

Conclusión nº 12

<< En el marco del Grupo de Trabajo de CLECAT, que impulsa la estandarización y el lenguaje común, promoveremos un FORO ESTATAL que permita la puesta en común de estos temas. >>

Securing standardisation and interoperability to reap the benefits of data sharing in logistics and transport

Over the last couple of years many initiatives have developed at EU level around data sharing and data access. This has also gained a lot of attention from the European freight forwarding community. Freight forwarders own door-to-door supply chain data, and therefore when considering data exchange, the safety and ownership aspects are essential. Whilst big multinational freight forwarding companies mostly own and operate their own visibility platforms to share the data in their network, smaller entities may not have own networks, meaning that their transport management systems are not be able to interact with each other. There are good platform solutions and port community systems, but there are still many of them working in silos, requiring companies to connect with local interfaces.

CLECAT is since many years a member of the Digital Transport and Logistics Forum, DTLF, an expert group of the European Commission bringing together public and private stakeholders from various transport and logistics communities to support the European Commission in promoting the digital transformation of the transport and logistics sector. Currently the DTLF2 is working on the issues around data sharing between platforms,

recognising the challenges in the current ecosystem. These are multiple:

There is on the one hand the ever-increasing number of data sharing solutions utilised within the supply chain and logistics sector, each with their own governance structure and business model. These solutions provide a variety of IT services with their APIs for certain customers. Whenever an organization requires to share data for a particular purpose with another organization and both use different solutions or platforms, they must connect to both solutions. The variations within IT services with respect to data semantics, process functionality, and supporting APIs create a potential risk of lock-in. This means that it can be expensive to change from one platform to another.

The second challenge is the ability to integrate business processes within the supply chain and logistics sector. Whilst authorities specify regulation at EU level pertaining to data sharing protocols, at Member State level the national guidelines on implementation can vary, making it difficult for enterprises operating in the EU. This makes that there is a need for some legal intervention at the EU level, supported by a common IT architecture.

Another aspect in this context is the bilateral or multilateral (community) agreements made between companies for applying an open standard in data sharing. Such agreements can potentially lead to conflicting guidance on implementation and therefore not contribute to interoperability. The proposed solution by the DTLF is based on the creation of harmonized Technology Independent Services that can be implemented by platforms and solutions and facilities that enable organizations to integrate with a solution of choice and be able to share data with any other organization, without common agreements. Such a solution is called the 'the federation of networks.' So there is genuine recognition that with more platforms emerging, there are challenges and opportunities for the logistics sector.

Also, there are clearly a number of preconditions for economic operators to utilise a data-sharing environment which fully meets their safety requirements, as well as the work at national- and EU-level to ensure interoperability and standardisation.

The security of data is a currently a priority of the European Commission. In February this year the Commission proposed a Regulation on harmonised rules on fair access to and use of data, the so-called 'Data Act.' Important legislation around handling and sharing of data has been created and there are new initiatives to create the architecture and operational processes in line with the new EU approach: data should be easily shared and a level playing field should be created in which all stakeholders can benefit from the added value data sharing can deliver.

The EU aims to create 'data spaces' such as the European Mobility Data Space (for logistics) which will need to allow for safe and secure data sharing also in the area of logistics and transport. There is a lot of other work on logistics taking place at the above mentioned expert group of the European Commission, the DTLF. The DTLF is now also the formal Commission Expert Group on the electronic freight transport information (eFTI) Regulation, which seeks to progress on the Commission

work on eFTI Regulation's implementation and certification aspects. Next to the work on the implementation, the team also focuses on the certification of platforms and service providers, where work will be done on certification requirements, certification procedure, as well as providing proof of certification. The group is moving forward at a good pace with the eFTI Regulation's implementation. The adoption of the Delegated Act which is planned for February 2023 will bring implementation a step closer.

Next to the work at the European level there are several industry-led initiatives in different sectors to support digital standardization such as the International Port Community Systems (IPCSA), the Digital Container Shipping Association (DCSA), Terminals TIC4.0 and GS1 etc. In view of this, it is unlikely that a single platform would become a dominant market player due to the wide availability of options. Standard setting is therefore key to enable an interoperable data-sharing amongst different platforms. There is general recognition that many benefits can be reaped from it. Considering that a lot of standards and data are available on the market, the key task is putting them together and making them interoperable, to ensure an optimal data-sharing infrastructure for the market players.

To reap the full benefits that digitalisation has to offer for the logistics sector, economic operators have to trust that there is value in sharing data, which can only be achieved if the necessary safeguards are put in place. The path ahead for creating a federated network of platforms requires a stepwise approach and trust. In particular for SMEs, an easy onboarding process to the data-sharing infrastructure will be essential to ensure market acceptance.

Nicolette van der Jagt
Directora General CLECAT