

The 13th Annual WCA Worldwide Conference is being hosted for the first time in Dubai, United Arab Emirates

OVER 4,500 members gathered in Dubai this week for WCA's 13th Worldwide Conference – setting a new record for the largest ever number of freight forwarding companies to gather at one location.

For some, Tuesday morning began with a 6.30am tee-off, while others opted for a full-day tour of the desert, taking in 4x4ing, camel riding and sandboarding.

But the party really hit it off with the opening night's cocktail party, as old friends reunited while new friendships were formed, showcasing what WCA does best: bringing freight forwarders together. Voice of the Independent spoke with the delegates the morning after and they expressed delight to be in Dubai, with rave reports on the conference so far.

New network members as well as established companies were welcomed during the first event of the second day, with a full overview of both what it means to be part of the world's largest forwarding network as well as the extensive benefits it encompasses.

Further testifying to the positive reports VOTI received was the very healthy turnout for the plenary session that rounded out the second morning.

Founder and chair David Yokeum, now in his 26th year at the helm thanked delegates for the support that they continued to provide – support that makes conferences like this possible – while WCAworld chief executive Dan March set out

the network's plans for 2024. Phillip Emmanuel also shared details on the network's insurance company, World Insurance Services.

Chief executive of Sea Intelligence Alan Murphy took to the stage to round out his thoughts on the major ocean markets and trends following a year complicated



by increased supply chain uncertainties and disruptive conflicts in eastern Europe and the Middle East.

While some members took off for the buffet lunch, others headed to the eCommerce luncheon with guest speaker Turgut Erkeskin, president of FIATA.

For the 75 delegates that made it into the luncheon, Erkeskin gave his thoughts on the predominant issues of the ever-growing eCommerce sector and the freight



forwarding dynamics for those servicing the sector.

As the second day came to a close, the great and the good of the forwarding sector convened for the annual awards ceremony (full winner details on page 6).

And with a host of one-on-one meetings, special guest speakers, and various workshops to follow, not to mention the famed WCAworld Football Tournament, there remained a lot for attendees to get their teeth into.



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Desert safari fun

DELEGATES joined together to explore Dubai with a Desert Safari tour and camp activities, including camel rides and sand boarding. There was also the opportunity to see the majestic falcon – the UAE's national bird, experience a henna tattoo and relax with a shisha water-pipe. After a buffet lunch in the safari campsite came a live Belly Dance show and Tanura traditional folk dance.









together in one room to enjoy drinks

and conversation.







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Nice to see you again!

The 13th WCA Worldwide Conference week started with a cocktail event where members were able to catch up with old friends and meet new ones. Over 4,000 delegates came







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Managers must think not just globally, but also locally

industries themselves.

board, he said this was

While true across the

SUPPLY chain managers' capacity to remain competitive is dependent on their ability to think not just globally, but locally.

Managing director of Group7 Günther Jocher told Voice of the Independent (VOTI) that Covid-19 had left a "huge mark on the world" and that the onset of a series of post-pandemic wars across the globe was only adding to the strains of supply chains.



Amidst a daily emergence of "new obstacles", Jocher said it was not just the way industries moved goods that was changing, but that there were changes in the

"especially" true of the pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors. describing them as "evolving faster than ever", with "ground-breaking" therapies and individualised medicines and treatments beginning to hit

markets. "In order to remain competitive, today's pharmaceutical supply chain managers must think not only globally, but also locally," said Jocher.

"The global perspective needs to be considered to account for changing manufacturing and trading practices around the world.

Marinair, 'always by your side'

MARINAIR has been making significant investments as it looks to bolster its offering for clients, having opened a new office and added to its online instant rates platform, "myMCS"

Chief executive officer Pavlos Poutos told Voice of the Independent (VOTI) opening the new branch office at Athens International Airport was part of the forwarding firm's pledge to its customers to ensure it was meeting their "convenience" and providing quality of service.

"In line with this our latest investment and our online instant rates platform 'myMCS' will be ready to offer ocean LCL & FCL rates to partners and clients from main trade locations and main ports of the world with our own services in one minute," he told VOTI.

"And, by being inside Greece's biggest airport, we can provide an even more enhanced experience when it comes to customs services, air freight transport and more.

Poutos noted that Marinair has always been focused on ensuring the human

element of the company is unrivalled, describing the staff as "highly experienced and knowledgeable" when it comes to transport issues.

He noted: "We are always by your side searching for new and efficient ways to improve our services and meet your expectations."

To the forwarding firm's customers he simply added that it was their "support and trust, which constantly helps us keep evolving".



PAVLOS POUTOS Marinair

CGATE opens in Liverpool

CGATE Logistics has expanded its UK footprint with the opening of a new sales office in Liverpool.

Seeking to cater to the north of England market – as well as markets in Ireland and Scotland - the office was seen as something of a necessity by CGATE's managing director of the UK Amanda Behr.

"We have been getting a lot of business out of northern England, customers were seeking a sales office closer to their own business

centres," Behr told Voice of the Independent.

"So, it seemed appropriate for us to meet this demand with a new office. As it stands, that office will remain a sales one, with our warehouse operations continuing to run out of Heathrow," Behr continued, speaking on the sidelines of the WCA's 13th World Conference.

But Behr added that the company is always looking at options to further grow its operations - both inside and

outside of the UK, describing the company as "European' but Liverpool made sense not only on the back of what its customers were seeking but also in line with the increased regional demand.

As to what they ship, everything it seems. Behr stated that "being close to Aberdeen and Glasgow oil and gas shipments are big, but we also have perishables, pharmaceuticals, and time critical shipments, not to mention machinery and spare parts".

Local focuses on how to deliver individualized therapy to a specific institution or patient."

That focus on the global and the local must also be considered in relation to the changing preferences of manufacturers.

"Wars and

conflicts

have direct

impact on

markets,

industries

and supply

chains"

Given ongoing geopolitical tensions and tit-for-tat tariffs being flung about by China and the US, many western headquartered firms are looking to relocate, if not all, then at least some of the manufacturing

capacity away from the Asian powerhouse. Jocher is only too

cognisant of this. "A huge topic will be near-shoring: manufacturers are re-evaluating their supply chains and in consequence

looking for suppliers and

distributors in geographical proximity," he said. "Mainly due to the

pandemic-related upheavals, increasingly unstable political conditions and national industrial regulations," to which he added the increase in regulations surrounding the use of new medicines and treatments.

To meet the demands of these shifting supply chain practices, Jocher preaches the need for forwarding partners which can be both flexible and "highly responsive" to sudden changes.

For its part, Jocher said that Group7 has been continuously tailoring itself to the needs of the pharma and healthcare sectors, having implemented IATA GDP-certified 24/7 emergency logistics, temperature-controlled storage and deliveries and double-staffed drivers.

the team always retain

access to a fleet of vehicles



GÜNTHER JOCHER Group7

for short-notice emergency deliveries; and he expects pressure on forwarders in this sphere to only increase.

He noted: "Market research professionals predict an average annual growth of six per cent for pharma products worldwide through 2028. The expansion of global vaccine distribution over the past few years will have a lasting impact on overall pharmaceutical distribution."

"In short," he added, "vital products require special care along the supply chain and the demands are growing and changing every day.

"Companies from the pharmaceutical sector will require flexible partners with good knowledge and short decision-making abilities, in order to bring potentially life-saving products to the patients that need them."

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Further to this, he noted,





AFRICA: Kevin Addison and Cindy Luyt collect the award for 1UP Cargo

WCA Best Partner Awards 2023

Region	Winner	Runners Up	
Africa	1UP CARGO SOUTH AFRICA PTY. LTD	DN Freight Exclusive Logistics Solutions	
Asia	Best Services International Freight Ltd	CIMC Anda Shun International Logistics Co., Ltd Everokgroup International Forwarding Co., Ltd.	
Europe	Unsworth UK Ltd.	Charles Kendall Freight Mesco International Forwarding Inc	
India Sub Continent	Dart Global Logistics Pvt. Ltd.	Everfast Freight Forwarders Pvt. Ltd. Parekh Integrated Services Pvt. Ltd.	
Latin America	DC Logistics Brasil	B&M Logistica Internacional Ltda Easy Solution Logistica Ltda Inter American Cargo Group S.A.	
Middle East	EMIRATES Logistics LLC	Abreco Freight LLC Haktrans Global Logistics LLC	
North America	Worldwide Logistic Partners Inc.	BTX Global Logistics ClearFreight, Inc. Global Shipping Services, LLC	
TOP AGENT 2023	EMIRATES Logistics LLC		



WINNER: Top agent goes to Emirates Logistics, congratulations!



EUROPE: Thomas Kuehn collects the award for Unsworth UK



LATIN AMERICA: Ivo Mafra picks up the trophy for DC Logistics



ner awards 2023







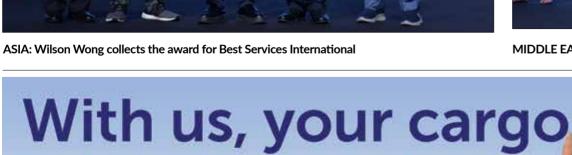
NORTH AMERICA: Mitch Kamdar, Krish Kamdar and Ajay Pillai collect the trophy for WWLP



INDIAN SUB CONTINENT: Anton Ananda Raj collects the award with the Dart Global team



MIDDLE EAST: Anjali B Ramchandani and Zoe Carvalho pick up the trophy for Emirates Logistics



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'Different cultures with a single mindset' at JTM

JTM Group has experienced a consistent and rapid growth since opening in 2011, with the Portuguese firm having expanded from the 20 people that started it to more than 160.

João Val, part of the forwarder's management team, told Voice of the Independent (VOTI) that when JTM started everyone involved knew its success would be dependent on not only "know-how",

but finding a way to add value that perhaps was missing in the sector.

"Our customers and our people are at the centre of everything we do, and this is our big difference," Val said. "In a dynamic, constantly

evolving market, forwarders

"We operate against cycles,

when others were trying to

were trying to hire as we

wanted to be sure that we

were ready for the demand

Sorgenfrei told Voice of the

Speaking during WCA's

13th World Conference, the

Resultantly, he said the

company prided itself on

keeping those that kept it

and paving them well – it

has paid off, with just 14

its 1996 launch.

employees having left since

ticking over happy, which he said required treating them

certainly seems a mantra that

Of those, five retired – "all

Independent.

my staff".

that would come after Covid,"

release staff during covid, we

play a key as we represent and move goods on behalf of various businesses. JTM's internationalisation has been the result of a consolidated expansion strategy in tactical markets and in the needs of emerging

markets.' That strategy of expansion continues, with the company having just people are at added Istanbul to its list of destinations. In joining the company's network, it joins Porto, Lisbon,

> Madrid, Zaragoza, New York. Miami and Jacksonville, with Val noting that they are "thinking about adding more strategic centres in the US".

"We are flexible, fast and detail-oriented, and now we have more than 160 people all over the world,



integrating different cultures with a single mindset," Val told VOTI.

"Additional offices enable us to negotiate favourable rates and ensure efficient logistics operations. Our extensive network also helps businesses expand into new markets by providing access to local expertise and infrastructure."

In-house, the company has also been enhancing its digitalised offerings, with Val citing the benefits of "streamlined operations and improved efficiencies" afforded by the introduction of online tracking systems,

electronic documentation, and integrated supply chain solutions.

"Of course, we know future developments are uncertain, but we are prepared to continue development and adopt technology, such as artificial intelligence and automation," he said.

"We are collecting and analysing large amounts of data to enable us to make more informed decisions regarding pricing, demand forecasting, and route optimisation. This can result in a better customer service and in cost savings."

WCA out in force for GDP training

PANDEMIC-induced interest in pharmaceutical logistics has driven attendance at WCA's GDP training to its highest levels yet.

Taking place alongside WCA's 13th Worldwide Conference in Dubai, WCAworld Academy's Good Distribution Practice Certified Training Course is the first catering to the Association's general as well as pharma members, with 33 attending.

Leah McKenna, manager of the WCAworld Academy, told Voice of the Independent (VOTI) that "covid produced increased demand for pharmaceutical logistics".

She added: "And forwarders have shown themselves only too willing to meet that demand. But what we wanted to do was to make sure our members that were moving either medical products or medical devices were doing it in the correct and compliant way."

Achieving this is no mean feat, with an absence of unified global standard when it comes to Good Distribution Practice (GDP).

Running the training, Henry Moran of ACS Associates noted that this absence of uniformity in requirements - or in some cases, a complete absence of them - leaves forwarders caught between a rock and a hard place.

"In Dubai, they are really hot on ensuring there is no temperature deviation, with two readings required to be compliant," Moran told VOTI.

"Conversely, up until now the US has had no regulations when it comes to the movement of pharmaceutical goods - it is now working on transparency regulations - and so for logistics operators working along global supply chains, this creates a bit of a headache."

Moran said the forwarder's job was "to ensure distribution process doesn't affect the quality of the product or disrupt the supply to the patient".

And with this in mind, the training had been geared towards ensuring WCA members were aware of not only the diversity of compliance procedures across the world but also how to factor these into their own operations.

McKenna noted: "Given the numbers we're getting, and given they've increased with each event we've hosted; we see that as a sign that these training sessions are well-received."



"And if we build a successful partnership with



general cargoes - so when it comes to expansion what we back; how could I do that?" motivates them to progress through the ranks – and 30 per cent of our turnover goes

on bonuses," he continued. That ethos stands against Cross Freight chief executive the increasingly prominent added "I am nothing without business mantra of grow fast and break things.

passed away.

"We pay all of our team

very well and, importantly,

our team can see what the

wages are per position and

per department, which

Instead, Sorgenfrei seeks company growth not through a bigger footprint – it boasts an airfreight office in Frankfurt and a head office in Hamburg – but through partnerships with other forwarding outfits.

This, he said, was one of the principal benefits of being in the WCA: access to a host



Cross Freight was one of the main sponsors of the golf tournament

example, we specialise in dangerous goods, machinery, pharmaceuticals, and project

cargoes - and we also cover

someone, to open an office on their doorstep would be to thrust the knife into their

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More growth in milestone year for QCS opened up in the Czech

QUICK Cargo Service touched down at the WCA 13th Worldwide Conference fresh from having inked the deal to see it open its first Austrian office

10

Coming fresh on having



Republic, the Austrian

to the 30 offices it has

scattered around the

operation marks its 11th

destination in Europe adding

continent and helping fill a

key area for continental logistics.

Speaking to Voice of the Independent on the side-lines of the Dubai Conference, managing director and partner at QCS Denmark, Allan Christensen, said "we're a growing group".

He continued: "We have two new offices in the Czech Republic, we have an operation in Hungary that has grown to 15 people in two years - and a management team out there that are looking to recruit more - and now we have this Austrian office.

"It all comes in the build-up to what will be our 50th anniversary and now, with the founder having

passed the reins over to his children, the third generation of Haltmayers

have joined." For Christensen, the looming anniversary

(officially being celebrated in November) has

brought within it "It all comes a lot of attention and thinking, internally, about where the company is going and where it can be taken next. Ultimately, he

"independent" forwarder in

said, the mission

statement is to

Europe.

will be our 50th anniversary" become the number one

become a member of the WCA network. He said: "You know, using

"We're not looking to

become a transatlantic, or

transpacific operation, we

want to continue to grow in

Europe and to become the

biggest independent player

"We have already grown

our office network across

the region, not to mention

some 350 now working for

part

Christensen's

confidence is in

engendered by

the faith he has

in not only QCS

itself but in the

partnership

no small part,

to its having

our employee base, with

on the continent and we

believe ourselves to be well-placed to achieve this,"

he said.

us."

in the build-

up to what

WCA members is a real positive for us as it means we know that the partners we are dealing with come with a sense of security.

"Namely, that security is they can be trusted to do the job properly. It is about safety and trust and while trust you can build, having the safety of knowledge that as a WCA member the prospective partner will meet certain minimal standards is a good starting point."

If Austria is the latest branch to open, does Christensen have any thoughts on where next QCS will go?

This, he continued, is a question that needs to be put to the Haltmayer family but that it will expand is all Christensen stating that the negotiate with the carriers.

Needs of the wealthy a growth industry for Mathez

A hidden economic landscape is fostering a boom period for Mathez Freight's work as there has never been so many millionaires on this planet.

Even though "normal cargo" remains by far the biggest part of Mathez's business, when you have offices in Monaco, Nice, and Cannes in the so called French Riviera, you are facing logistics needs in the fields of fine art, exceptional cars, collection items, high jewellery, yachts, and jets. President of the

company's executive board. Frederic Mercier, told Voice of the Independent (VOTI) that with more than three decades experience in the sector they had seen a marked increase in activity in recent years.

"This is an industry built upon reputation, we have no sales team, we have our own handling teams and reputation. This makes the clients come to us," Mercier continued.

"There are two musts when servicing clients like these: be confidential, be

trustworthy. And, after that, what is essential is realising that your customers are not professionals, they do not work in the industry, they are auction houses, museums or private individuals.'

Resultantly, he said it becomes about a different way of looking at work, from the client's perspective this means explaining and instilling confidence rather than giving minute details.

Monaco branch manager at Mathez, Alexandre Lefevre echoed Mercier's point that

clients are less interested in the details of export certification, describing the work as meeting the requests of "wealthy people

who want a solution". Lefevre told VOTI: "It's also important to understand that this is a truly

international business - we have clients and partners from Canada, the Middle East, Switzerland, the UK, and the US. Mercier said it can be a

case of them having just bought a little X-million dollars painting, some



jewellery or a car last weekend in London and them then asking Mathez to bring it back home or keep it in one of their private storage facilities in perfect condition.

"Because we deliver door to door, we're also dealing with unusual

transport modes; sometimes we require cranes," he noted. "Or a helicopter to deliver a statue to a sea-view villa that you only see on TV or in some magazines." Mercier said that the company is always focused on finding solutions rather than saying "no" to clients. Having the owner to

break a wall to go through a narrow door so the Mathez team can fit a big piece inside is not an exception.

But in this willingness to take on all manner of work, the mind is constantly kept busy, and is always facing up to hurdles that those handling just general cargo may not encounter, including finding nail insurance.

"Yes, we had to get an insurance policy extension as we are daily moving very valuable paintings, literally from nail to nail, and so we needed to find someone to insure the nail we used. getting coverage on it for five years; like I said, it's about thinking differently." Certainly, Lefevre and

"Because we deliver door to door. we're also dealing with unusual transport modes; sometimes we require cranes"

Mercier believe their efforts have paid off, with an ever-increasing number of client requests - in 2023 they moved some 300 Bentley, Ferrari, Bugatti types of cars, were required to run three fine art warehouses under bond, temperature and hygrometry control, and handled more than 20 in-house "white glove handlers"

Do they think this success has further to go? Mercier certainly exudes confidence noting "that there is no limit" as far as future opportunities go because "people are always looking for ways to move their goods around".

He added: "In one project, we moved and installed a Formula One car along the wall into the office of a now-retired Formula one driver."

base it has built up and this is, in but inevitable, with he noted down thinking is through this growth QCS will build up buying power and be in a stronger position to



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WIS launches innovative new products

DURING the conference World Insurance Services announced two new products, adding to its market-leading portfolio of insurance solutions aimed squarely at the independent freight forwarding community.

Thanks to the buying power offered by its partnership with WCAworld, WIS was able to create the new WCA Project Cargo Insurance Program with a pre-approved limit of up to US\$ 50 million per shipment. WIS Chief Executive Officer, Monica Lee explained that: "Upon receipt of the required underwriting

information, we are committed to providing same-day quotation or non-binding indication for most cases. We welcome project cargo insurance enquiries valued over \$50 million for special insurance quotation arrangements.

She added: "No project size or movement is too small or too big to insure. Let us be part of your risk management team and assist you with the project bidding process."

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The second new product announced was NVOCC FMC Bonds and US Customs Bonds. Lee said: "WIS partnered with a couple of the largest bond providers offering various types of bonds for our members: FMC Freight

Forwarder Bond \$50,000; FMC OTI/NVOCC Bond \$75,000; Non-US NVOCC

"No project

size or

movement

is too small

or too big to

insure"

Bond \$150,000; FMCSA Freight Broker Bond \$75,000; AMS Customs Bond, Activity 3; and US Customs Brokers Importer Bond."

Members can enjoy special and discounted rates and a fast turnaround application process with exceptional automation and services.

US-based WCAworld members may qualify for approval without collateral or

submitting financial statements thereby streamlining the application process. In most cases for the NVOCC bonds existing replacements are completed in 48-hour turnaround. Applications from all company sizes are welcome. For the Importer Bonds, it can be approved for up to \$400 million. "Our bond experts are excited to assist and MONICA LEE World Insurance Services

offer advice for WCA members," added Lee. WIS is delighted that its relationship with WCAworld is helping provide members with world-leading insurance and bond solutions. "As an exclusive in-house insurance broker and consultant for WCAworld and its affiliated network members worldwide, WIS has never stopped innovating, creating, and improving our products and services."

The management team of WIS is comprised of veteran freight forwarders and insurance specialists. And its team members all have at least two decades of experience in the sector. "WIS has the expertise to resolve complex global supply chain risk

management problems and is your resource," said Lee.

WIS has a team of nine here at the conference and can be found at a designated desk within the WCA Booth. WIS is also holding a special workshop, "The Biggest Threats Facing Freight Forwarders", which will be held on Friday, 1st March 2024 at 4pm in the Al Multaqua Ballroom.

Golf tournament

THE WCA Worldwide Golf Tournament was held at Dubai's Jumeriah Golf Estates Earth Course, offering a super fun day out for all participants. With 88 players taking part, the atmosphere was lively and filled with laughter and camaraderie. The stunning backdrop of the Earth Course added to the enjoyment, providing a picturesque setting for a leisurely day of golfing fun.

All players had a great time, and prizes were awarded for skill and enthusiasm. It was a memorable event that gave WCAworld members a chance to meet with other members and network on the golf course.







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