00 – 15:00h.

The webinar was structured in two main parts with a brief opening speech. The two parts focused on "**The port of the future**" (2 speakers) and "**How to foster collaboration in multimodal freight transport?**" (3 speakers).

These minutes first provide the agenda of the webinar, followed by a summary of the key messages of each of the speakers. A list of participants is also available at the end of this document.

2 Agenda

13:00 – 13:15	Opening, AUTOSUP project, and ESC strategy paper Matteo Nenciolini (ESC)
13:15 – 14:00	**The port of the future**
13:15 – 13:25	Interoperability, Safety, and People: The Three Challenges of Multimodal Automation Guiseppe Luppino (ALICE)
13:25 – 13:40	Developments on the ground toward innovation Karen Van Brussel (Port of Antwerp)
13:40 – 13:55	Discussion

13:55 – 14:00	Break
14:00 – 15:00	**How to foster collaboration in multimodal freight transport?**
14:00 -14:15	How can a modern legal framework contribute to more efficient collaboration along the supply chain? Nelson Coelho (Aalborg University)
14:15 -14:30	How would automation affect the "modus operandi" in supply chain nodes such as maritime ports? Zeljko Jeftic (Einride)
14:30 -14:45	How will digitalization foster exchange of data and enhance trust amongst partners? Dominique Willems (Digital Container Shipping Association, DCSA)
14:45 -15:00	Discussion

3 Opening

Matteo Nenciolini from the European Shippers' Council (ESC) introduced the webinar by discussing ESC's involvement in the AUTOSUP project and their vision for European ports. The ESC is a European organization representing cargo owners such as manufacturers, retailers, and wholesalers, and they advocate for freight transport interests across Europe. In the AUTOSUP project, ESC leads the policy package, developing EU-level recommendations to support automation in multimodal logistics hubs, addressing regulatory gaps, and considering human, environmental, technological, and security factors.

ESC's vision for a common European port strategy emphasizes ports as strategic logistics hubs for Europe's competitiveness, green transition, and security. They highlight the need for ports to serve as hubs for the green transition by incorporating shore power, electric vehicle charging stations, and clean fuels. The presentation also identified several challenges for European ports, including capacity issues, innovation gaps, crime, digitization challenges, sustainability concerns, fair competition, and resilience.

4 Part 1: Port of the Future

Giuseppe Luppino (ALICE) focused on the three key challenges of multimodal automation in logistics: interoperability, safety, and people. The AUTOSUP project, funded by the European Union, aims to unlock the potential of automation by addressing the current fragmentation and lack of interconnectedness in freight movement. The project is undertaking rigorous analysis and engaging stakeholders to define the foundational requirements for a future of efficient and autonomous logistics. Key activities include classifying automation technologies and levels, and modeling digital twins for the Trieste and Antwerp-Bruges Living Hubs, integrating a decision support system within these twins for simulations and optimizations.

The presentation concluded by emphasizing that interoperability is crucial for seamless multimodal automation, requiring standardization, data exchange, and trust in digital environments. Safety must be proactively addressed through legal frameworks, data security, and ethical guidelines. Importantly, people remain central to this transition, necessitating new skills, training, and inclusive human-machine interaction. The project highlighted that collaboration, governance, and shared value creation are essential to translate these requirements into tangible impacts, guiding future innovation, testing, and policy development within AUTOSUP.

Karen Van Brussel (Port of Antwerp – Bruges) introduced the Port of Antwerp-Bruges as a global port in the heart of Europe and the second-largest port in Europe. She highlighted the port's significant role in cargo transport, handling a large volume of seagoing vessels, barges, and cargo trains, and its importance as a main chemistry hub in Europe. The port's vision is to be a world port that balances people, climate, and economy, striving for sustainable solutions and pioneering in mobility, energy, and digitization.

The presentation emphasized the port's commitment to innovation and outlines the five foundational pillars of a smart port: integrated port operations, adaptive modal shifts, cybersecurity, impact on climate and ecology, and digital talent and ecosystems. It detailed the port's "digital nervous system," which includes the use of sensor devices, drones, 5G/LoRa technology, and digital twins, as well as initiatives like the APICA innovation platform.

The presentation also touched on various projects and initiatives, including those related to green energy, modal shift, and the AUTOSUP project, which aims to explore the impact of automation and autonomization to achieve seamless multimodal automatic freight transport.

The presentation discusses the legal instruments and challenges related to multimodal freight transport in the European Union, drawing from insights gained in the AEGIS and PERMAGOV projects. It emphasizes the barriers to Multimodal Freight Transport (MFT), particularly concerning digital collaboration, data sovereignty, and governance. Several key EU regulations are identified as relevant, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the EU Cybersecurity Act, the eIDAS Regulation, the Data Governance Act (DGA), and the Electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) Regulation. Additionally, international rules such as the Hague-Visby Rules and the UN CMR Convention are noted.

5 Part 2: Fostering Collaboration in Multimodal Freight Transport

The presentation by **Nelson F. Coelho (Aalborg University)** highlighted interoperability as a critical factor in MFT, referencing the European Interoperability Framework (EIF) which includes technical, semantic, organizational, and legal aspects. It also delves into the concept of Freight Data Space, describing its layers from physical resources to business services, and the importance of data sovereignty, defined as the ability of enterprises to control their data. The speaker noted that data sovereignty in the logistics context is generally governed by business contracts and regulations.

In conclusion, the presentation argued that the increasing digitization of cargo documents creates data issues that intersect with cross-border data sovereignty debates in multimodal logistics. It suggested that EU lawmakers should promote harmonized multimodal rules, mandate interoperability standards for electronic transport documents, strengthen data sovereignty protections by ensuring data remains under EU jurisdiction, and update liability frameworks to address damages, losses, or data breaches across different transport modes.

The presentation by **Zeljko Jeftic (Einride)** discussed Einride's efforts in deploying autonomous transports for freight. Their solution is a Freight Mobility Platform that integrates electric fleets, charging infrastructure, operational partners, and autonomous vehicles, all coordinated by their AIdriven "brain" called Saga. The company's approach involves a phased introduction of autonomous vehicles, starting with less complex routes such as short shipments on private roads and gradually advancing to more complex scenarios like highway and city operations.

Einride highlights successful customer cases, including a partnership with Apotea for daily autonomous operations in Europe and a large-scale deployment of electric and autonomous vehicles with DP World in the Middle East. The presentation concludes with recommendations for stakeholders: transport buyers are advised to view autonomous transport as a long-term strategic effort, policymakers are encouraged to create supportive yet non-duplicative safety policies, and local authorities are urged to implement traffic measures that accommodate autonomous vehicles.

Dominique Willems (Digital Container Shipping Association, DCSA) introduced the Digital Container Shipping Association (DCSA), a global, non-profit association focused on digitalizing the container shipping industry. DCSA, which covers over 75% of global container transport, aims to create seamless, easy-to-use services for customers by fostering a digitally interconnected environment. DCSA achieves this by developing openly published, technology-agnostic, and vendor-neutral standards in collaboration with industry stakeholders, based on established international standards. These standards encompass various

aspects of container shipping, including track and trace, vessel schedules, port call optimization, booking, and the electronic Bill of Lading (eBL).

The presentation also highlighted the scope of DCSA's standardization efforts, which include export and inland transport, shipping operations, and import and inland transport. DCSA standardizes data exchanges for vessel movement, container movement, and administrative processes. The organization's work has garnered global and national recognition, with global leaders promoting the electronic Bill of Lading and organizations like the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) and the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure integrating DCSA standards into their processes. The presentation concluded by emphasizing the importance of correct and timely data, easy data access and exchange, respect for data ownership, and cybersecurity for successful digitalization.

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