

# trailer world

The customer magazine of BPW

Issue One 2010



## Specialists

are not only in nature





Dear Reader,

How special are specialists? In the current issue of trailer world, we pursue this question and find various people and companies who are particularly talented in a certain discipline, or who have managed to find their niche by employing a lot of creativity, energy and conviction.

Such stories encourage us – particularly when we look back at the last year, which demanded a lot from all of us, and severely tested the motivation of the staff at BPW, and our customers. In light of this, I am all the more impressed by what people are able to accomplish under extreme conditions – for instance, the emergency staff in the trailer world title story.

It would seem that economic rock-bottom has been reached and is now passed. We look optimistically at this year's industry get-togethers – at the Bauma that just closed its doors behind a record number of exhibitors and exhibition space, or the IAA in September, for which VDA president, Matthias Wissmann expects a « fireworks display of innovation » in the area of aerodynamics, alternative propulsion and sustainable automobile technology.

Back to the matter of specialists. BPW is a specialist company, whose highly qualified staff are able to develop and build especially good trailer axles and chassis systems for a wide range of different applications. We want to convince the entire market of our quality standards by way of our development skills and pronounced understanding of the word service.

With this in mind, let yourself be inspired by reading trailerworld.

Yours truly,

Dr. Bert Brauers, Member of the Board of Directors/Sales

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## Contents

- 06 Title** **Logistics professionals on behalf of mankind**  
Commercial logistics organisations helped to rapidly transport emergency personnel to the incident site.
- 12 Reportage** **Special routes for the Airbus 380**  
Due to their size, Airbus uses multimodal transport for the individual components of the A380, which originate all over Europe. They transport them by sea, by river, and finally, on their own road.
- 15 Portrait** **A family for special cases**  
The family-owned, Hamburg based company, Pfaff pull together where “heavy and difficult transports” are concerned.
- 18 Interview** **»Revolutionary leaps«**  
A trailerworld interview on innovations in the trailer industry and the challenges for the future, with Dr. Frank Sager and Bernhard Rossenbach.
- 22 International** **Neighbours with a Ro-Ro connection**  
Turkish transporters founded their own ferry line to Italy during the Balkans war using a boat. A success story.
- 26 Reportage** **Tractors on the building site**  
At the Berlin-Brandenburg International Airport BBI, Tractors help with the excavations – the machines impress with their power, speed, and flexibility.
- 29 International** **Overcoming the crisis thanks to flexibility**  
The Finnish bodywork and trailer manufacturer Ekeri banks on traditional values and its own special niche. Their customers appreciate it.
- 32 Industry** **Construction machinery trade fair as mood indicator**  
An optimistic general mood was simply unmistakable at the 29th Bauma in Munich. trailer world asked BPW key account customers about their current mood.
- 04 Panorama**
- 35 Dialogue**
- 35 Imprint**





18



32



22



6

## Disc brakes now in series production

In trailer world Issue Two 2008, project manager Michael Ley proudly presented the then empty production hall for the BPW trailer disc brake ECO Disc in Hunsheim. Back then, Ley spoke about taking „a lot



Brake calliper blank waiting to be machined

of small but sound steps along the way to our objective". The assembly line for the ECO Disc was fully installed just nine months later. From the start of the year, BPW began series production of its proprietary innovation on state-of-the-art production lines. BPW now expects demand to pick up. The product is sure to help. The trailer disc brake ECO Disc not only offers outstanding braking properties but also contributes a noticeable weight reduction of up to 13 kg per axle; furthermore, it is particularly easy to work on and needs very little maintenance.



Michael Ley in the empty production hall, September 2008

## More service for end users

■ Whether in development, production, sales or logistics, BPW always focuses on the customer. BPW already recognised the importance of the end user many years ago. Already in the 90s, the Technical Sales Department was founded at BPW, which was then renamed 'End User Support' in 2009 in order to provide haulage businesses, transport firms, hire companies, logistics service providers and repair garages with international product advice and support when it comes to chassis specifications. Local presence, training courses and an international alignment ensure that every customer has a personal, competent contact partner. When it comes to new developments, this ensures the best possible quality at conditions in line with the market conditions.



The new end user support department led by Bernard Bonvalot (far right)

### "Best Brand": BPW

■ As previously, this year once again BPW has won the "Best Brands" image prize in the "Trailer Axles" category.

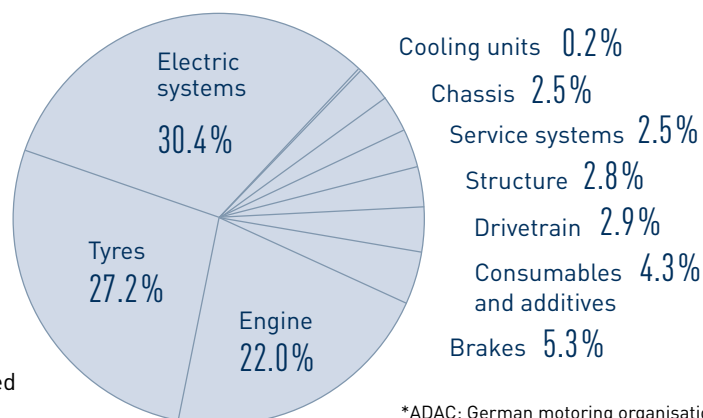
As part of the survey to ascertain the "Best Commercial Vehicles", readers of the press magazines lastauto omnibus, trans aktuell and FERNFAHRER also voted for the "Best Brands". The survey featured altogether 20 product



groups in for example following categories: gears, tyres, brakes, trailer hitches, trailer axles, vehicle parts dealers. According to the editorial team of lastauto omnibus, the survey shows how well known the various candidates are, who pursues good product policy, who understands what marketing is all about and in the end, who knows how to handle the brand and ensure it is always correctly positioned.

### ADAC: where trucks suffer most damage

■ The ADAC\* TruckService recently presented the results of the latest HGV breakdown statistics based on a random sample of the 93,000 breakdowns handled by the organisation throughout Europe in 2009. Breakdowns have become more complex. A good sign for BPW: chassis problems accounted for only 2.5% of all breakdowns.



\*ADAC: German motoring organisation



## IAA sends the signal for a new departure

■ “Commercial vehicles: efficient, flexible, future-proof” – that’s the motto of the event that the whole industry hopes will give a positive impetus to business: this year the IAA Commercial Vehicle Exhibition will be opening its doors in Hanover from 23 to 30 September. What counts this year is that the IAA “sets a clear signal for a new



departure in the global HGV industry”, said Matthias Wissmann, President of the German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA). “No other commercial vehicles trade fair is better able to trigger this new departure. The IAA is simply the leading international trade fair for mobility and logistics”.

BPW will also be at the fair and looks forward to putting life into the above motto.

»The Bauma 2010 took place at a favourable moment in time«

Helmut Fliegl,  
Managing Director Fliegl  
Fahrzeugbau GmbH



## GOOD MOOD AT THE BAUMA DESPITE THE VOLCANO

■ In the end there were happy faces after all. While volcanic ash and the air traffic ban caused anxiety for the organisers to start with, leading to a 17% decline in visitors at the 29th Bauma, the world’s leading construction machinery trade fair, compared to the previous event in 2007, in the end the experts

all agreed: the Bauma 2010 in Munich with 3,150 exhibitors from 53 countries, a total surface area of 555,000 square metres and 415,000 visitors did actually mark a turning point for the international construction machinery and vehicle

industry. “The mood shows that Europe has overcome the worst of its economic crisis”, concluded Ralf Wezel, Secretary General of the CECE, the Committee for European Construction Equipment. Rarely have there been more innovations on display, with a clear focus on sustainability and environment protection. “The customers were quite noticeably optimistic”, remarked Hannes Nachtelberger, Sales Manager at trailer specialist Schwarzmüller. The experts at the BPW stand presented the new 12-ton low-loading axle, a narrow-gauge swinging axle for vehicles with extension systems and excavator troughs that saves up to 90 kg in weight. Due attention was also given to BPW’s proprietary ECO Disc brake with its significant weight savings. The BPW employees in Munich at least were in a good mood – excellent weather, a “full house” and lots of customer contacts.



BPW and its Infomobil was to be found on the outside area of the Bauma

# Logistics professionals on behalf of mankind

They are the specialists that bring disaster relief workers and their equipment quickly to the scene. In trouble spots too, logistics companies such as DHL, Kühne+Nagel or TNT work as partners for the relief organisations, maintaining order and keeping things moving under chaotic circumstances. But their work never becomes a matter of routine.

When Chris Weeks from Britain speaks of his time in Haiti, he never starts with the piles of rubble, the bodies found lying in the middle of the road or the looters letting off fire arms in the destroyed city centre of Port-au-Prince. Instead, DHL's Head of Humanitarian Aid says: "It was difficult to get any sleep because of the noise made by aircraft landing constantly at the airport.

Weeks had erected his two-man tent right next to the only runway at Port-au-Prince airport, for reasons of security because in this location, the provisional camp set up by the international relief workers and helpers was under the protection of the US military. During the day, Weeks and his staff worked in a frenzy to establish a logistics aid system. "Normally only 10 planes land at Port-au-Prince airport every day. All of a sudden there were more than 160 a day. You soon come up

against your limits when trying to organise this kind of situation."

## Challenge of a "CNN disaster".

Disasters are logistical challenges where human life is at stake. If the first aid fails to reach the victims within 72 hours, any further delay can cost life. At the same time, most normal transport routes are destroyed. In Haiti, the earthquake that measured 7.0 on the Richter scale had demolished cranes in the harbour of Port-au-Prince; it had flooded quays, broken up the roads, caused landslides and destroyed bridges. The telephone and internet network had broken down completely. Once the total of US\$ 1.5 billion in aid donated by the international community began to flow, the supplies could only be brought in by air; and with only one functional runway, the airport soon became the eye of the needle. Even

an airplane from Médecins sans frontières with a mobile hospital on board was unable to land and had to divert to Santo Domingo in the neighbouring Dominican Republic.

This kind of bottleneck situation is typical for major "CNN disasters", which is what the humanitarian sector calls disasters with massive media presence and similar-scale aid donations. Humanitarian logistics is hampered above all by uncoordinated donations made in kind by private individuals, small organisations and friendly countries. The so-called rapid response phase is particularly tricky: this refers to the first two weeks during which the supply chain and infrastructure still has to get established on site and where every minute counts.

Long queues waiting at the aid organisations' trucks. Shortly after the earthquake in Haiti, they were responsible for food supplies to the whole of the population. →



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City reduced to rubble: disaster logistics often begins by getting rid of the damaged infrastructure

City reduced to rubble: disaster logistics often begins by getting rid of the damaged infrastructure.

In this situation, private logistics firms can help with their know-how, workforce and means of transport. Since 2006, DHL has been operating three Disaster Response Teams (DRT) worldwide with altogether 200 vol-

untary employees, based in Singapore, Dubai and Miami. From here they can move quickly to those regions most frequently affected by natural disasters. The teams are made up of voluntary logistics experts for handling goods, for warehouse and stock management or customs procedures. When a disaster happens, the employees can be on site and ready for action within 72 hours.

After the earthquake in Haiti, the DRTs at Santo Domingo airport were involved in ground logistics to ensure that the relief aid coming from smaller NGOs and aid agencies was unloaded properly. They set up a warehouse for trucks to collect the goods. The team ensured that every day, more than 100 tons of aid such as water, medicine, emergency food rations and tents were brought to the needy earthquake victims, without letting the airport premises get clogged up by piles of empty cardboard boxes.

## Growth of crisis logistics on the private sector

The support provided for humanitarian aid by DHL as a private logistics company is not a one-off. For some years now, Søren Christensen, Head of “Emergency & Relief Logistics” at the logistics company Kühne+Nagel, has observed a growing commitment from private companies in the humanitarian sector. “The tsunami initiated the largest PR campaigns since the Second World War”, he said. “Since then, it has become attractive for many companies to play an active front-line role after major disasters.” Particularly when international companies already have a presence in an affected country, many customers and employees expect them to become involved. This is joined by the general trend to social commitment or so-called “corporate social responsibility”.



»It's difficult to sleep with airplanes landing round the clock.«

Chris Weeks, DHL Disaster Response Team





The Disaster Response Teams can assume responsibility for ground logistics at an airport within 72 hours of a disaster happening.

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DHL sees its Disaster Response Team as part of its sponsoring activities to enhance its image as a company with sustainable, social commitment. It poured about €100,000 into its mission in Haiti. The rewards: positive media reports and motivated employees.

## Cooperation with the United Nations

Donations of money and in kind are the easiest form of private aid. A donated chartered flight for example can save costs of up to €500,000. Other companies such as Kühne+Nagel set up their own disaster relief departments or send teams of volunteers, like DHL. Aid from private companies has to be

coordinated closely with the United Nations to ensure it does not become a problem in its own right. In this situation, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is an important partner for the logistics companies. The OCHA also advises

the international aid organisations with regard to logistics and has drawn up contracts to stipulate the framework for DHL's Disaster Response Team.

TNT, Agility and UPS have also entered into a partnership with the World Food →

## Disaster logistics as growth “market”

- Climate change is causing an increase in the number of natural disasters. There is an on-going trend among aid organisations to outsource their logistics activities or fleet management.
- Around 80% of the costs for international humanitarian aid missions are generated by logistics. 65% are spent on stockpiling and provisioning in strategically positioned permanent aid warehouses, while 15% is incurred by transport and storage costs.
- Global logistics companies with crisis logistics departments also work in war zones. However, the long-winded learning and communications processes mean that only a long-term commitment is worthwhile.
- Individual acts of aid interrupt the delicate supply chains in a crisis region. The UN World Food Programme coordinates the various aid organisations and companies, taking the role of Lead Logistics Service.



»In the worst case, incorrect communication can cost lives.«

Søren Christensen,  
Kühne+Nagel

Programme (WFP), responsible for the UN global logistics cluster.

Together they provide emergency logistics teams, similar to DHL. The teams include logistics experts as well as company warehouses, trucks and forklift equipment, used for example in China, Haiti, India, Myanmar and Mozambique. TNT has also benefitted from its commitment: today the company is one of the most popular employers in the USA and is one of the Top 10 sustainably acting companies.

But humanitarian logistics is not just an act of charity, it is also a business unit. As the largest UN sub-organisation, the WFP alone transports about 9% of its goods with com-

mercial providers, accounting for altogether 4.5 million tons of aid in 2009. On a global scale, the WFP employed 48 shipping companies, 67 airlines, more than 200 logistics companies on the ground and several thousand truck hire companies in more than 70 countries. It also hires its strategically positioned warehouses all over the world from private providers. Altogether, the organisation spent

### Setting up a supply chain from nothing

one billion US dollars on its logistics.

One of WFP's contract companies on site was Kühne+Nagel (KN). The company generates about five percent of its turnover from disaster and emergency aid logistics. In the first three weeks after the earthquake in Haiti it flew 21 charter airplanes to Santo Domingo for the WFP, and also for UNICEF, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Red Cross, as well as World Vision and CARE. Corresponding agreements stipulated that the company had to be ready to act in the disaster region within 24 hours. For 15 years now, the company has been operating a corresponding "Emergency & Relief Logistics" department based in Copenhagen. As soon as the first news emerges

of a new natural disaster, the staff start to assemble equipment and means of transport.

"The biggest challenge in disaster logistics is not getting the goods from A to B", says Søren Christensen in describing his department's work, "but in setting up functional communication to guarantee that all players in supply chain management know their task and don't get in each other's way". On site, the KN team makes sure that customer freight consignments pass smoothly through the customs and tax formalities of the particular country; it informs the airport authorities about the contents and volume of the delivery, and organises local drivers and convoys which are often accompanied by local military or UN soldiers in their blue helmets because of the poor security situation in crisis regions. Here too the right papers must be available. Where these tasks are concerned, the logistics company profits from its branches in 100 countries. It already has local employees in many conflict regions such as Afghanistan or Sudan, who take care of communication with the authorities. After all, according to Christensen, "In the worst case, incorrect communication can cost lives."

Major aid organisations such as the International Red Cross use their own global logistics system. All over the world, aid can be



Major aid organisations such as the International Red Cross use their own global logistics system with strategically positioned warehouses



Protection from looters: UN soldiers accompany trucks bringing supplies to Haiti





The World Food Programme coordinates the logistics network of the United Nations and is one of the largest employers in crisis logistics

brought from strategically positioned warehouses to the scene of the crisis in just a few hours.

“The next few years will see further development in cooperation between the private and the humanitarian logistics sector”, predicts Belgian Professor Luk Van Wassenhove. For years, the co-author of the book “Humanitarian Logistics” has been investigating how to organise this kind of public private partnership along the best possible lines for both sides. He estimates that around eighty percent of the costs for international humanitarian aid missions are generated by logistics. 65 percent is spent on stockpiling and provisioning in strategically positioned permanent aid warehouses, while 15 percent is incurred by transport and storage costs.

Compared to the daily costs of humanitarian logistics, the sponsoring activities of private companies are merely a drop in the

ocean. On the other hand, they offer potential in the form of their expertise in setting up more efficient systems and supply chain management structures, which can save money as well as lives. After all, the UN is chronically underfunded and has to rely on uncertain donation commitments from the individual countries.

### Earning money vs. saving lives

TNT helped the World Food Programme to set up a more efficient warehouse system, providing advice in terms of IT systems, stocktaking and fleet management. In future, the WFP wants to work on the basis of large-scale cooperation activities of this kind. It is also considering outsourcing whole business areas such as fleet management. However, Professor Van Wassenhove warns aid organisations not to place their logistics structures

completely in private hands, as the objectives of private companies are simply quite different from aid organisations: earning money versus saving lives.

But these frontiers become fuzzy at least for many employees of private companies who volunteer to take part in emergency relief. Only a few weeks after DHL relief worker Chris Weeks came back from Haiti, he had to fly out to Chile. Here the earthquake had made hundreds of thousands of people homeless; his task was to ascertain whether DHL should send one of its Disaster Response Teams out to help. Before checking in for his flight at Brussels airport, Weeks gave an interview on the phone and said: “When things start to get emotional, when there are lots of media reports, that’s when I begin to worry”, adding: “Emergency aid often begins very quickly, and we really have to get a move on.” (lyr)

The components for the A380 can only be transported by special low-loader trucks.

# SPE



The Airbus A380, the largest airplane in the world, is assembled in Toulouse in the South of France. But its component parts are made in Airbus factories all over Europe. The front and rear fuselage sections come from Hamburg, Germany; the middle fuselage and the cockpit from Saint Nazaire, France; the wings from Broughton in the UK and the horizontal and vertical tail from Puerto Real, Spain. Bringing them all together in Toulouse was a special logistics challenge. This kind of European division of labour is nothing new: in former Airbus series, the components were transported by special freight

airplanes also made by Airbus, called the “Beluga” after the white whale, because of its shape. But the A380 measures 73 metres in length and 24 metres in height, with a wing span of 80 metres, so that the components no longer fit in any freight airplane. The parts being transported can be up to 53 metres long, 8 metres wide and 14 metres high. After checking all possibilities, including the idea of an airship, in the end the logistics experts at Airbus opted for combined transport by ocean-going ship and river barge together with road transport. Now the components are brought from Hamburg, Broughton, Saint Nazaire

and Puerto Real with a specially designed and built Ro-Ro ocean-going ship to the French port of Pouillac west of Bordeaux in the Gironde estuary. Here they are transferred to a specially built Ro-Ro river barge which travels up the Gironde to the small town of Langon, about 50 km upriver from Bordeaux.

### The transport airplane was too small for the A380's components

This is the point where the Gironde is no longer navigable for heavy loads so that the



# CIAL ROUTES FOR THE GIANT OF THE SKIES



Components for the Airbus A380 from all over Europe are so huge that they are brought to the assembly line in Toulouse by multimodal transport solutions, by sea, by river and finally by road.

journey by water ends here. And so the low-loader trucks with the components leave the barge in Langon and set off on the last leg of the journey by road.

The railway line from here to Toulouse was out of the question because of the dimensions of the loads. Even the idea of using the nearby motorway had to be rejected because too many bridges would have been in the way and anyway, normal traffic would have been unduly hindered. The solution was to use a series of less frequented country roads running parallel to the motorway.

In only two years, between 2002 and 2004, the carriageways were widened from their

previous dimension of only 6 metres, curves were straightened and bridges reinforced, while power and telephone cables went underground. 6,500 new trees were planted to replace the 1,500 trees that had to be felled along the route. At some points, even individual houses had to be demolished when they stood in the way of the straightening work. But all in all, only half a dozen houses were affected, and their residents were resettled. The Airbus Group provided generous compensation for those who were affected, and also made further financial contributions of many different kinds to the local communities en route, quickly appeasing the

initial protests against this unusual airplane component transport route, which opponents had dubbed the “A380 motorway”.

## A straightened country road for the huge airplane parts

The upgrading and improvement work to this stretch of road cost 171 million Euro, with 43 percent paid by the French government and 57 percent by the Airbus Group. The same ratio was also taken to fund construction of the Ro-Ro terminals in Pouillac and Langon: after all, the transports were →

intended for the aircraft industry and help to safeguard ten thousand jobs in the region.

After a public tender, the contract for the road transport was awarded to the SME company Capelle from Vézénobres in the South of France. “This was a huge challenge for us, but winning the contract made the whole workforce very proud, including those not directly involved”, recalls proprietor Daniel Capelle. The loads are pulled by six Mercedes-Benz Actros trucks, fitted with a 600 hp engine and a special gearbox to cope with the relatively long distances at extremely low speed.

The Airbus parts are carried on low-loaders made by the French company Nicolas, measuring up to 28 metres in length. The larger units have twelve axles and 96 wheels, the smaller ones “only” 48 wheels. All the wheels on the low-loaders can be steered individually, and the units have electric motors for manoeuvring onto the ship or onto the shore, for example, and also within the terminal so that they only have to be actually towed on the road.

The transports take place only at night between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., so that normal road traffic and the everyday lives of the people living along the route are hindered as little as possible. The trucks have been fitted with sound-proofing engine cladding and special exhaust silencers to cause the least disturbance to people’s sleep. “We have taken Austria’s standards as the basis for noise protection, as these are the most stringent in Europe”, explains Daniel Capelle. When the convoys set off, consisting of six trucks with low-loaders, accompanied by 20 gendarmes on motorbikes, the route is blocked off completely in sections of 15 km at a time for normal traffic. Electronic road signs have been installed along the route to keep other road users informed, giving indications of alternative routes.

Each convoy carries the parts for a whole airplane: two low-loaders for the wings and one each for the tail, middle fuselage section, rear fuselage and cockpit. At many points, traffic signs and their posts have to be removed and returned again later on, once the extra-wide loads have passed. At particularly narrow points, for example when passing through built-up areas, the trucks only move at walking pace and are accompanied by marshals on foot



**Multimodal transport of aircraft components by sea, river and specially upgraded roads.**

who give the drivers instructions by walkie-talkie to ensure they don’t touch any house walls, trees or bridge abutments. The slightest lapse in attention or wrong movement could have expensive consequences. Each convoy is manned by up to 60 people – drivers, marshals and gendarmes.

**For people living along the route, the A380 convoys have become part of daily routine.**

The transport is controlled and coordinated by a central office at Airbus in Toulouse which maintains radio contact with the convoy and tracks its progress in real time by GPS on the screen and with numerous CCTV cameras en route. The fibreglass cables laid specially for this purpose have also brought broadband internet to the local communities and their residents – another of the measures that has increased acceptance of the transports. But public acceptance quickly ceased to be a problem once the A380 had attracted media interest to the remote region.

“In the first few weeks and months, the villages were lined with residents who applauded us as we passed through”, recalls Michel Bertier, driver of one of the trucks. The people living along the route are still proud of the Airbus transports that bring a touch of the big wide world to their villages and towns. But the convoys have meanwhile become part of daily routine and applause has become a rarity. No-one feels hindered in any way, as during the day time the special transporters stay on one of the five specially built secure parking areas along the route. As the trucks only travel 20 km/h on average and never exceed 40 km and have to stop whenever side winds pose a risk of the high load tipping over, it takes three days (or better: three nights) for the 240 km journey from Languon to Toulouse. Initially there was only one convoy per month, but once the assembly line reached its full capacity in 2008, the frequency increased to one convoy per week. (rkl)

→ Info Enthralling pictures of the A380 transport convoys can be found online at <http://www.photoamateur.net/convoy-airbus-a380.htm>





*Carsten, Christa,  
Ernst and Thomas  
Pfaff: two generations,  
one task*

## A family for special cases

“For heavy, difficult transports” – that’s the slogan of the family transport company Pfaff. trailer world visited a quite normal family in Hamburg.

A job that’s too difficult? A problem that can’t be solved? Not for Ernst Pfaff. After all, difficult cases are his daily business. “If we can’t do it on our own, we do it together with partners”, says the 68-year old founder of the special transport company Pfaff in Hamburg.

Relocating a beverages factory to Ireland, conveyance of a paper production line to India or, as now, moving a chip company from Bielefeld to Kulim in Malaysia: two to three times a year, the SME company deals with this kind of special global assignment. Smaller company relocation jobs in Germany are handled on a monthly basis. Otherwise, the company transports almost anything that is too complicated for anyone else: whether it’s an oversized power generator or a dismantled lathe for railway wheels, spread out over five trucks. Transporting forklift trucks, printing presses, machine tools and X-ray machines is the company’s staple business.

**Together we’re strong** Nearly every job is different. “It’s not only the equipment and fleet that count”, says Pfaff, who speaks as “we” rather than “I”. It’s just as important to have decades of experience and a reliable workforce. The closest confidantes come

from the direct family. Wife Christa has always been responsible for accounting and controlling. Sons Carsten (47) and Thomas (39) have also long since joined the family business. “The firm is part of our home, it’s where we earned our first pocket money”, says Carsten Pfaff. Three years ago, the brothers started to took over for responsibility for running the day-to-day business, while the whole family has shouldered overall management of the firm for the last twelve months.

**Innovative technology** Meanwhile the senior boss concentrates mainly on corporate strategy and investment. Even so, nothing goes unnoticed. “All the post and every order still goes over my desk”, reports the agile businessman. The desk in his office has two screens monitoring what’s happening on the company premises covering 25,000 m<sup>2</sup>. The shelf behind him displays numerous car racing cups. “Meanwhile I’ve turned to golf, it’s more relaxing”, he says, while turning his attention to what’s happening outside the window.

One of the red-and-yellow low-level trucks bearing the Pfaff logo comes into the yard. The flatbed is lowered hydraulically to unload a forklift truck. “This makes us flexible when loading →



*Carsten and  
Thomas Pfaff.*



*»I'm just not the  
kind to drop out of  
the business and  
put my feet up«*



*They used to earn their pocket money here.  
Now they're Managing Directors.*

and unloading from different heights", says Pfaff, either directly on the ground or from any kind of loading ramp up to 1.50 m. Next to it there's a diagonal loader with a larger loading volume which is used to transport heavy machines up to eight tons. Altogether the fleet has 50 special vehicles. Mega low-loaders, diagonal hoisting cradles or mega electric cranes: "No vehicle in the fleet is like any other", says Carsten Pfaff.

**New developments** The requirements differ just as much as the orders. The low-loaders and hoisting gear can be adapted in the company's own garage to keep pace with what's needed every time. The company also pursues its own development work here, such as a trailer with a loading height of 4.20 m under a tarpaulin, specially designed for the high masts of forklift trucks. Or the mega diagonal hoisting cradle loader with continuous flatbed. At the moment, work is in progress with a corresponding manufacturer on an innovation for low-loaders. "To be even more flexible, last year we completely renovated the garage and fitted it out with state-of-the-art engineering", says Pfaff, who has meanwhile put on a neon-yellow safety waistcoat over his grey suit and crosses the garage building with a springy step. Here the company modifies and repairs trucks belonging to other companies as well as its own. The



truck washing installation facing it is also in good use. "The current slack period gives customers time for this kind of thing", says Pfaff.

**Complex processes** Special transports are also affected by the crisis. "We naturally also notice it when our customers' turnover declines", says Pfaff. To counteract these effects, the company has diversified into new areas, such as transporting milking machines and milking robots. The long-distance sector is also expanding, as well as business with company relocations. "What's more, we are increasingly moving away from being a transport company to a service provider", says Thomas Pfaff. This includes not only loading and unloading the freight but also the complete dismantling and installation of machinery, including making all the connections and related storage activities. The orders often entail highly complex processes.

It took a whole week for example just to plan the processes involved in relocating the chip factory to Malaysia. "Where major projects are concerned, we inspect the unloading site personally in advance", says Carsten Pfaff who is responsible for the project. Drive, entrance door, condition of the ground outside and the floor inside, parking area – everything is examined to ensure that any hindrances can be ruled out in advance. If a door is too low, structural alterations may be necessary or the machine will have to be dismantled outside. Fitters and electricians accompany the transport to cover such cases.

Photos: Bergunde, Pfaff





*One of Pfaffs special jobs: relocating the chip factory from Bielefeld to Kulim/Malaysia*

For the move to Kulim/Malaysia, the whole production facility from the die cutter via the screen printing machine to the press was dismantled and loaded part for part in 40' containers. Together with the actual transporting equipment, altogether 15 containers then set off from Bielefeld to Kulim. The load was accompanied by a mechanic, an electrical engineer and three transport crew who spent three weeks in Asia, unpacking and installing the factory on site.

**Constant growth** The projects were much simpler to start with. 49 years ago, Ernst Pfaff set up business with a VW Transporter, which he drove himself in the early days. The 21-year old precision mechanic and his wife Christa initially intended to start trading with potatoes. But they weren't granted a permit. Giving up was simply not an issue. "As we'd already purchased the Transporter, we decided to use it to transport other goods", says Pfaff. Two years later, he purchased a low loader from a firm that had gone bankrupt. In those days, this was a really innovative vehicle that propelled the small firm into a niche in the market. The first contracts to transport forklift trucks soon followed. "For a long time, we had a kind of monopoly", says Pfaff. The range of transport services was then extended to include printing presses and machine tools. A good 15 years later the company had a fleet of 16 vehicles and a workforce of 20 employees. In the early 80s, the company opened a branch in Bremen and the company enjoyed constant growth. Today the 100 employees generate annual sales of around 12 million Euro.

At Pfaff they won't bow to the price pressure which currently dictates the industry. "We counter this trend with quality", says Pfaff. The vehicles are constantly maintained in the company's

own garage. The firm regularly invests in its fleet which is always state of the art. "And behind every trailer you'll find an axle from BPW", says Pfaff. "After all, they have a lot to contend with." Nor do they cut corners when it comes to staff. The vehicles are always only driven by the company's own drivers. Many of them have been with Pfaff since receiving their initial vocational training here. It takes a full year to complete the advanced training needed to transport the sensitive machine tools and printing machines. Sub-contractors are only used if they are known on a personal basis. "This approach has always worked well", says Thomas Pfaff. The family firm has a reputation for punctual deliveries without any damage.



*Pfaff special fleet: from very high to very low or very wide*

**Reliable values** The reputation also extends to flexibility and speed. "Customers who ring up will get a special vehicle in 45 minutes", says Carsten Pfaff. Speedy decisions are also often necessary when handling orders.

"Communication is often easier within the family setting, with greater scope for decision making", he says.

In spite of growth and progress, the corporate values have remained the same over the years. "We attach importance to fairness with business partners and customers alike", says Pfaff. This is why an order is only said to have been successful if everything went well. "Of course we want to earn money. But profit is not all that counts". With this philosophy, some customer relations have existed for 45 years. (bb)

→ Info More information about Ernst Pfaff can be found online at [www.pfaff-hh.de](http://www.pfaff-hh.de)

# »Revolutionary leaps are difficult to predict«

Sceptics criticise the restrained willingness to make progress in the HGV industry, which in turn is proud of its innovations that are not always visible at first glance. Interview with experts.

*trailerworld: While the commercial vehicle industry holds visionary discussions concerning the great innovations which tomorrow will bring, they prefer to limit themselves to a policy of small steps, instead of far-reaching progress. Don't they have the courage for great deeds?*

**Bernhard Rossenbach:** There I must immediately contradict you: particularly in the commercial vehicle sector, we are seeing many innovations, which may not be seen as such in the public eye. But if we compare the efficiency of today's commercial vehicles with vehicles of the previous generation, significant progress becomes apparent. For example, compare the load ratio to the overall

»It inevitably takes years for new technologies to make their mark.«

weight – the technicians have achieved good work here. Progress cannot be achieved with just one technology, many small steps result in a large stride.

**Dr. Frank Sager:** There are two aspects that need to be considered: on the one hand, the long product cycles in the commercial

sector and, on the other, the long life of trailers and tractors, which can be more than 15 years. Until new technologies have gained acceptance, it is inevitable that a few years go by. In any case, the discerning commercial vehicle operator expects a definite advantage from every innovation.

*What are the goals of the commercial vehicle industry? And in particular for the semi- and drawbar trailer manufacturer?*

**Sager:** It is always about bringing goods from A to B at the lowest possible cost.

In other words, reduce the tare weight and diminish costs. Here, we are not talking about reducing the purchase price of the vehicles but the overall operating costs per fleet kilometre.

**Rossenbach:** Today, a trailer is a link in a logistics chain. One that guarantees, for instance, that the car manufacturer receives his car seats just in time, and for burger fast-food restaurants, primary products are delivered into the deep-freeze warehouse at a reliable minus 24°, monitored by satellite and exactly conform to customer specifications. A deeper integration of the commercial vehicle into the logistics process is required – here, the potential has not yet been exhausted.



*In the case of trailers, the progress seems to be piecemeal, at least that is how the observer sees it. What will be the contribution from semi- and drawbar trailers for the transport of the future?*

**Sager:** Even in the future, the tare weight will be the focus. Fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will need to be monitored. Both are dependent on the chassis. In general, the driving resistance must be minimised. And, as always, the weight of the individual components plays an important part here. A special consideration will be given to safety. Because the public will not accept it in the long run if HGVs are a greater danger than motor cars or motorcyclists. We are working closely on this to advance the state of technology.





### Personal details

**Dr. Frank Sager (45)** has been running BPW's Development, Construction and Testing department since summer 2007. The electrical engineer with a PhD offers extensive experience in vehicle safety, software development and telematics, having been involved in corresponding development work at Bosch, VDO and Daimler (HGV).

**Bernhard Rossenbach (43)** is responsible for Product Management at BPW. He joined the company back in 1994, immediately after obtaining his engineering degree. The graduate mechanical engineer gained a wide range of experience in many different jobs and central positions for the company.

BPW development engineers, Dr. Frank Sager and Bernhard Rossenbach, being interviewed by HGV journalist Wolfgang Tschakert.

#### *How will you meet these requirements?*

**Sager:** I think that we can confidently say that at present the safety level is quite high. In trucks but also in the trailers, there are safety systems that already surpass the usual motor car equipment. The consistent decline in traffic fatalities is proof of the fact that the HGV industry has performed very well.

**Rossenbach:** If we retain the same rate of development, we can continue to expect substantial progress. Consider the late 90s for instance, when an axle weighed more than 500 kilograms. Currently, it weighs only around 400 kilograms; we took away a good 20% from the product, and increased its lifespan at the same time. If we consider braking distances, we arrive at a similar re-

sult: using EBS controlled brake systems commercial vehicles decelerate much more effectively these days. Shorter braking distances have saved lives, that is certain. Or the TRS system (trailer roll stability) that automatically brakes a vehicle that enters a curve too quickly, it has established itself nationwide and has improved safety significantly.

#### *More payload, more transport volume – what consequences does this hold for the chassis?*

**Sager:** Of course, the chassis and the axles will continue to be optimised to gain payload. Actually, however, the question is rather: will future vehicle designs remain the same as they are today? Consider the

discussion about the EuroCombi, the discussion on the 60 Tons issue. With more loading length and payload capacity, in ratio to the cost, transport becomes more

»Today an axle weighs only 400 kg – we have taken a full 20% out of the product.«

efficient. The driver costs remain constant, diesel prices rise only moderately but not in a linear fashion. With innovative chassis designs we can make a significant contribution to their success. Remember the advent of the steered axle, that makes long articulated trucks significantly more manoeuvrable and easier to control? ➔

»New materials will continue to drive innovation in future too. But progress is not always that obvious: many material improvements are made in intricate details.«

Dr. Frank Sager



*Will you be using new materials for the high stress components? What is the potential that we are talking about in this case?*

**Sager:** There are already good examples of that: carbon fibre is already being used on weight optimised semi-trailers – the high material price is offset by the gain in payload. Whether the customer accepts this depends on the lifespan of the product and the overall transport balance sheet. New materials motivate innovation, and will continue to do so in the future. However, progress is not always apparent, many material optimisations happen in detail, which result in favourable effects for us. As you specifically mention carbon fibre and synthetic materials, approaches have been made repeatedly within our industry. The problems were always the material costs: they are significantly higher than steel components. It is also about calling entire structures into question. We are studying new concepts that will make optimal use of the material properties and will be able to show a cost benefit within the overall system.

**Rossenbach:** Especially with the major building blocks, an improvement in the materials contributes substantially to progress. A design that better targets the stresses, and is supported by modern calculation methods would take us further. And, because today the material quality is much more

consistent, a better product quality can be achieved with a lower material use.

*The safety issue is an enduring subject. If you compare the braking distances of cars 10 years ago with those of today, you will find braking distance at least 10% shorter. Where does the chassis manufacturer BPW stand on this and with which concepts?*

**Sager:** We need to achieve the same safety standard with trucks (as motor cars) in the mid to long term. However, I would not want to just shorten braking distances. We are already at a good standard with this. There is also a physical limit, at which we are currently already operating. It is more about controlling the vehicle's driving properties. In the future, quite a lot will happen here. For instance the "jack-knife" effect which is potentially very dangerous. Also, in the future, brakes will play an important part, as they are the actuators for all preventive safety systems. Today it is the brake management that is in the forefront, as opposed to the hardware. That brings us to the topic of electronics in the trailer. It is an integral component of the articulated truck, some systems, such as the trailer EBS or TRS cover the towed unit. There is still plenty to be done here; for instance, a stronger overall truck and trailer management.

*Explain to us the thought process of a developer, what makes him tick?*

**Sager:** It is in the nature of an engineer to have the aspiration to constantly improve existing solutions. Of course, there are always challenging topics that constantly require new technologies and new materials. Yet the business consists largely of tasks that initially do not look so exciting. The real challenge is to equate each innovation and its cost to the benefit for the customer. After all, the manufacturer and his staff have to live on this. It is like sport: If the target is challenging enough and even if you knock over obstacles on the way, you still keep trying until you reach the finishing line.

*How long-term does BPW development work?*

**Sager:** Our thought horizon is 10 years, that is how far ahead we are looking. Specifically, we are working on topics that will achieve the production stage in 4-5 years. We are investigating the benefit that they will generate and the costs they will incur. Once series development takes over, it will go into production within two years.

*What are the topics that are presently being researched?*

**Sager:** The central issue that affects us is: how should we design our components



so that they remain usable for a specified lifespan. Because our customers have a right to high quality, and we would like to provide the customer with a well-engineered product. Each component must be adapted optimally to the particular use. This guarantees the customer an economical and powerful product that satisfies his requirements fully. It is about designing the components as exactly as possible for the application they are meant for. In doing this, we run into the problem of the gigantic variety of variants that makes it difficult for us to limit our development to concrete applications. Our goal is to have a box of bricks that allows us to bring all customer requirements and cost considerations under one umbrella. To achieve this, we use mathematical analysis, and also field trials to achieve results as precise as possible.

*How could an interested market observer envisage the commercial vehicle technology of tomorrow?*

**Rossenbach:** The aim is to have more optimised products. We currently achieve a high standard. Our ECO Plus guarantee is valid for

5 years for on-road operation, that means, for instance, our wheel bearing is maintenance-free for 5 years and unlimited kilometres. Up until now, the area of validity for this guarantee was tied to the national boundaries. From the middle of this year onward, these constraints are being waived, and the ECO Plus guarantee is valid from the Atlantic to the Urals as long as it concerns on-road operation. In addition, our products will be integrated much more tightly into the overall logistics. As is already the case, for instance, with our EBS system in which we can store the entire axle documentation. When reading the trailer operating data, it is possible to revert to the Internet, and spare parts can be ordered quickly and easily via our platform. In addition, we shall expand this base further so that the customer can operate his trailer more easily, will require less maintenance, and save operating costs in the process.

*Evolution instead of revolution, would you agree with that in this case?*

**Sager:** There will always be revolutionary steps, as we have seen in the past. Re-

member the introduction of EBS brakes, the transition from the pure pneumatic braking system to an electronically controlled compressed air brake meant a revolutionary leap. We will certainly experience that in the future, the difficulty is to predict when. Often it is in new materials, new technologies, or electronics. Completely new approaches make strong progress possible. Of course, we also discuss large steps for the future, and the consequences that these will have for our company. At the same time, I would like to hold up a flag for the trailer manufacturers who have motivated us into taking many large and small steps.

**Rossenbach:** We would wish for a closer future collaboration between the trailer and the truck industries. Issues, topics and the need for optimisation are present in abundance. For instance, how will the future EuroCombi look, how can the different modes of transport be combined more efficiently. Improved solidarity within the industry could get things done much more quickly, which brings us back to the subject. (wt)



Photos: Fünf6

»Our EBS systems can be used to store the entire axle documentation«

Bernhard Rossenbach

# Neighbours with a Ro-Ro connection

After the war in Yugoslavia, forwarders looked for a safe alternative to land transport and founded U.N. Ro-Ro. Today the operator is one of the most successful companies in the Mediterranean.

The cargo hatch of UN Akdeniz is wide open. The powerful trucks Mafi 1, 2 and 4 are busy at work pulling trailers for Turkish and international forwarders into the heart of the ship. After four hours of hard work, at 8 p.m. the ship run by the Turkish operator U.N. Ro-Ro leaves the company port in Pendik to set off over the Marmara Sea. It will pass through the Dardanelles into the Mediterranean and round to the Adriatic Sea, finally docking in the Italian port of Triest 58 hours later.

“Today is pretty average”, says Özcan Mimir, port manager in Pendik as he walks across the parking area. It’s not full. Mimir is expecting 150 trailers, perhaps a few more will come. On other days the premises with 530 parking lots will be full to capacity. At the main entrance, the trucks pass through customs before the load is controlled and weighed. Then they can refuel tax-free before going on board.

The route between Turkey and Italy has been in existence since 1994. In those days, 48 Turkish forwarders in the UND (international transporters association) were wondering how to bypass war-torn Yugoslavia. Although the alternative land routes to Europe

via Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Austria or the Czech Republic were still open, the roads were often in poor condition, the border procedures longwinded and the goods weren’t safe.

“Our company came up with the idea of setting up a Ro-Ro connection”, says Ser-



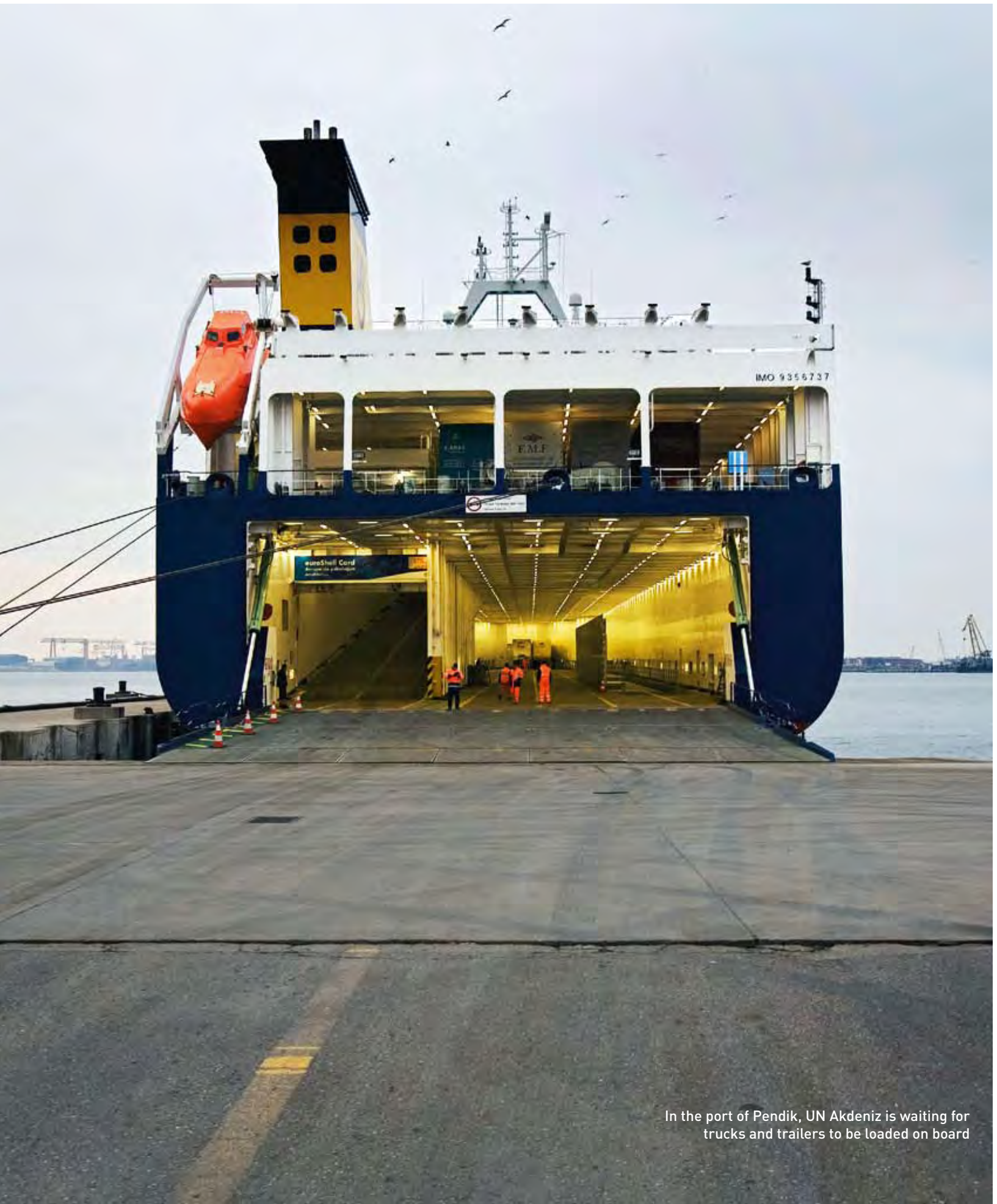
Özcan Mimir, port manager in Pendik, makes sure things run smoothly

dar Sezen, Manager of Ünkar International Transports and Customs Warehouse. Initially they tested a route between Derince in the Gulf of Izmir and Triest. However, there was simply not enough space, the Ro-Ro ships also carried passengers and only ran twice a week. “But in principle it seemed to us that this route is right”, explains Sezen and adds: “Turkey and Europe became neighbours”.

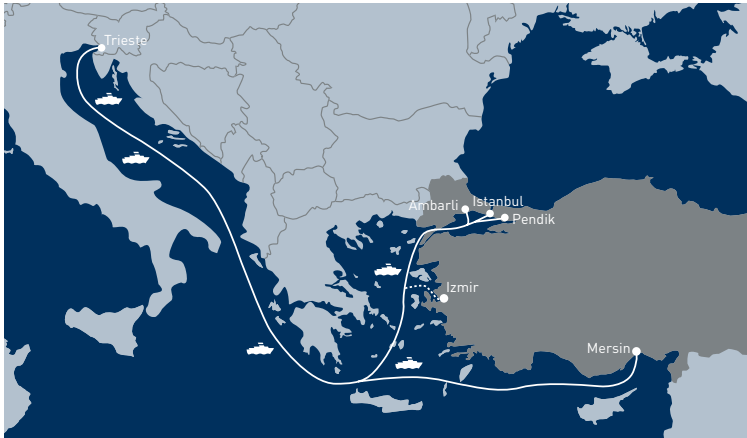
To start with, the state Turkish Cargo Lines chartered two ships, with UND taking on the guarantees. The forwarders then founded U.N. Ro-Ro, which today is one of the most successful companies in the Mediterranean. “We have around 12,000 customers and a market share of about 36 percent in freight transport between Turkey and Western Europe”, says Cemil Bayülgen, Managing Director of U.N. Ro-Ro.

To begin with, the ships sailed from Istanbul’s Haydarpasa port on the Asian side. Following investment in the port of Pendik, since September 2005 around 50 percent of the trailers are loaded here. Three times a week, Ro-Ro ships leave Istanbul’s Ambarli port on the European side, with twice-weekly departures from the Mediterranean port of Mersin. →





In the port of Pendik, UN Akdeniz is waiting for trucks and trailers to be loaded on board



The floating highway as a direct connection between Turkey and Italy

In 2007, the American holding company Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co (KKR) purchased U.N. Ro-Ro for 910 million Euro. UND only holds one percent.

Since the takeover, KKR has continued to invest, purchasing two ships in 2008 and another one in 2009. The next delivery is to be made in July 2010, bringing the fleet to eleven ships.

On the 103,000 m<sup>2</sup> premises of the U.N. Ro-Ro terminal in Pendik, trailers and trucks from all renowned Turkish forwarders wait in line, including leading names such as Ekol, Ran and Mars Logistics. Sittnak International Transport Inc. sends around 50 trucks with trailers and three to five trailers every week, just to Triest and back. "Safety is the main reason why we use the Ro-Ro connection", says

M. Melih Kinaci, Vice President of Sittnak. The company supplies goods above all to Italy, Spain, France and Germany. "We don't go via Bulgaria and Romania at all, as the border guards want a bribe", says Kinaci. Furthermore, the fuel available here is often poor.

Land transport is the only competition for U.N. Ro-Ro Managing Director Bayülgen. His employees therefore check meticulously to see what land transport costs. The Ro-Ro operator's prices are then aligned accordingly to keep below forwarders that only offer land transport.

Last year, U.N. Ro-Ro shipped around 150,000 units in both directions from all three ports. At the moment, the facilities are working at 80 to 85 percent capacity for export and about 100 percent for import. "2008 was a good year, apart from the last few months", says Bayülgen. He hopes that the whole market will pick up in 2010. U.N. Ro-Ro plans to run more frequent services between Ambarli and Triest, and also between Mersin and Triest: after all, Bayülgen expects more transit traffic in future. (sl)



## Specialist for Ro-Ro ships

■ FSG (Flensburger Schiffbau-Gesellschaft) is a key partner for U.N. Ro-Ro and has built altogether 14 ships for its Turkish customer since 1999. FSG was founded in 1872. Since then it has built more than 700 ships, including sailing ships and tankers. The orders from U.N. Ro-Ro have seen the Flensburg company develop into a special shipbuilding firm. "A team of experts was out and about all over the world to find the right shipyard",

says Uwe Otto, Sales and Marketing Director at FSG. "They found us and have stayed with us, because our ships use around 10 tons less fuel a day than competing vessels with the same load volume". In time, the company has adapted the Ro-Ro ships to the increasing demand. Initially they were rated for 2,700 track meters but this has changed to 3,715 metres today, with the ships offering capacity for 240 trucks and trailers.

→ Info More information about the named companies can be found online at [www.unroro.com.tr](http://www.unroro.com.tr) (U.N. Ro-Ro), [www.unkar.com](http://www.unkar.com) (Unkar International Transport and Customs Warehouse) and [www.fsg-shpi.de](http://www.fsg-shpi.de) (Flensburger Schiffbau-Gesellschaft).





The Ro-Ro terminal in Pendik is not full just now. But 240 trailers and trucks will have been loaded by 8 p.m.

## »It was our idea«



Serdar Sezen, Manager of Ünkar International Transports and Customs Warehouse

### *How long have you been using the U.N. Ro-Ro connection from Turkey to Trieste?*

We are one of the founders of U.N. Ro-Ro. The reason was the war in Yugoslavia. The alternative route to Europe meant we had to go via Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and the Czech Republic. But there was a lot of theft going on, together with problems at the borders. For example, when importing heavy machinery, the Hungarians and Romanians only weighed the axles but not the complete truck. If the weighbridge showed 100 kg too much on one axle, they expected us to pay a fine of up to DM 1,500 there and then.

### *Why do you use this Ro-Ro connection?*

The truck is the biggest investment for a forwarder. But using the Ro-Ro connection means that the truck doesn't stand around

idle for the four-day outbound journey and four-day return journey. We only send the trailers to Trieste. We have split our trucks into two groups. The newer ones operate in Europe, the older ones are used in Turkey.

### *What are the advantages for you in using the Ro-Ro connection?*

We need fewer drivers with experience in Europe. The Ro-Ro connection is also more profitable and more environment-friendly, as no trucks are needed during the loop of about six days while the trailers are on the ship. And we can offer our customers more stable transit times. The drivers are flown in from Ljubljana so that for import consignments, we receive the shipping papers two days before the trailers arrive. This means we can check everything in advance and make preparations for the customs formalities.







The tipper trough takes up to 25 tons of load and is pulled by a tractor at full power.

# Tractors on the building site

At the building site for the Airport Berlin Brandenburg International (BBI), Agroliners help with the earthworks. These are convincing machines when it comes to power, speed and flexibility

Four huge wheels plough easily through the damp, clingy soil, the 203 hp engine purrs with joy and moves the six and a half tons of its load with up to 40 km/h: a tractor has really got what it takes! As recently discovered by the building trade. With increasing frequency, these strong vehicles work away from the farm: for example, just now they're to be found on one of Europe's largest building sites, the Airport Berlin Brandenburg International in Schönefeld to the South of Berlin.

"JD 7530 Premium" by the American agricultural machinery specialist John Deere is involved in excavation work on this particular building site – combined with a tipper unit by Kröger Nutzfahrzeuge or Krampe Fahrzeugbau, which carries up to 25 tons with its BPW axles. The family company HKL Baumaschinen from Hamburg added the green vehicle with the deer logo to its fleet about two years ago and hires it out for use among others on the airport building site. "Before this, we didn't have any vehicles in our programme that were capable of moving larger masses", says Friedrich Schneider, manager of

»They can pull really heavy loads«

the nearest HKL branch in Königs Wusterhausen. "We were looking for a practical and flexible solution, and came up with the idea of using tractors and tipper units. This has filled in a service gap and customers no longer need to turn to an additional transport company." The tractors have clear advantages over dumpers or trucks: they use less fuel – only about eight litres – while achieving more. "They can pull really heavy loads", summarises Friedrich Schneider. The tractors are also allowed to travel on the open roads – a special advantage at BBI where the vehicles have no problems in travelling to the nearest gravel pit outside the site premises.

There's still plenty for the powerful machines to do on the huge building site. Work on the largest infrastructure project in Germany's new federal states began in 2006. The official opening of the Airport Berlin Brandenburg International BBI is planned for 30 October 2011, when it will be called Airport Berlin Brandenburg "Willy Brandt".

At the same time – in fact on the evening before – Berlin's Tegel airport at the other end of the city will be closed. Schönefeld will →

Photo: Zappner



Tractors working on the apron of the new airport

then be capable of handling up to 27 million passengers, with scope to expand capacity later to up to 45 million. Together with European connections, the intention is also to offer new long-distance flights. Berlin airport is particularly interesting for passengers from Eastern Europe. The planning activities took account of all the demands made in terms of modern security standards. For the passengers, this means the airport will be one of short distances – from arriving by car using the new motorway link or the six-platform BBI station through to the check-in desk, security control and shopping prior to departure.

The Airport BBI covers 1,470 acres of ground, corresponding to 2,000 football pitches. In spite of the long and particularly cold winter, up to now work on the building site remains on schedule. The topping out ceremony for the terminal will be held in May. Its impressive glass façade is already visible from afar. Procedures on site are perfectly coordinated: even now, work is still in progress on many different aspects, from underground construction through to installation of the electric systems.

At the moment, the HKL tractors are at work on the apron. A digger lifts the earth onto the trailers behind the tractors, which are sent to various different intermediate storage sites depending on the class of soil. Here the soil material is processed, treated if necessary and reused later on at other parts of the site. Meanwhile, the unusual vehicles have become an accepted part of the overall picture in the everyday life of the building site. But to start with, the tractors were met with scepticism, recalls Friedrich Schneider from HKL: “The customers struggled at first, it took us

a lot of effort to convince them. It’s simply strange to see tractors in this context”.

But quality did the trick: “We really are completely satisfied and only have good things to tell”, says Schneider. “On other kinds of ground it might be a different story, but when it comes to the sandy, loamy ground here in Brandenburg, the tractors are ideal. What’s more, they are reliable and need little

maintenance: not one of them has let us down up to now. They just don’t break down”. He sees no drawbacks with these machines, apart from motorway construction where the tractors are not allowed on the motorway outside the actual site because of the minimum speed limit of 60 km/h. But apart from this, Schneider thinks that tractors “simply belong on the building site today”. After the “BBI project”, there will still be plenty of work for tractors: after all, there are many other construction projects with earthmoving work in the pipeline, in road building for example.

With a water truck as trailer, the “green deers” are also at work elsewhere on the BBI project: during the summer, dust development on the construction site threatened to impair flight safety on the nearby runway of Schönefeld airport (this will be the northern runway of the new airport), resulting in a need for dust nets. But it was almost impossible to obtain them in the necessary dimensions. The simple, effective solution: “We just hooked up the water trucks and sprayed the construction site and corresponding material storage sites to render the dust harmless”, says Friedrich Schneider. “A tractor helps wherever it can”. (jg)



»A tractor helps wherever it can.«

Friedrich Schneider,  
branch manager  
HKL Baumaschinen

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→ Info More information about the named companies can be found online at [www.hkl-baumaschinen.de](http://www.hkl-baumaschinen.de), [www.agroliner.de](http://www.agroliner.de), [www.krampe.de](http://www.krampe.de), [www.deere.de](http://www.deere.de) and [www.berlin-airport.de](http://www.berlin-airport.de)



# Overcoming the crisis thanks to flexibility

The example of Finnish manufacturer Ekeri with its excellent bodywork can be used to study the advantages of “the old economy”. Advantages that are highly appreciated by the company’s customers.

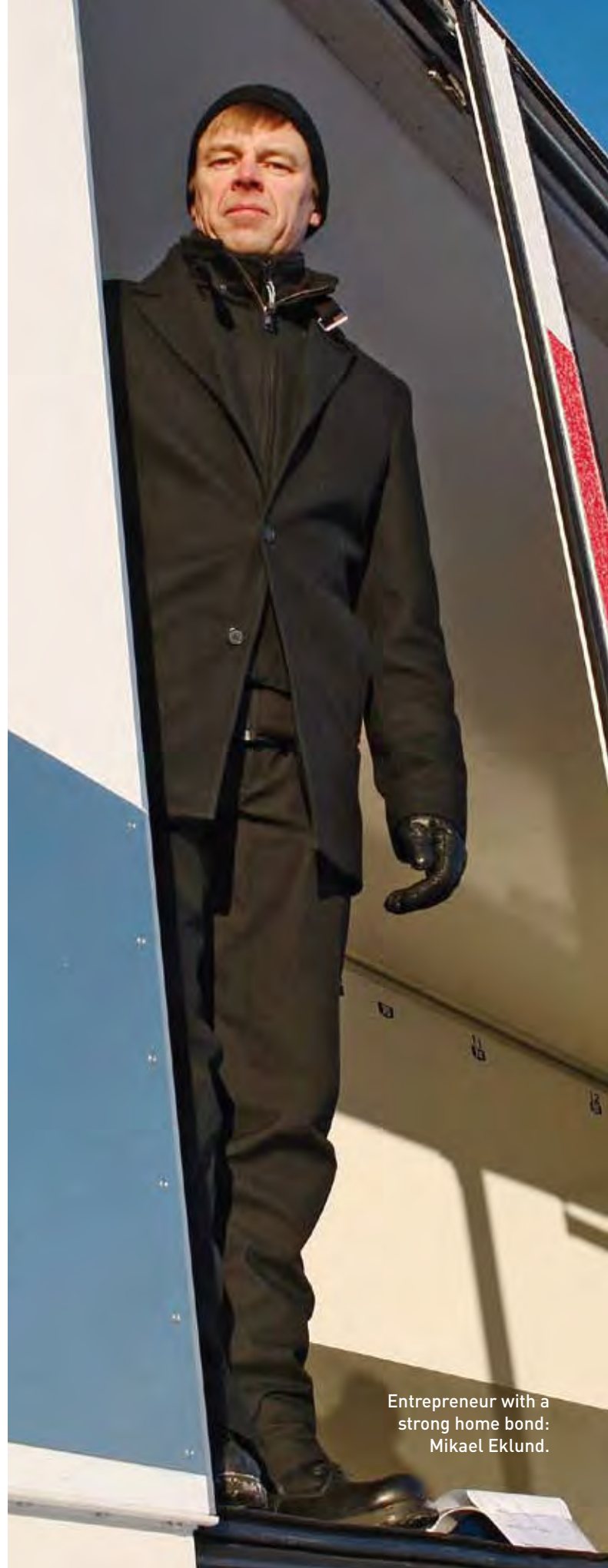
After the interview, Mikael Eklund invites us to have coffee with him. We need to drive a few metres, the 48 year old entrepreneur explains to his visitors. Indeed, it is just a few hundred metres from the company to a modest bungalow with a pleasantly furnished living-room. It is a family get-together, looking out of the window, the house of Eklund’s brother can be seen; around the corner is the old joiner’s workshop “where everything started.”

Mikael Eklund can not deny his roots. The development of his company is, in principle, carried out on just a tiny spot of Finland in the west of the country, where a respectable minority exists, which speaks Swedish and carries Swedish names. A relic of history: for centuries Finland belonged to the Kingdom of Sweden.

A similar bond with one’s roots is found in many medium-sized companies and, presumably, is for the most of them an important part of their success story. In Eklund’s case this rags-to-riches story is, in short, as follows: his grandfather ran a small joiner’s workshop in the post-war years and, at some point, began to build caravans for his increasingly travel-happy countrymen. The village joiners expanded their product range, and the business gradually changed to become that of a vehicle manufacturer; one that was specialised in a very clever niche-product. Admittedly, it had the reputation of not being very cheap but, also of being indestructible.

**Folding doors: an idea by Ekeri** The name Ekeri stands for bodywork and trailers for temperature-controlled transport, with lateral doors that allow a high degree of flexibility when loading or unloading. →

Photo: Kienberger



Entrepreneur with a strong home bond: Mikael Eklund.



Cool technology in the cold north. Ekeri believes in high-quality, multi-use fridge trailers with wide-opening side panels.



## KRAATZ OY – BPW in Finland

■ The Finnish Kraatz Oy and BPW are linked by a long common road. Kraatz was founded in 1922 and agreed a delivery contract with the German axle manufacturer in 1938. Back then Kraatz was a two-man operation managed by Henry

Kraatz, the grandfather of the current managing director, Hans-Peter Kraatz, and was active as an agency, de facto, as an import/export company. While they initially operated as a typical agency – just a “transit post” – the business transformed due to the changes in the market, increasingly towards a service and trading company that maintained its own warehouse, from where orders could be processed at short notice. In 1985, the longstanding, strong business contacts led to the Finnish company being sold to the German partner, and it has been a 100% BPW subsidiary since then. At the Espoo location, in a suburb of Helsinki, items from the BPW inventory are not the only things in stock. On the contrary, Kraatz has a broad range of products that covers practically all components for trucks and trailers, including tyres and rims and axles and axle systems.

Mikael Eklund says, they are still the “centrepiece” of his products, even if in the meantime, more, sometimes very special, building blocks have been grouped around them: “But with this special construction characteristic, we have been able to gain a lot of knowledge, and, therefore, know how to build such vehicles so that they have the necessary stability and strength.”

The idea to build fixed bodies combined with generous lateral loading options is due to the particularities of northern Europe: the partially inhospitable North is very thinly populated, large industrial enterprises are quite rare. Transporters, therefore, do not often have the luxury of standardised loads. In Norway, for instance, it is not uncommon that on a tour from South to North construction planks are transported and the return trip is with Bacalao, salted codfish, whereby the handling takes place somewhere in the yard. Consequently, Ekeri’s customers need equipment that is flexible in its application. Not a problem for Eklund: “we have everything in our programme – boxtype trucks, semitrailers, tandem trailers and all trailer variants for the 25 metre articulated combinations”, with which the total weight of 60 tons, permitted in Finland and Sweden, is possible.

“The more ‘normal’ a vehicle is, the more difficult it is for us to keep up with large series production. Our domain is the ‘special solution’”, says the Finnish entrepreneur outlining the position of the company within the concert of the coachwork and trailer manufacturers. Just as the semitrailer that is standing in front of the company premises. The



customer's fleet is painted very ostentatiously, that's why, it's easy to miss the acronym in the top left corner.

'EX III' is there – therefore, the trailer is permitted to carry explosives.

The exterior walls are made of steel, other characteristics are central locking for all doors as well as devices for crane loading – “everything is good for Ekeri”, Mikael Eklund smiles. And you feel the pride in his own achievement, when he remarks that “this typical niche product” received the explosives certificate to the latest standard, which is not easy to get.

**Overcoming the crisis through specialisation** Of course the north European specialists were hit hard by the economic crisis – he makes no secret of the fact that “within a year, we lost just under half of our turnover”. In particular, headaches were caused by some of his Icelandic customers who overnight became insolvent. “At that moment, we needed a lot of creativity to not have to write off the entire outstanding accounts”. In the meantime, production is back to almost 80% of earlier levels. For the entrepreneur, the rapid recovery was due to specialisation: he is convinced that those who have mainly standard products in their product range are currently in a clearly more difficult situation. “At the moment in Finland, things are going better than they ever have” reports Mikael Eklund and remarks self-critically: “Maybe we simply used to have less time to really worry about the home market”. One of his Finnish customers is Juha Ristimaa, the one that is currently on the road with probably the most spectacular Ekeri equipment which has less to do with the product specifications and more with Juha's passion for ostentatiously styled vehicles. He has baptised his 25 metre articulated lorry the “Legend”, the airbrush work on it depict film star legends such as Marilyn Monroe and Katherine Hepburn or James Dean. This owner-driver has already won around 20 trophies at relevant events for his piece of jewellery.

**Green flexibility “legend”** Ristimaa travels back and forth, mainly between Finland and Sweden, and he is one of the many customers for whom the lateral doors assure the necessary flexibility: he estimates that for 3 out of 4 loadings or unloadings, he opens the doors. He appreciates Ekeri as a customer-oriented supplier from whom he gets good service and smart ideas. For instance, the Ekeguard: a device that is no larger than a telephone. With this he activates the central locking, and if anybody tries to open the doors of either truck or trailer, the Ekeguard sends an SMS directly to Ristimaa's mobile telephone. In addition, the device tells the weight of his load or the temperature in the cargo compartments. Today, Ristimaa carries lettuce, tomorrow crates of beverages, and paper on other

»Flexibility we gain from the use of lateral doors is extremely important for us. We use it practically all the time.«

Juha Ristimaa, haulier

days: “I make full use of the permitted 60 tons”, reports the Scania fan, who thinks there is nothing special about driving the 25 metre long combination: “it's quite simple, the artic can be manoeuvred very easily”. (rk)

→ Info More information about the companies named here can be found online at [www.ekeri.fi](http://www.ekeri.fi) and [www.kraatz.fi](http://www.kraatz.fi)



Juha Ristimaa is an absolute fan of Ekeri, the Ekeguard remote control, and Marilyn Monroe. The striking paintwork on his 25-m truck and trailer is the centre of attention at many festivals in Northern Europe.

# Construction machinery trade fair as mood indicator

Great expectations were made of the world's largest construction industry trade fair in Munich, where protagonists were spreading an unmistakably optimistic mood. The world's leading construction industry trade fair came at just the right time to give important signs.

To no-one's great surprise, the seven days in Munich broke all the records. The 29th trade-fair for construction machinery, building material machines, mining machines, construction vehicles and construction equipment easily beat all previous records, regardless of the economic crisis and air traffic bans. With more than 555,000 square meters of exhibition space and 3,150 exhibitors from 53 countries, it outshone all its predecessors, with around 415,000 visitors from more than 205 countries coming to the event in Munich. In the end, the Icelandic cloud of volcanic ash only kept visitors from the Far East and America away for the first couple of days. Enquiries from Asia and Turkey and in particular from India, this year's Bauma partner country, were more numerous than ever before. "The Bauma reflects the global economic developments of the industry", explained Klaus Dittrich, CEO of Munich International Trade Fairs right at the start. "The companies can feel the ground under their feet again, so that the Bauma comes at exactly the right time", is the pleased reaction from Christof Kemmann, Chairman of the VDMA Sector Construction Equipment and Building Material Machinery at the opening of the trade fair. There →

Illustration: Hoffmann



Uwe Meißner, Technical and Production Director, F.X. Meiller Fahrzeug- und Maschinenfabrik GmbH & Co. KG, Munich



»For us the building industry takes absolute priority. Around 70% of our turnover is generated with construction products.

Our tipping bodies and vehicles have had a complete upgrade. The Bauma hosted the world launch for our new electronic control system i.s.a.r control, which will be used in future to operate all our bodies.«



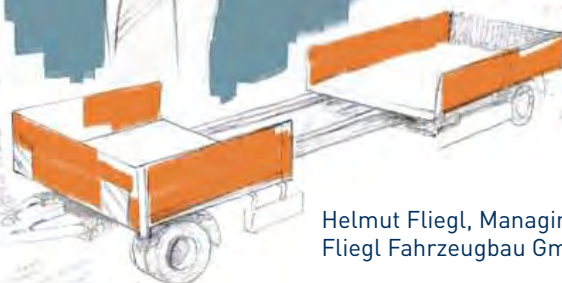


Stefan Fuchs, CEO of Goldhofer AG,  
Memmingen

» The building industry accounts for a major share of our business worldwide. This includes our customised products for the heavy-duty vehicles. Our innovations such as increasing the loading capacity of the 245 tyre from 10 to 12 tons in conjunction with a swinging axle offer new vehicle concepts with advantages for the customer.«



» The building industry is one of the main pillars of our company; our product range essentially covers the vehicle needs of this industry sector. It's worth drawing special attention to our new 2-axle tipper semi-trailer "Compact Coni light", the first member of the new Compact dumper family.«



Helmut Fliegl, Managing Director  
Fliegl Fahrzeugbau GmbH, Triptis



are also hopeful signs of recovery among manufacturers of construction vehicles, although the generally positive willingness to invest is offset by a lack of funds.

Stefan Fuchs, CEO of Goldhofer AG, explains his optimism thus: "We presume that the impact of the financial and economic crisis are now weakening, particularly on the Eastern European markets". Brunhilde Rauscher-Doll, CEO of Doll Fahrzeugbau AG in Oppenau clearly indicated that "Public sector investment plays a major role", adding: "If the planned investment projects for the road transport system and general infrastructure are actually put into effect, this could give a major impetus to the building industry and consequently also to the HGV industry."

Uwe Meißner, Technical and Production Director at F.X. Meiller, sees a need for companies to get back onto a more secure footing in order to boost the willingness to invest. "Given the backlog in investment, we could see a strong boost in demand".

Almost all vehicle manufacturers have used the profound crisis to prepare themselves for the competition with a cutting-edge product

range. Stefan Fuchs from Goldhofer sees advantages for his customers in the increased loading capacity of the 245 tyre. "They can now take 12 tons instead of the previous 10 tons. This opens the door for new interesting vehicle concepts in conjunction with swinging axles." The Munich company F.X. Meiller with its long tradition has used the Bauma for a fireworks display of innovations. Uwe Meißner describes the USP of his new chassis products as follows: "Together with BPW, we have developed a tipper direct air suspension to protect the vulnerable air suspension bellows." Doll Fahrzeugbau celebrated the world launch of its new Panther chassis technology for trailers. "We are curious to find out how our customers react and what their verdict will be," says Brunhilde Rauscher-Doll. "The mood at the Bauma is a major economic indicator for the industry." Helmut Fliegl, Managing Director of Fliegl Fahrzeugbau GmbH in Triptis, was optimistic at the presentation of a new 2-axle tipper semi-trailer: "We have noticed that the industry has overcome the crisis and is raring to go with a certain optimism." (wt)

*»Most of our customers work in the building industry. They use our HGV products for transporting construction machinery and building components. We offer the building industry a wide range of semi-trailers with 3 to 8 axles. We focus in particular on universal multi-purpose vehicles that can be used by the construction industry for most machinery and material transports.«*

Brunhilde Rauscher-Doll,  
CEO of Doll Fahrzeugbau AG,  
Oppenau







## Logistics in Utopia

Sustainable success requires a concept for the future. The next trailer world will be devoted to the future viability of the branch. Wait and see!

## OPTIMIST OR PESSIMIST?

The IAA in September is just around the corner and is giving rise to hope in the HGV industry. We want to know how you see the situation. Please answer the following question, or put your opinion in your own words.

☐ After taking a breather, the economy will see further recovery this year

☐ The crisis is not over yet by any means

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

As a gesture of gratitude, all entries will go into the draw for five BPW leather footballs.

Company:

First name and surname:

Position:

Road, town and post code:

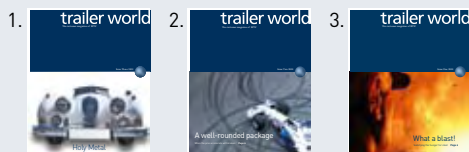
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Please send your entry by post to BPW Bergische Achsen KG, P.O.Box 1280, 51656 Wiehl/Germany, by fax to +49 2262 78-1765 or enter online at [www.trailerworld.de](http://www.trailerworld.de). The closing date for the competition is 13 August 2010.

**Winners of the competition in trailer world Issue Three 2009:** Rainer König-Hawes (Halle), Ricardo Pasaribu (Sidoarjo), Klaus Rödder (Wissen)

The three favourite covers are:



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