## E-AWB – the breakthrough is on its way

# Value of information on the rise

If it was up to Iata, then the digital air waybill would already be on its victory lap. Christian Doepgen spoke to K&S Informatik's Rainer Stawarz and Nico Pereira da Silva recently, and found out that progress in Switzerland is encouraging.

**Mr Stawarz, Mr Pereira da Silva, to what extent has airfreight already been digitalised?**

The use made of the e-AWB document has steadily increased worldwide over the past twelve months, with US and Asian airports currently the market leaders. But Turkey, for example, where e-AWB's share comes to approximately 65%, can be proud of the progress it has made.

**What is the status in Switzerland?**

At Zurich airport, where the process was initiated in April, e-AWBs now account for approximately 24.6% of cargo volumes. Some of our customers already handle 98% of all orders electronically. At the Geneva gateway, where the e-AWB was introduced in October, the figure has already reached 20%.

**What about the last major Swiss airport...**

Basel / Mulhouse's Franco-Swiss Euro-Airport is starting with this endeavour in March 2017. The corresponding information for airlines and freight forwarders, the standard forms, etc., are all due this year. Twelve airlines will enter the process directly.

**Many people had hoped for more dynamic progress.**



Stawarz (left) and Pereira da Silva (centre) are optimistic about e-freight in 2017 too.

Scepticism is on the decline, and we've also registered increasing demand from airlines. There are now 83 enterprises that have signed up in Switzerland. The country's freight forwarders were open to these new developments right from the word go; they've clearly recognised the inherent advantages.

**What motivates the interested parties?**



Images: Iata / K&S / C. Doepgen
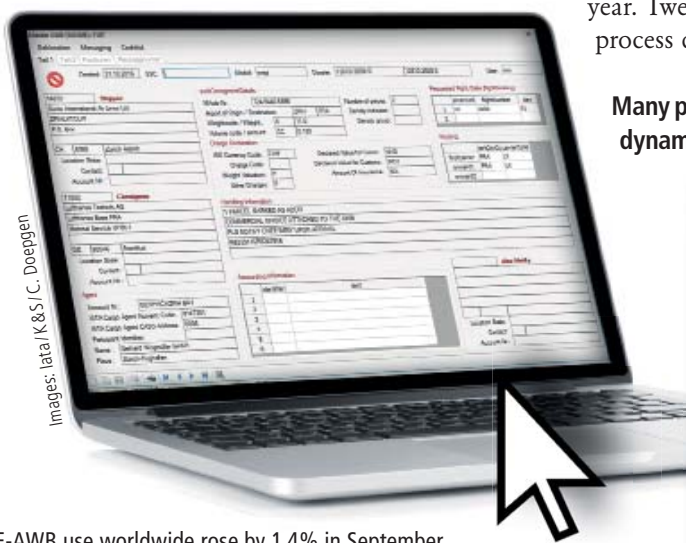
E-AWB use worldwide rose by 1.4% in September vis-à-vis August (see the Iata statistics in the table).

### E-AWB penetration levels (top ten countries by volume of e-AWB origin)

| Rank (previous) | Country | e-AWB penetration in August | in September |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (1) | USA | 37.3% | 37.5% |
| 2 (2) | Hong Kong SAR, China | 67.8% | 67.1% |
| 3 (3) | People's Republic of China | 40.9% | 42.6% |
| 4 (4) | Singapore | 68.1% | 68.9% |
| 5 (6) | India | 53.3% | 54.8% |
| 6 (8) | South Korea | 45.5% | 45.1% |
| 7 (7) | Germany | 27.9% | 28.1% |
| 8 (5) | United Arab Emirates | 81.3% | 83.2% |
| 9 (9) | Taiwan, China | 48.2% | 52.3% |
| 10 (11) | France | 41.1% | 41.2% |

Of course you can save time and money. Up to 80% of all processes can be automated, when a system fits. Today an e-AWB can be generated and processed in less than one minute.

### What are the key technical elements?

The e-AWB works through two components. At the front there is the electronic information, the freight waybill, which is transmitted to the airline. If a firm has already signed the multilateral e-AWB agreement, then the airline can release the shipment immediately.

### What would an ideal process that has been coordinated with a shipper look like?

The data flows from a shipper's goods management system into a data-handling centre, for example one of K&S Informatik's, which functions as a data hub. The forwarder decodes the data for the order and the customs authorities, additional documents go to the transporter, to the interim storage facility for the preparation of the shipment, to the ground handler and finally to the airline, which then forwards the information to the final destination.

### Where is there potential for improvement?

The programme should be able to print the necessary papers (AWB if requested, label, pouch) as is the case for example in loggPRO.efreight. Some documents can't be transmitted electronically yet, for example the certificate of origin.

### Tracking and tracing is probably simple.

Transparency is a given along the entire supply chain. If there is no data logger on board, then clients receive all data in a compact form as milestones. Information thus becomes ever more valuable.

## Two airports innovate

# Realising their visions

Open communications require more than transparent logistics processes. SCMP and SSGC may still sound a little mysterious; the abbreviations represent major public-private partnerships at Amsterdam airport. Brussels in turn has invited everyone to join a workshop for the future.



*Photos: KLM / Amsterdam airport*

Willem-Alexander, King of the Netherlands, inaugurated a new joint inspection centre, an important element of the airport economy.

The neighbouring Belgian and Dutch airport authorities would appear to be a rather inventive lot. The two rather small countries' hinterlands are huge, not least thanks to officials' negotiating and trading skills. Thus not only the maritime ports in the Northern Range, but the region's airports too are amongst the largest airfreight hubs in Europe.

### Royal and smart

University research as well as courses, and the government too, all already support the Amsterdam cargo community's ongoing efforts to make Schiphol airport a so-called smart hub. Fresco Flowers recently became a new partner in what the hub calls its smart cargo main port programme (SCMP), which seeks innovative ways with which to improve the flow of goods through the gateway.

King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands honoured the hub on 22 November, inaugurating the latest element in Schiphol's smart cargo gate (abbreviated as SSGC), namely a joint inspection centre. The latter was launched by the customs authorities, the airport operator, KLM Cargo and Air Cargo Netherlands.

### From today to the day after tomorrow

Brussels airport, in turn, has asked everyone affected by its operations, including local residents, to participate in what the gateway calls its strategic vision 2040. The process was launched in November. The hub wants to create the intermodal preconditions for the airfreight industry to move from today's volume of around 600,000 t of throughput to approximately 925,000 t annually. *Andreas Haug*