

PRESS RELEASE

“EurAsian Landbridges - opportunities to exploit the untapped potential”

BRUSSELS, 21 November – At the fourth European Logistics Platform (ELP) event of the year 2018, around 40 EU policymakers and industry stakeholders met to listen to experiences from companies that make use of the EurAsian landbridges and to discuss the opportunities they see in making even more use of the connections between Europe and Asia.

The event was hosted by **MEP Wim van de Camp**, member of the TRAN Committee and of the ELP Advisory Committee. Mr van de Camp welcomed participants to the debate, mentioning that as a member of the China delegation of the European Parliament he has a great interest in the Chinese Belt Road project and in particular in how this connects with the TEN-T infrastructure. In this regard, Mr van de Camp argued, ‘China is not waiting - China is moving, and it is doing so at a fast pace and Europe needs to keep abreast with the changes.’

Thomas Kowitzki, Head of China Rail / Multimodal, Europe, DHL Global Forwarding gave a users’ perspective, highlighting that DHL’s customers are more and more interested in the Transasian rail connections in view of its advantages which relate to sustainability and decarbonisation efforts, costs, time and reliability. Also, the share of transport volumes from Europe towards China has continuously increased in the past years, making the trades more balanced. ‘Rail transport from Europe to China is also extremely interesting for many shippers because large shipments can be transported quickly or rather cost-efficiently on this route as an alternative to sea or air freight’, noted Mr Kowitzki.

Hendrik Wehlen, General Manager Sales and Operations, Interrail Europe GmbH, gave the perspective of the intermodal operator, providing a lot of insight in the practical issues Interrail is facing, such as the need for them to analyse growth levels on the landbridge, including which commodities and types of shippers it benefits the most, the need to connect in view of the cultural differences and problem areas and service risks in terms of infrastructure, service quality, pricing and the eventual elimination of government subsidies. He gave the example of a pilot of a direct rail shipment of European wine successfully crossing Eurasia and arriving in China, opening up a new way for supply chain operations for wine producers of Europe.

Alain Baron, Team Leader, DG MOVE presented in a nutshell the vision of the European Commission with regards to the Belt and Road initiative. He highlighted that the Commission has been investing a lot of time in ensuring continuous dialogue with the Chinese government through the Connectivity platform. The Commission aims for a more inclusive and sustainable approach for development of connectivity with Asia taking into account European standards and values. Mr Baron was also careful in his approach towards the Belt and Road initiative and stressed the need for to be selective and to create value for money with projects that arise out of demand.

ELP Chair **Nicolette van der Jagt**, closing the event, noted that with the ELP celebrating its fifth anniversary this year, some more events would be organised in the last-mile towards the European elections.

The European Logistics Platform consists of more than twenty industry stakeholders representing a wide variety of actors involved in logistics and supply chains across Europe. Current members are ACEA, Amazon, BDL, CER, CLECAT, Deutsche Bahn, Deutsche Post DHL Group, Duisport, ECG, ESC, ECSLA, ERFA, FEPORT, FERRMED, FTA, Goodyear Dunlop Tires Europe, Hutchison Whampoa, IRU, Michelin, NLA, Port of Rotterdam, P&G, TLN, UIRR, Volvo Group. www.european-logistics-platform.eu