

trans·o·flex

magazine



**More logistics,
more countries,
more service**

*What will improve for trans-o-flex customers
as a result of the GEODIS takeover*

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After info campaign

Delivery authorisation in high demand among consignees

Book online at any time

Also ship to Ireland, Greece and Cyprus with tof.now

Green logistics for vets

Why VetLogOne uses orange plastic pallets and returnable containers



With maximum deliverability is a phrase that underlines the uniqueness of the trans-o-flex service. It combines urgency with precision, innovation and reliability in delivery.

“Because it's important”

Successful campaign relaunched and expanded

They generated interest in trans-o-flex and its solutions, led to visits to the website and ultimately to numerous sales meetings. We are talking about four advertising concepts that trans-o-flex used last year to draw attention to its expertise in important, sensitive and urgent shipments. This year, the successful internet campaign was continued and expanded. “We have added four new concepts to the previous core statement “because it's

important” with the slogan “with maximum deliverability”,” says Lutz Blankenfeldt, Business Unit Manager Strategy, Commercial and Marketing at trans-o-flex. “We're making it clear that trans-o-flex is a trusted part of the value chain and that with trans-o-flex you have a partner at your side who handles express deliveries reliably and efficiently, so you can concentrate on your own core business.” The ads are displayed on LinkedIn.

Legal notice

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Errors and omissions excepted. The details given in this magazine do not, in any circumstances, replace the General Terms and Conditions of Business of the trans-o-flex companies. For ease of reference, in German the masculine form is used to designate persons (e.g. the customer). Such terms should be understood to apply to both sexes.



Dear Readers,

Since March of this year, trans-o-flex has officially belonged to the French, globally active logistics group GEODIS. And because many customers are wondering what will change as a result, or even what has already changed, we are dedicating the cover story of this magazine to this topic. In it, GEODIS top manager Thomas Kraus and I answer the most important questions that customers have asked us on this topic. Without prejudging these answers, I would like to take this opportunity to mention a number of strategic points that are of central importance in view of the new situation.

The sale to GEODIS was and is a strategic decision. The sale was deliberately made to an investor who not only has financial interests, but also their own logistical interests and great logistical know-how. Who helps its customers to establish successful logistics chains worldwide, but who could still use a network especially in Germany, where, for example, sensitive express shipments can be picked up and delivered quickly, reliably and cost-effectively. Who strengthens this network with its additional transport orders and at the same time can offer its customers a better service through the new network. Who, not least, benefits themselves from volumes that come from Germany.

This mutual strengthening came at just the right time. Because the current economic situation means for all logistics service providers: volumes are decreasing. Thanks to the synergies with GEODIS, trans-o-flex can at least cushion this development, possibly even offset it completely. Our network is already benefiting from the first airfreight consignments we have delivered for GEODIS in Germany and from the first consignments we pick up on behalf of GEODIS somewhere in Germany and then take to

a seaport where GEODIS ships them worldwide for the customer. Such consignments would normally have passed trans-o-flex by. But they definitely fit into our system. And they are just the beginning. You can find out what new opportunities will arise for you as a customer from autumn onwards, for example in France, and what savings potential you can achieve internationally by switching to multimodal logistics chains organised by GEODIS, all this and more from page 12.

Just one further comment on the subject. In addition to the operational advantages and the cost advantages that we can achieve with new volumes and you with new possibilities of the joint product portfolio, the shareholder GEODIS means a financial strengthening. This is an advantage that should not be underestimated, especially with regard to investments in times when money is getting tighter. This will enable us to make the necessary investments to put ourselves at the forefront of logistics development. Our priorities are IT and the vehicle fleet. In IT, as one of the pioneers in logistics, we have developed the first digital twin and will drive this and other AI topics forward (see page 20). The vehicle fleet is our biggest lever in terms of greater sustainability and, in our estimation, will change completely in the next five to ten years. We are preparing for this and are ready for it – together with GEODIS.

Wolfgang P. Albeck
Chief Executive Officer



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Security standards

Five more sites certified according to TAPA

So far this year, five more sites in the trans-o-flex network have been certified according to TAPA FSR C 2020. In Germany, Kassel, Freising and Dettingen an der Iller have received the certificate. In Austria, Großebersdorf and Regau are now also certified according to the demanding security standards.



TAPA stands for Transported Asset Protection Association and is an independent organisation supported by consignors, which has established the highest security standards in transportation worldwide. "For us, the TAPA certificates are not only proof of the high security standards at trans-o-flex," explains trans-o-flex CEO Wolfgang P. Albeck. "Rather, we use the certifications to systematically check and further develop the security of our processes and facilities."



Highest customer satisfaction

Award-winning: Three B2B awards in one go

In 2023, trans-o-flex received the German B2B Award for the second time – and this time three times over. The Germany-wide B2B ranking looks at the three areas of customer satisfaction, customer service and value for money. For this, more than 100,000 ratings were obtained from decision-makers on a total of 1,347 companies from 100 sectors. trans-o-flex achieved first place in the "Mobility, Travel & Logistics" sector for customer satisfaction, second place for customer service and third place for value for money.

29 sites audited

Highly successful GDP certification

TÜV-Süd audited a total of 29 sites of the trans-o-flex group in July. The result: all sites work in accordance with the EU's GDP directive. "And not only that: because the results were so good and we had so many sites audited, the next recertification is not due until 2025 and not in one year as usual," says trans-o-flex CEO Wolfgang P. Albeck. "The great effort this year was definitely worth it." The



TÜV experts' audit points included quality control, training, safety, cleanliness, active temperature control at 15 to 25 degrees Celsius and at 2 to 8 degrees Celsius, as well as internal monitoring procedures.

International consignments

Quality award won for the seventh time

For its performance in the international European EURODIS network, the trans-o-flex Expressdienst has received the annual quality award for the seventh time in a row. "Quality is a logistics service provider's only right to exist," said trans-o-flex CEO Wolfgang P. Albeck at the award ceremony. It is a confirmation that is doubly important: "Firstly, the award is proof that our processes ensure safe and reliable shipments on an ongoing basis. Secondly, it's a great recognition of the performance of our whole team."

The annual award for the best operational quality in the EURODIS network is the most important benchmark for the operational excellence of the network, which is represented in 38 European countries. It is based solely on the measurement and analysis of hard facts, such as the percentage of scanned consignments, on-time and complete data trans-



mission as well as consignment information up to and including the proof of delivery with the consignee's signature. All this data is collected in real time and analysed daily to monitor, control and continuously improve operational processes.

Jens Reibold congratulates Wolfgang P. Albeck, CEO of the express service trans-o-flex, on winning the EURODIS Quality Award again. Reibold is Managing Director of EURODIS GmbH, which manages the international, road-based network for joint transport of parcels and pallets in 38 European countries.

**Customer survey**

"trans-o-flex is faster than others"

Speed is the key criterion that most clearly sets trans-o-flex apart from other service providers. This is the result of the evaluation of the customer surveys in the first half of 2023. According to the surveys, 88 per cent of respondents said in the first quarter that trans-o-flex works faster than other service providers. In the second quarter, it was 85 per cent. At the same time, speed is one of the requirements that is most important to trans-o-flex customers. On a school grade scale of 1 (very important) to 6 (unimportant), customers rated the importance of a short delivery time at 1.4 (1st quarter) and 1.3 (2nd quarter). This means that the current speed rating is in line with the long-term trend of this value, which is 1.3. The only thing more important to trans-o-flex customers than the delivery time of a consignment is the satisfaction of the consignees. Here the long-term trend is 1.2.



"The feedback from our customers is a great motivation for our job," says Lutz Blankenfeldt, whose area of responsibility includes customer surveys. This goes both ways for the Business Unit Manager Strategy, Commercial and Marketing. "When we receive confirmation, we are happy. And if we are told that we could perform better in this or that place, then we look into it and change what we can. Our customers can be sure that the regular customer survey is taken very seriously and has consequences. It has now developed into one of the most important tools that shows us starting points for improvement."



Online shop for shipments

You want to book Ireland, Greece or Cyprus? tof.now makes it possible!

As of August, *tof.now* can do more. Shipments to Ireland, Greece and Cyprus can now also be ordered at any time using *trans-o-flex's* online booking tool. This is because for the first time *EURODIS*, the international European road network for combined freight shipments, has a partner in Greece and Cyprus (details in the partner report in this magazine on page 30). In addition, the IT connection with the partner responsible for Ireland has been improved so that online bookings can also be made to this country.

tof.now is one of the most modern online booking systems in the logistics industry. It was originally designed for the spontaneous dispatch of individual parcels or smaller quantities. But it also makes it easier for regular customers to work with *trans-o-*

flex and makes shipping orders even faster and more efficient. This applies, for example, to customers whose logistics department uses its own shipping system, but where other departments also send shipments from time to time and do not have access to this shipping system. With *tof.now*, they have a booking system at their disposal that offers customers the highest product diversity and is nevertheless quick and easy to use. All this now also applies to Greece, Cyprus and Ireland.



Schedule shipment, confirm, done!
The link not only leads to more information about the online tool *tof.now*, but you can also start a shipping order right there: bit.ly/EN_tof-now.

Climate protection and toll charges

Offset emissions transparently with trans-o-flex

Because the HGV toll will be calculated primarily on the basis of a vehicle's CO₂ emissions from December this year, some customers are asking themselves whether they are not being made to pay twice for the climate costs of their shipments with the toll and CO₂ floater. "The uncertainty is understandable because both cases talk about CO₂," says CEO Wolfgang P. Albeck. He is the member of the management board responsible for sustainability at trans-o-flex. "But the effect and purpose of both charges are completely different."

Purpose of the CO₂ component of the toll is to make road transport more expensive in general. In doing so, the Federal Government is departing from the previous principle of "roads finance roads" and levying a separate, uncommitted additional component via the toll. The additional revenue is also to be used for the promotion of commercial vehicles with climate-friendly drive systems and the expansion of the associated refuelling and charging infrastructure, although it is mainly to be used for the expansion of the rail network. "The CO₂ floater from trans-o-flex, on the other hand, ensures that the CO₂ emissions caused by the transport of our customers' goods are offset. It is a polluter-pays levy that already protects the climate today and improves the climate footprint of our customers." This is because the income from the CO₂ floater is used to purchase emission certificates from projects that have demonstrably avoided CO₂ emissions.

"The effect of our approach is not only faster, but also more comprehensive," explains Albeck. While the CO₂-dependent toll only focuses on transport, the CO₂ floater from trans-o-

flex relates to the entire logistics chain of trans-o-flex. "Because we have been developing a comprehensive CO₂ reporting system for years, we not only know exactly what CO₂ emissions are caused by the transport, but also by the handling, the operation of offices, the temperature control of our warehouses or our business trips. We invest to continuously minimise climate impact in all areas, and what cannot be avoided at present, we want to offset 100 per cent. For us, this is generation-appropriate logistics."

With the CO₂ floater, trans-o-flex customers benefit – unlike with the toll – not only from investments in lower-emission vehicles, but also from investments in modern transshipment facilities and the use of green electricity. The CO₂ floater is made up of two transparent factors: the CO₂ factor and the certificate price per tonne set by the German government for CO₂-producing companies. The CO₂ factor is calculated by dividing the total emissions of a network (trans-o-flex Express or trans-o-flex ThermoMed) by the transport weight of all consignments transported in that network. The actual amount of the CO₂ floater is then determined in two steps: firstly, by the product of the CO₂ factor and the certificate price set by the government. Secondly, the price per kilogram transported calculated in this way only needs to be multiplied by the weight of each customer's consignment and this then results in the customer-related CO₂ emission offset price. "And if we improve CO₂ efficiency at the same certificate price, then the level of the CO₂ emission offset price also goes down," says Albeck.



For more biodiversity

Logistik-Service in Alzenau: fourth site with bees

Since February, bees have also been buzzing at the logistics site in Alzenau. They ensure the pollination of wild and cultivated plants within a radius of three kilometres. For this project as part of its commitment to greater biodiversity, trans-o-flex Logistik-Service is cooperating with a local beekeeper who has set up a beehive on the edge of the field behind the warehouse. The beekeeper takes care of the bees, trans-o-flex covers the costs for this and also receives 24 kilos of honey per year. This brings the total number of beehives that have found a home at the trans-o-flex sites in Dettingen, Koblenz, Cologne and Alzenau to five.



Pinus Larix



Offsetting

92 larch trees planted for trade fair visits

This is how visits to trade fairs can become more sustainable. This year, trans-o-flex offset all CO₂ emissions caused by its own employees travelling to and from transport logistic in Munich, as well as those of customers who had made appointments at the stand before the trade fair. The offsetting took place with the help of the organisation Tree-nation, which was thus able to plant 92 European larches in France.

Sustainability report

CO₂ emissions cut by 10 per cent

trans-o-flex has reduced its CO₂ emissions by 10 per cent in 2022 compared to the previous year. The absolute amount of emissions saved was 13,381 tonnes. The company reports this in its latest sustainability report. "To take this big step, we have strategically repositioned ourselves with our own ESG department and are literally turning over every stone," says Wolfgang P. Albeck, CEO of trans-o-flex, referring to numerous improvements at sites, sorting facilities and the use of geothermal energy. "In our latest sustainability report, we are one of the few logistics service providers to document according to the GRI standard and thus in a highly transparent manner how trans-o-flex has developed in all three areas of Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) over the past year. We can be proud of the progress we have made throughout the company."



The latest sustainability report of trans-o-flex for the year 2022 will soon be available for downloading at bit.ly/tof_sustainability.

Green delivery station

ThermoMed Austria is building in Styria

The foundation stone was laid on 5 September, and the opening is planned for March 2024. The talk is of a new Austrian ThermoMed site in Lebring in Styria. A delivery centre is being built here on a 10,000 square metre site, which will replace the previous facility in Kalsdorf near Graz. "The entire building is temperature-controlled in the ambient range of 15 to 25 degrees, and the refrigerated consignments are handled in an area integrated into the building," explains Eugen Günther, CEO at ThermoMed Austria and Managing Director Sales in Germany. "The new facility is an important step in modernising, speeding up and increasing the efficiency of our processes." A large part of the energy for the temperature control of the building and the sorting system



comes from the company's own photovoltaic system on the roof. No fossil energy is used for heating in winter either, but an electrically powered heat pump. A rainwater infiltration system relieves the local sewage treatment plant and saves water costs. Ten gates for trucks and 14 for delivery vehicles enable fast loading and unloading. Lebring is conveniently located on the Austrian north-south motorway A9.

Lead article

How trans-o-flex customers benefit from the global GEODIS network



Top managers Thomas Kraus and Wolfgang P. Albeck answer questions from customers about how the cooperation between the two companies will look in practice: Visible changes will first take place on the axis between Germany and France – The first shipments have already been switched over – The following applies to the gradual expansion of the portfolio: Quality has priority over new volumes – The merger of trans-o-flex and GEODIS gives customers access to the global network of freight forwarding and expertise in contract logistics.



Ever since the French group GEODIS became a shareholder in trans-o-flex, there has been a dominant theme among trans-o-flex customers: how will trans-o-flex's service and offering change? Will the company remain independent? What specific benefits can customers expect and when? The editors of this magazine collected these and other questions and presented them to the top managers Thomas Kraus and Wolfgang P. Albeck. Kraus is Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the EUROPE region in the GEODIS Group. Albeck is the CEO of trans-o-flex. Here are their answers.



Wolfgang P. Albeck
Chief Executive Officer
of trans-o-flex

I am aware that not everything changes immediately when a company is taken over. But I would like to know what the sale of trans-o-flex to GEODIS means for me as a customer. We haven't noticed any change so far.

Albeck: First of all, that's a good sign! In many takeovers, so much is integrated, reorganised and restructured that the proven quality suffers as a result. We have made it our mission not to allow that to happen. As is well known, trans-o-flex thrives on its quality, on the fact that our logistics make a difference.

You have announced plans to exploit synergies between GEODIS and trans-o-flex, to accelerate the internationalisation of trans-o-flex and to expand the product portfolio. What will this look like in practice and how long will it take?

Kraus: We have already started to identify synergies for the customers of both companies and to adapt our service portfolio accordingly. A first important milestone in this is the expansion of trade and shipments between Germany and France. In addition, the first GEODIS airfreight consignments to Germany have already been delivered by trans-o-flex. The advantage for GEODIS and our customers here is above all the ability to feed the consignments seamlessly into the trans-o-flex network and to know that the consignments will be delivered safely and quickly. For trans-o-flex, this means better network utilisation.

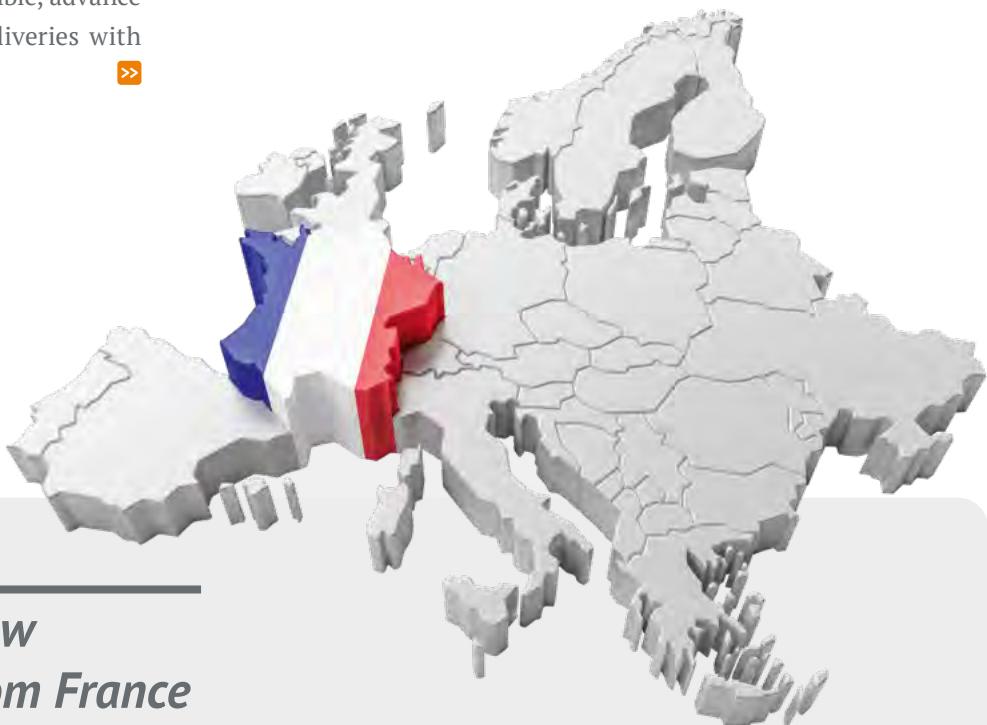


Thomas Kraus Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the EUROPE region in the GEODIS Group

Albeck: We will also be making changes in the other direction in the autumn. For example, we will soon have trans-o-flex consignments from Germany to France delivered there via the GEODIS network. This allows us to take advantage of the capabilities of what we consider to be the best French distribution and express service. GEODIS' Distribution & Express division in France employs

8,700 people at 110 locations. On 6,000 routes, more than 120,000 consignees are reached every day and around 100 million parcels are delivered every year. For trans-o-flex customers, this means just one network for parcels and pallets, something that could not be offered before. In addition, both 2B and 2C consignments are possible, advance consignee information or express deliveries with various time options.

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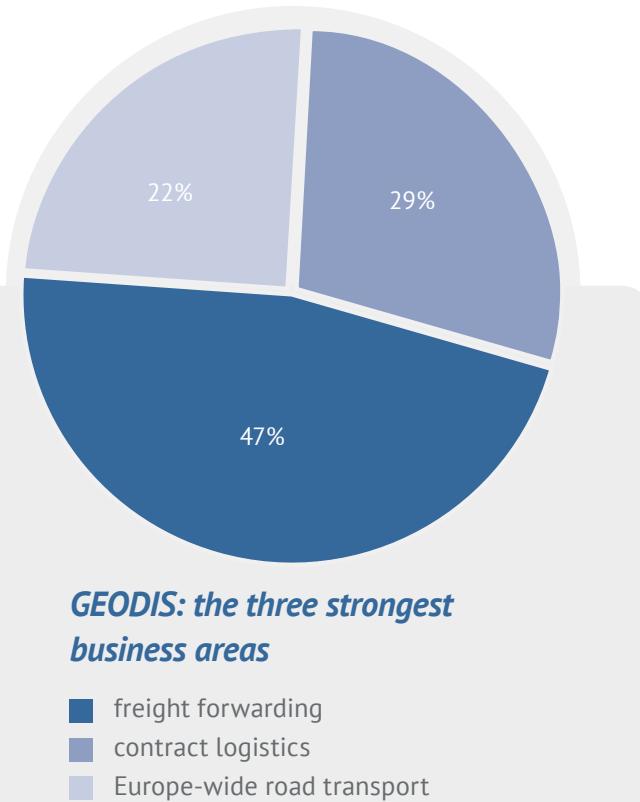
Advantages of the new connection to and from France

From autumn, the express service GEODIS Distribution & Express will deliver parcel and pallet consignments from trans-o-flex customers in France and send consignments to Germany at the same time. Numerous advantages result from this change:

- Unlike before, parcels and pallets can also be transported and delivered in one network in France. The consignee has only one delivery.
- All addresses in mainland France are served within 48 hours from the time of collection in Germany. Apart from that, there are numerous express and additional options. This includes, for example, delivery on a specific day, in a specific time window or even on Saturday morning. The consignee can be informed in advance of the estimated time of arrival. Last but

not least, just-in-time delivery is possible (15-minute time window).

- GEODIS not only handles 2B but also 2C deliveries with its network.
- Transport of dangerous goods is possible, even if it is subject to labelling.
- GEODIS is considered the market leader in France and serves around 120,000 consignees daily on behalf of 60,000 customers. The backbone of the network's high quality are 110 stations from which 8,700 employees deliver around 100 million parcels annually.
- Thanks to the GEODIS volumes from France, the long-distance shipments in both directions are utilised to capacity and the network in Germany is consolidated.



GEODIS in figures: logistics company with a focus on international solutions

The French logistics group GEODIS, to which trans-o-flex has belonged since March 2023, achieved annual sales of 13.7 billion euros in 2022. GEODIS is present in more than 60 countries with nearly 50,000 employees at a total of 900 facilities. In total, it serves around 170 countries around the world. 165,000 customers use 7.9 million square metres of storage space. The three strongest business areas are freight forwarding, contract logistics and Europe-wide road transport. With 47% of sales, freight forwarding is the largest business area. It also includes international rail transport and European short-sea transport. Contract logistics account for 29% and pan-European road transport for 22%.

What are your plans for international pharmaceutical consignments?

Albeck: We have agreed with our new shareholder that we will maintain, complement and expand good existing solutions. For international actively temperature-controlled pharmaceutical consignments we have the EUROTEMP network, and for non-temperature-sensitive goods we still have EURODIS. And in all countries that we cover neither with one nor the other, we can count on support from GEODIS in future.

Kraus: Incidentally, this applies not only to pharmaceutical consignments, but also to other goods, especially sensitive products such as cosmetics or electronics. GEODIS has developed industry solutions for its customers and specialises in various core industries. In addition to healthcare, this also includes high-tech and fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) with beauty and cosmetics. All three are sectors in which trans-o-flex is also strongly represented and very efficient. Above all, GEODIS takes the same approach to all industry solutions as trans-o-flex: to be our customers' growth partner through industry-specific know-how and to help them achieve competitive advantages through logistics.

Albeck: I would like to add another example. Customers can expect GEODIS to provide a global, GDP-compliant door-to-door network for the delivery of sensitive goods in the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries. In addition, GDP-compliant and licensed warehouses are available.



In addition to booked capacities with airlines, GEODIS also uses its own aircraft for its air freight services. The A330-300 cargo Airbus, for example, can carry 62 tonnes of goods with a volume of 480 cubic metres.

Will my contact at trans-o-flex also be able to make offers for our procurement logistics from Asia or America?

Kraus: That is the goal. To and from China, for example, GEODIS scores with the fact that customers can choose to have their products transported by air, rail or ship, depending on the specification and urgency. For example, GEODIS uses its own aircraft as well as a fully controlled air freight network making it flexible for individual customer solutions. We also offer numerous solutions for container shipping, rail and multimodal shipments. We cover the entire logistics chain from collection to delivery. In the contract logistics business area, too, the GEODIS network is an important addition to the national trans-o-flex range of warehousing and value-added services. GEODIS has 360 warehouses with 7.9 million square metres of space in 34 countries on all continents. In North America, we have

only recently strengthened ourselves with two acquisitions and currently employ more than 18,000 people there. In Asia, too, the range of services has been further expanded in recent years.

Albeck: Because we don't want to launch new services before we are sure that they fit seamlessly with the tried and tested procedures and processes and do not jeopardise their quality, we are still taking our time. But the preparations for this have already been underway for a long time. Teams from GEODIS and trans-o-flex already meet regularly to inform each other about the respective product portfolios in joint working sessions, to establish IT connections, and to define operational processes and connections. ➤

Are the new options also associated with price advantages for customers?

Albeck: Yes. We will reduce costs through network consolidation and alternative logistics concepts. And everywhere we can pass on the advantages to you as a customer.

Kraus: We can now offer customers a more diverse product portfolio. For customers who, for example, have one plant in Germany and one in Spain and where deliveries between the two plants have so far been organised as truck-only transports, the switch from road transport to short-sea shipping could be interesting. Instead of having goods

brought from Spain to Germany by truck, you can send a container – reefers with active temperature control are also possible – from Bilbao to Rotterdam. From there it is only a stone's throw to Duisburg, where the goods can then be distributed throughout Germany via the trans-o-flex network. The whole thing is hardly longer in terms of time, but much more environmentally friendly and cost-effective. Short-sea shipping is also less affected by strikes than the journey through France. And transport by short sea is at least 25 per cent cheaper than land transport alone.

GEODIS offers door-to-door container transport worldwide. A network of experts in more than 120 countries manages the full and part load orders.





GEODIS can also repackage products in the medical sector, for example, thanks to its manufacturer's licence.

What are GEODIS' long-term plans with trans-o-flex? Are you planning to integrate the company into the GEODIS Group or continue to run it independently?

Kraus: Nobody can say what will happen in 20 years. But as of today I can say: trans-o-flex is a strong, successful brand that we want to use. We are now the market leader in Germany for the carriage of actively temperature-controlled pharmaceutical products and benefit from the seamless trans-o-flex network for the last mile. It has also been shown that smaller units are more efficient to run than larger ones because they respond more quickly, are closer to the customer and are often more innovative. We can compensate for some of the disadvantages of smaller organisations, namely that they have fewer opportunities for funding and internationalisation, with corporate support. Finally, I would like to emphasise that trans-o-flex is an important part of the GEODIS Group and therefore also has access to our international network. On the France-Germany axis, we are already showing what specific improvements this could involve. But this goes much further, as a recent example shows. We transport goods from South Korea to Europe by container ship and plane, take care of all the necessary processes in the supply chain, such as customs clearance, and deliver directly to pharmacies, hospitals or end customers in Germany. The entire service comes from a single source. ■

More logistics, more countries, more sectors

Until now, trans-o-flex's warehouse and value-added logistics have mainly focused on special industry solutions and customers who also use trans-o-flex's local distribution network in Germany and Austria. At five sites, trans-o-flex Logistik-Service stores dry goods and actively temperature-controlled products for them in the range of 2 to 8 degrees as well as 15 to 25 degrees. On the one hand, customers benefit from sophisticated solutions for pick-and-pack, quality controls, returns management, display construction, repackaging or pharmaceutical serialisation. On the other hand, they receive a seamless transition into the trans-o-flex networks with the latest possible cut-off times and a one-stop service.

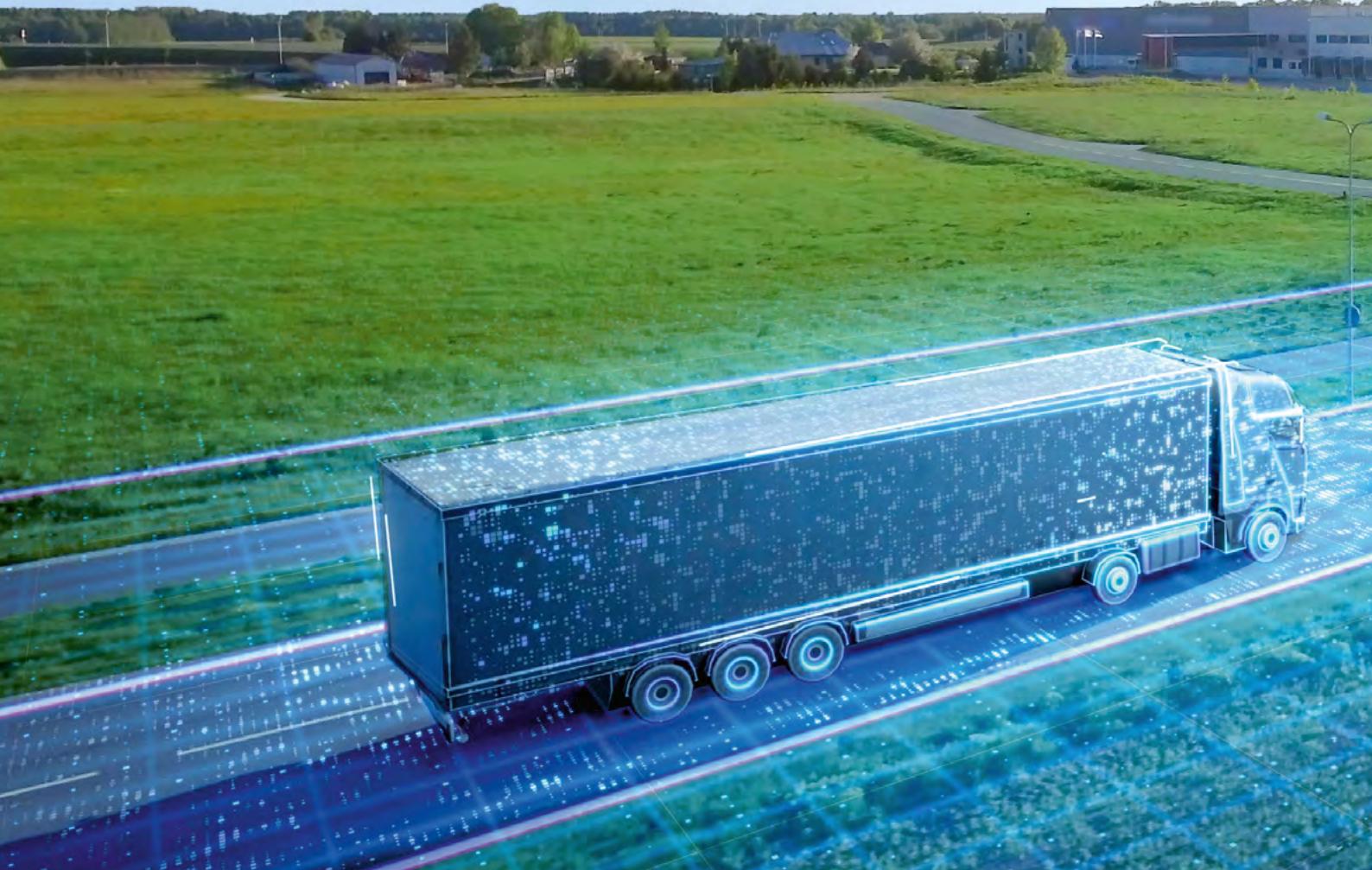
In future, further warehouse sites in Germany and in more than 30 other countries worldwide can be included via GEODIS.

With more than 300 sites and 7.9 million square metres of warehouse space around the world, GEODIS is one of the market leaders in contract logistics. GEODIS offers a wide range of services to help customers use innovative solutions to, for example, manage the flow of goods cost-effectively, reduce storage costs and improve supply chain efficiency as a result. Through its fulfilment and e-fulfilment offerings, GEODIS is a major player in e-commerce.

Leveraging new potential for improvement

How digital twins are changing logistics

The next big thing in IT development: trans-o-flex creates digital twins – First tool for the trans-o-flex Expressdienst line haul services already completed – Second tool for transshipment in development – Head of IT Stefan Thömmes: This puts us at the leading edge of development in logistics



“With the help of digital twins, we will be taking the next major steps in the further development and optimisation of our express and logistics services,” says Stefan Thömmes. The Managing Director of trans-o-flex IT-Service GmbH is convinced: “Digital twins, as they are usually called in the trade, can also significantly further improve optimised products and processes.” According to major consulting firms such as Ernst & Young, they have enormous potential, especially for logistics. However, the development of digital twins means significant IT and manpower investments because it is highly complex and requires large amounts of real-time data and sophisticated analytical tools. This is why there are only very few applications in logistics so far. “trans-o-flex is one of the pioneers in this field. We have already developed a digital twin. A second one is being developed right now.”

But what exactly are digital twins? They are virtual images of real things. These can be products, processes, people or even

places. A digital twin first accurately represents the respective real object. By being continuously fed with real-time data from the real object it is replicating, it changes in parallel with the original. This is a prerequisite to then be able to help improve the original in further steps. The key advantage here is that with the digital twin, changes can be tested through the use of simulations, machine learning and predictions without having to implement them in real life. The digital twin thus provides very specific decision-making aids for changes without any risk.

The concept can be used in almost all areas, whether for drive systems, engines or logistics processes. A digital twin is used before, for example, a warehouse is built in an earthquake zone. Then, for example, a digital twin of the racking system can be used to test which earth movements the racking can withstand – and which it cannot.

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"At trans-o-flex Express, we use our first digital twin for line haul transport, which mainly covers night-time trips between our branches," explains Thömmes. "With the first version, we can already detect problems in the network before they actually occur. This enables us to respond early and use alternatives. This has already led to an improvement in quality. And this process will continue." Because the digital twin becomes more and more effective the longer it is used.

This also applies to the second application for which trans-o-flex-IT is currently developing a digital twin – transshipment. "This area is still under development and we aim to have it up and running in 2024," reveals Thömmes.

Basically, the concept of digital twins at trans-o-flex offers optimisation opportunities in all areas. "By virtually mapping the entire logistics infrastructure, we could visualise and analyse the entire logistics chain," says Thömmes. "This allows us to

identify bottlenecks and inefficient processes more quickly and easily, simulate different scenarios and evaluate their impact on logistics operations."

An important prerequisite for the application of a digital twin is the use of sensors and IoT devices to collect real-time data. "Here we can access the scan data for each consignment and package, and for temperature-controlled shipments even the temperature data in the truck or in the depot, depending on where the consignment is at the particular moment." This data is then synchronised with the digital twin, which enables trans-o-flex to carry out a detailed analysis and check of the current processes.

This in turn helps to identify potential problems or deviations at an early stage and possibly even rectify them before they actually occur. The late arrival of a line haul truck, for example, can be compensated for under certain circumstances by giving priority to unloading and sorting particu-

larly urgent items in the truck so that they still make it to the delivery vehicle on time despite the delay. "Of course, all this is only possible because we have a huge pool of data at our disposal and know where which parcel or pallet is at any given time. This is where we are starting to reap the rewards of our IT investments over the last few years."

This also includes the combination of real-time data and its virtual mapping in the digital twin. "This will open up new possibilities for us to simulate a wide variety of scenarios. For example, we can test changes to route planning or warehouse layout to analyse the impact on efficiency and costs without having to invest in real-world testing and possibly encounter a learning curve."

Another major benefit of digital twins is proactive maintenance and troubleshooting. "By continuously monitoring the digital twin, trans-o-flex can track the status of machines and equipment such as sorting systems or forklift trucks in real time. We get accurate information on performance indicators such as the degree of wear on components,

operating times or energy consumption." As soon as deviations from the expected values are detected, it is possible to intervene to prevent the impending malfunctions or failures. This type of preventive maintenance of machines and equipment can avoid expensive repairs and help ensure 24/7 availability of the warehouse services.

"We cannot yet fully appreciate the potential for optimisation and development that lies in the concept of digital twins because it is still so new." However, Thömmes is confident that "the development of the first digital twins is an investment in the future of our service". The long-term goal for him is therefore: "We want to develop a digital twin for our entire company. This will put us at the leading edge of development in logistics." ■



Results information campaign

Digital delivery authorisation in demand with consignees

“More and more consignees are granting us delivery authorisation,” says Michael Löckener, Managing Director Thermo-Med and Business Unit Manager Operation Area Express at trans-o-flex. “Consignees have confidence that we will safely drop off their shipments. Our trans-o-flex insight app makes it easier for them to complete the delivery authorisation and increases confidence in the process again because pictures of the drop-off location can be uploaded and drivers receive clear instructions on how to drop the goods off.” This is how Löckener summarises the first results of a campaign on the topic of delivery authorisations, which has been providing consignees with targeted information on the topic since May. “The only thing missing now for the benefits of the delivery authorisations to be even more widely used is the consent of more consignors.”

Many consignors have already given their consent because they have recognised the advantages:

► **Consignee satisfaction increases!**

This is because they receive their consignments more quickly, even if they are not there at the time of delivery or cannot accept any goods at that moment.

► **Effort on the part of the consignor is reduced!**

Many enquiries (Where is my parcel? When can it be delivered again?) are no longer necessary.

► **Get your money faster!**

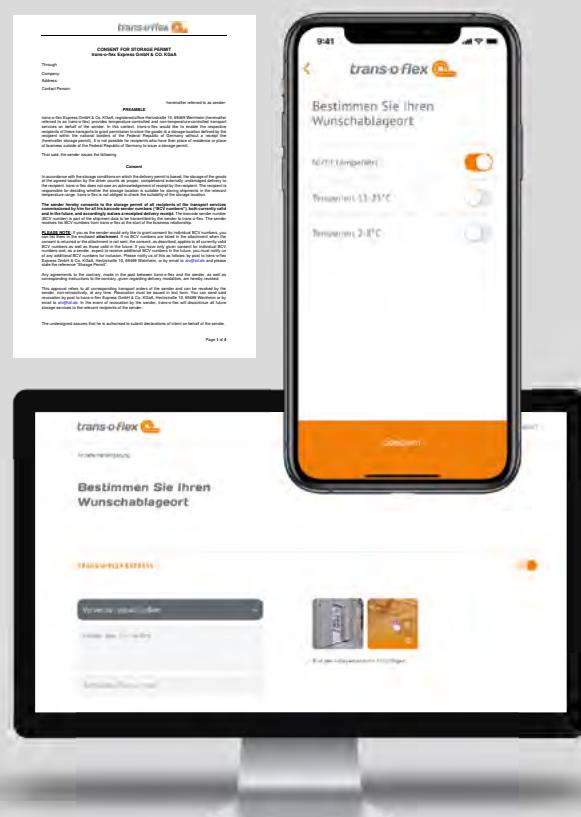
Because delivery is faster, invoicing and payment can also be faster.

► **More sustainability!**

Unnecessary double trips are avoided, the complete process of the delivery authorisation is paperless.

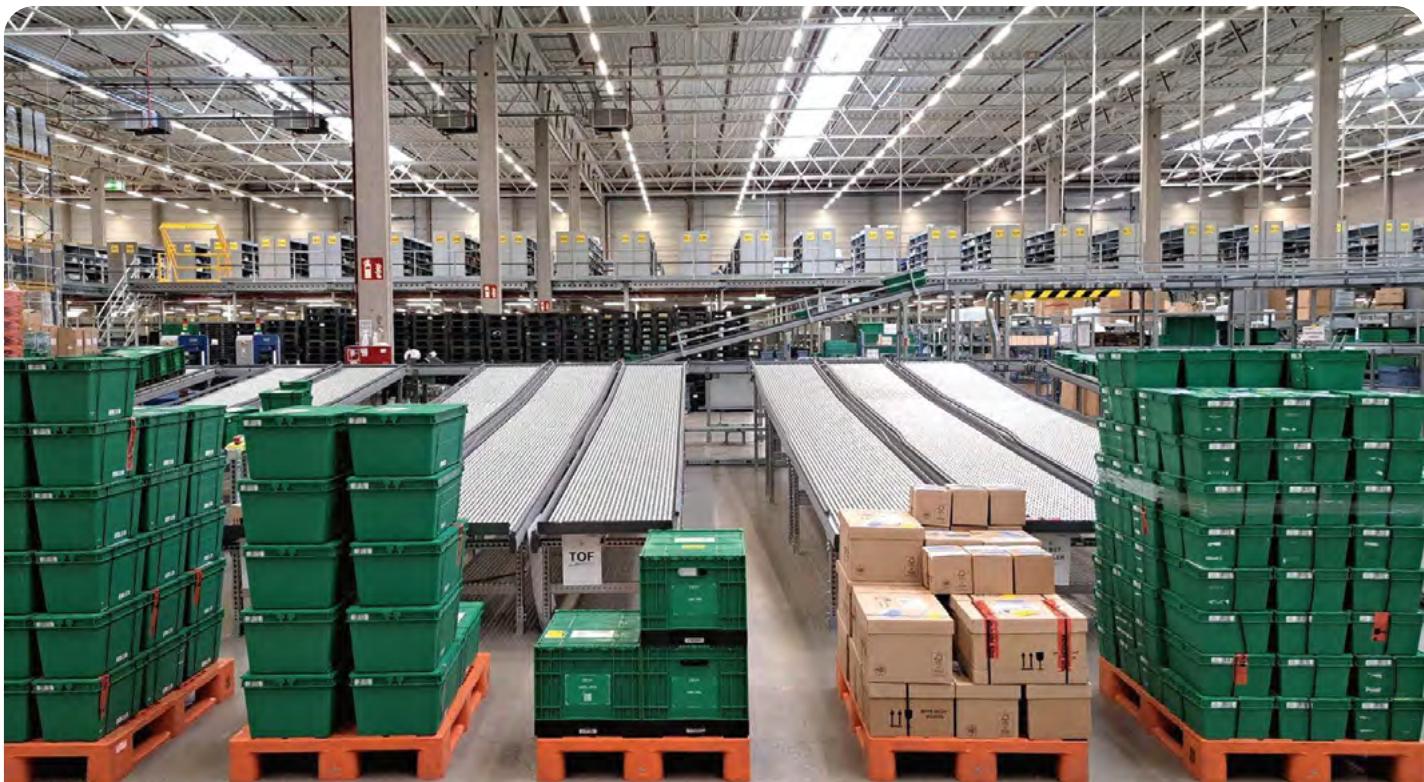
For a valid delivery authorisation, both the consignee and the consignor must agree to the delivery. Consignors who have not yet given their consent can do so at any time thanks to the new digital procedure, either for all their consignments or only for certain consignments: for non-temperature-controlled consignments, for temperature-controlled ambient consignments (15 to 25 °C), for temperature-controlled refrigerated consignments (2 to 8 °C).

Once a consignor has given their consent, consignees who have granted trans-o-flex a delivery authorisation can benefit directly. Consignors and consignees have the option to modify or revoke their consent at any time.



The consent form is available at any time as a download on the trans-o-flex website: bit.ly/EN_tof_ALV.





Logistics for vets

Why VetLogOne uses orange plastic pallets

Germany's first logistics centre specifically for veterinary medicine is fully committed to sustainability: After switching to active temperature control, introducing returnable containers and offsetting all remaining CO₂ emissions, the company now uses H1 pallets when handing over consignments to trans-o-flex.

VetLogOne, logistics subsidiary of Wirtschaftsgenossenschaft deutscher Tierärzte eG (WDT), is one of the first trans-o-flex customers to hand over its goods for various consignees on new, sustainable H1 pallets made of plastic. "For us, this is another building block in the strategic partnership for more sustainability in logistics that we have built up with trans-o-flex in recent years," says Andreas Mahn, Managing Director of VetLogOne.

The company has received 150 orange H1 pallets from trans-o-flex, which are used for mixed pallets. "We stack consignments for different consignees on the mixed pallets," Mahn continues. "trans-o-flex collects them from our logistics centre in Wunstorf near Hanover and takes them to the next sorting centre. There, the consignments are taken off the pallet, distributed to the different relations and at the next collection we get

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the empty pallets back." To ensure that there are always enough pallets in stock, even when quantities fluctuate, VetLogOne needs about three times the number of pallets that are shipped daily as mixed pallets. "And for this basic stock of H1 pallets, we receive a monthly invoice. The usage fee is lower than the cost of wooden Euro pallets. Every three months, we check with trans-o-flex whether the existing pallet quantity is correct or needs to be adjusted."

For VetLogOne, the reason for using H1 pallets was not only the cost savings, but also the sustainable overall balance of the plastic pallets. "In 2019, we started using plastic pallets nationwide as loading aids in our long-distance shipments, i.e. in transport between our sorting centres in Germany," Wolfgang P. Albeck explains the background. For the CEO of trans-o-flex, "pallets are a long underestimated production factor in logistics. Many companies assume that the use of wooden pallets and the exchange option are without alternative, cheap and sustainable, but all this is not the case when you look closer."



Doubly sustainable: After switching from cardboard shipping boxes to returnable containers, VetLogOne is now one of the first trans-o-flex customers to use the orange H1 pallets for the collection of its mixed pallets.

Andreas Mahn, Managing Director of the first logistics centre specifically for veterinary medicine, VetLogOne: "Our customers demand a more sensitive use of all resources and reward these efforts."



According to Albeck, trans-o-flex has "analysed the use of wooden pallets in detail and identified three main structural problems". The first thing he cites is "low durability". "In the fast express business, wooden pallets often have a defect after just a few rotations, are no longer safe and have to be sorted out as broken pallets and booked out. Moreover, in pallet exchange you don't always get flawless load carriers, but ones that are already damaged."

Secondly, Albeck points out that wooden pallets are heavier than the H1 pallets used by trans-o-flex (see box). "They also absorb more and more moisture over time, making them even heavier." Thirdly, the wooden pallets become darker due to the absorption of moisture and dirt. But then they are no longer considered hygienic and may no longer be used according to the EU rules for the transport of pharmaceuticals (GDP), which trans-o-flex adheres to. Last but not least, the sustainability of the H1 pallets used by trans-o-flex is enhanced by the fact that they are completely recycled in the event of a defect. "The plastic is regranulated and new pallets can be made from it again."



At VetLogOne, the use of H1 pallets is just one of many trans-o-flex offers that the company uses on its way to sustainable logistics for WDT and its other customers. WDT is the basic provider for 95 per cent of all veterinarians based in Germany. Around half of the WDT consignments are transported by trans-o-flex in the Ambient Express service actively temperature-controlled between 15 and 25 degrees Celsius, another part in the refrigerated range between 2 and 8 degrees. Active temperature control has made passive packaging superfluous. WDT went one step further this spring by switching its entire shipping to reusable containers. Mahn: "This saves us even more shipping cardboard, which is not usually or hardly reused despite the high grade and corresponding FXC certification for sustainable forestry."

Because, despite the many ways to make logistics more environmentally friendly, it still ends up producing CO₂ emissions, VetLogOne has already decided in 2019 to compensate for the transport-related emissions via certified climate protection projects. "We actively communicate this to customers and will publish our offset certificates regularly on our website in future," explains Mahn. "As in other areas of society, customers are demanding more sensitive use of all resources. And they reward our efforts in this area." ■

In three years 720,000 fewer broken pallets

Since 2019, trans-o-flex has only used H1 plastic pallets for transport between its sorting centres. 30,000 of these load carriers were purchased at that time. Since then, the annual number of broken pallets has decreased by 240,000. In the three years from 2020 to 2022, this means 720,000 fewer broken pallets. The figures collected at trans-o-flex on the breakage rate of pallets are confirmed by a Fraunhofer study on the costs of pallet exchange. It states: "By far the largest share of the costs of a pallet rotation is made up of replacement and repair costs. ... Overall, the replacement and repair rate per rotation is approx. 13%." So out of eight pallets, one pallet is damaged in each rotation. In contrast, trans-o-flex recorded hardly any breakage in the H1 pallets. They are predicted to be in use for an average of more than seven years.

At 18 kilos, the H1 pallets are a quarter lighter than wooden pallets. They already weigh 24 kilos when new and absorb more and more moisture in the course of their lives, making them even heavier. As a result, a full articulated truck with freight on wooden pallets has to carry over 200 kilos more load on each trip. Unlike dirty wooden Euro pallets, the plastic pallets are GDP-compliant throughout their entire service life. This year, trans-o-flex has purchased another 30,000 H1 pallets. The pallets, which are unmistakable due to their orange colour, are made available to customers for the collection of mixed pallets.

Significantly lower CO₂ emissions

Returnable containers in pharmaceutical distribution: MSD breaks the million mark



In general, the demand for alternatives to the cardboard transport box is increasing strongly: trans-o-flex Expressdienst expects an increase of more than 50 per cent this year for shipments in returnable containers – Low damage rate continues to fall thanks to stable containers – Consignees also feel significant relief

trans-o-flex Expressdienst recently delivered its millionth consignment in a returnable container for the pharmaceutical manufacturer MSD. As the first manufacturing pharmaceutical company, MSD's human and animal health businesses had started in early 2021 to switch the shipping of its products to all customers to a newly developed returnable container system, which has benefits for both the environment and the consignees. According to MSD, this has enabled it to reduce its carbon footprint by more than half compared to the previously used disposable cardboard box, and water consumption by as much as 80 per cent. In addition, the already low damage rate of products has been reduced by another third. Last but not

least, consignees regularly give positive feedback on the returnable containers. "In addition to being environmentally friendly, what they like about the containers is that they are smaller than the cardboard boxes because less filling material has to be used to protect the goods," says trans-o-flex CEO Wolfgang P. Albeck. "In addition, consignees always emphasise that they are relieved because they have to dispose of less cardboard and filling material."

The containers, which trans-o-flex offers its customers under the name tof.ecobox, can be used for all shipments with trans-o-flex Express and trans-o-flex ThermoMed, both with active temperature

control at 2–8 °C and 15–25 °C and without temperature control. There are four different sizes available. The smallest measures 30 x 20 x 16 cm, the largest 60 x 40 x 34 cm. All the containers can be stacked both empty and full. The container pool is operated by Smart Container Loop GmbH. The company is part of the Schoeller Group, which has more than 30 years of experience with returnable transport containers.

Special software developed for transparent container management

For optimum management of the containers at the lowest possible cost, trans-o-flex IT-Service GmbH has developed its own new software in cooperation with Smart Container Loop. It controls additional processes, corrects errors and provides a perfect basis for container billing. “The basis for this are our conventional scans for each package at each transport interface,” explains Albeck. This gives the consignors an overview of all containers sent, their location and the time they spend there. “With the new software, we not only transmit the information about as to when a particular container is at a particular location. It is also checked whether the container number transmitted in advance is correct.” If not, the correct container number is automatically stored in the system. “This makes container management simple and transparent, and allows for traceable and originator-based cost allocation at all times.”

Ideally, the returnable containers are used by consignees who receive deliveries on a regular basis. After delivery, the further procedure is as follows: On the next delivery, the trans-o-flex driver takes the empty containers with him and drops them off at the trans-o-flex site when he picks up new goods there again. At the trans-o-flex site, the containers are stacked on pallets and then bundled for cleaning. They then go to the respective customer or their warehouse service provider for the next shipment.

According to Albeck, the interest in shipments in reusable containers is growing strongly. “While we transported a total of around 1.1 million packages in tof.ecoboxes in 2022, we expect 1.7 million ecobox shipments this year, a good 50 per cent increase.” ■



Due to their conical shape, the containers can be stacked empty inside each other and thus take up as little space as possible during return transport. Up to 688 empty containers fit on one pallet.



New partner

International B2B and B2C service now also in Greece and Cyprus

The family business Geniki Taxydromiki expanded the EURODIS network to 38 countries – 4,000 employees generate around 100 million euros and work very profitably

Nadia and Eva Varzakakou are not both 43 years old by chance. They are twin sisters. They have been in the logistics business for 20 years. Their company is the Greek express service Geniki Taxydromiki, which their father Panagiotis Varzakakos founded and which they continue to run successfully. Together they have put the company on a continuous growth path, which is now to receive additional impetus through further internationalisation. Since June, Geniki has been a member of the EURODIS network, expanding the number of countries covered from 36 to 38. Geniki not only delivers EURODIS items in Greece, but also in the Greek-speaking part of Cyprus. The export of consignments from these countries to the other 36 countries served by EURODIS has also already begun.



“The addition of Geniki has numerous advantages for trans-o-flex customers,” says Sascha Caninenberg, Division Manager International and Regional Sales Manager West at trans-o-flex. “For example, they can use the full service of EURODIS in two more countries and the network is better utilised with additional international volumes.” Caninenberg is convinced that EURODIS could not have found a better partner in Greece. “Geniki enables combined freight, i.e. parcel and pallet in one consignment, transports dangerous goods consignments that do not require labelling, and delivers both B2B and B2C consignments.”

Athens is home to the company’s central hub and headquarters on 30,000 square metres of space. There are regional hubs in Thessaloniki and five other locations. In total, Geniki operates 330 stations in Greece. This number is expected to increase by 15 by the end of the year. Some of these stations are local delivery and pick-up bases, others are pure pick-up and drop-off stations (PUDOS = pick-up and drop-off stations) that Geniki uses for its online marketplace. Through its internet platform ebloko.gr, Geniki sells a wide range of

As recently as June, Geniki Taxydromiki purchased 20 fully electric delivery vehicles. There are charging stations at various locations on the company premises.

products, from cosmetics to household goods and electronics. Customers can have the goods delivered to their homes via Geniki or pick them up at the PUDOS and also return them.

The company's client list includes such well-known names as the cosmetics brand Avon, the German corporations Bayer, BMW and Bosch, the sporting goods retailer Decathlon, the DIY chain Praktiker, the textile giant Inditex (Zara) and the insurance group Ergo. In the last four years, Geniki has increased its turnover from 66 to 96 million euros and its gross profit from 8 to 12.4 million. ■

Nadia Varzakakou is one of the two managing directors of Geniki Taxydromiki. Together with her twin sister Eva, she manages the business of the new EURODIS partner for Greece and Cyprus.



48 per cent of all consignments are COD

One of the special features of the Greek express service Geniki Taxydromiki is a very high proportion of COD consignments. "In many countries in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the share of cash on delivery is high because the actual creditworthiness of the customers and also the trust in them is not as high as in Western Europe," explains Division Manager International at trans-o-flex, Sascha Caninenberg. At Geniki, the share is 48 per cent, almost half of all consignments. With an average of 120,000 items delivered by Geniki every day, that is more than 55,000 COD items per day. For the clientele, 2.8 million euros is collected in the process. The share is probably also so high because Geniki offers

the highest surcharge-free standard insurance in Greece. Documents are automatically insured up to 70 euros and parcels up to 400 euros.

The average consignment weight at Geniki is 1.4 kilos. Due to the high number of relatively small consignments, it is not surprising that 550 motorbikes are used in addition to 70 trucks and 750 vans. In June, Geniki Taxydromiki purchased 20 all-electric delivery vehicles. 13 mini-vans and two electric scooters are deployed at selected stations throughout Greece. Five vehicles went to a station in Athens, which is to be developed into the first completely "green delivery depot".

Grow with us!

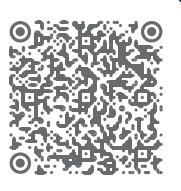
Grow with us worldwide

As a part of the GEODIS group, a leading international transport and logistics service provider, we are able to offer you parcel, pallet and document shipments to 168 countries – worldwide. GEODIS has outstanding expertise in the areas of supply chain optimisation, freight forwarding, contract logistics, distribution & express deliveries. Whether via air, ocean or road – we have the ideal solution for your logistics.

Simply scan the QR code to obtain more information about GEODIS.

Do you have any questions concerning our worldwide shipping?

Your personal trans-o-flex contact partner will be happy to answer these questions for you!



We look forward to receiving your call

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