



## **The European Freight & Logistics Leaders Forum (F&L)**

F&L held their annual meeting in Brussels on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

### **F & L statement**

F&L have decided to issue a statement of priorities to coincide with the findings of the Brussels meeting.

- Transport supply must learn to live without certainty, the pressures placed by shippers on the sector vary day by day, the industry must learn to live with this reality, at least in the short term
- Economic cycles will be with us forever and both shippers and transport providers have to adapt their business models accordingly. The boom of the last few years is unlikely to be repeated.
- A new dimension of sustainability, which is often used as a fashionable term in the context of the environment, has to be embraced in the context of economic survival. Real empathy between shippers and transport supply is fundamental. If they do not seek common ground there is a real risk that transport supply will simply cease to exist on a qualitative and cost effective basis.
- Supply and demand are interdependent; surprisingly many examples can be given where these two elements have failed to recognise a suitable and sustainable balance.
- Strategic partnerships between shippers and transport providers must evolve in a more sustainable way, e.g. better planning on lead times to assist on one hand the effective utilisation of transport equipment and on the other, cost effectiveness for the shipper.
- Flexibility and agility are emerging key words. It is essential to open the minds of many shippers to the benefits of other modes of transport rather than just road because it is easy, cheap and theoretically available at short notice. Does this mean that other modes have to market their capabilities more effectively?
- Crime continues to be a major problem in supply chains. The Commission really must stand up and take a lead here together with the regulatory authorities. This is another example which reduces the competitiveness of Europe and therefore the wealth and investment capability of the key actors.
- Infrastructure projects are critical and the opportunity must now be taken to prioritise these structures and prepare a solid platform for future growth throughout the 27 EU member states. Europe should follow the very positive developments in China in infrastructure which have undoubtedly led to the sustained economic growth which is now evident in Asian markets.



Gavin W. Roser  
Press Officer  
[gavinroser@pantrak.com](mailto:gavinroser@pantrak.com)  
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[www.freightandlogistics.eu](http://www.freightandlogistics.eu)