

Open Logistics Foundation presents new digital consignment note standard at transport logistic 2025

First industry-ready eCMR software: legally compliant, interoperable, and freely available for all

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There have been various international attempts to digitalise the CMR consignment note. However, the resulting solutions are rarely compatible. The Open Logistics Foundation now presents an industry-ready software that creates a common standard for the digital consignment note (eCMR). The new software is legally compliant, interoperable, and suitable for companies of all sizes and industries – freely available on an open source basis. Open Logistics Foundation members Rhenus, Dachser, Blue Yonder, and Markant presented the solution for the first time on June 2nd during a press conference at transport logistic 2025 in Munich, Germany.

The eCMR software from the Open Logistics Foundation is a development by companies, for companies. 28 members of the Open Logistics Foundation have advanced, tested, and validated the software as part of the Working Group "Electronic Transport Documents" and its associated project "eCMR". The Open Logistics Foundation supported the project procedurally in its role as a non-profit organisation and safeguarded it with technical and legal expertise. The origin of the project lies in an initiative by the Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flow and Logistics IML.

The new eCMR software is legally compliant, interoperable, and suitable for companies of all sizes and industries. The use of a standardised eCMR data model enables the exchange of eCMR documents via federated platforms. This requires neither a central authority nor a mediator or broker: Every company and organisation can become part of the network. For signing and validating eCMR documents at the company level, the software uses advanced electronic seals.

Open Logistics Foundation: Collaborative rather than isolated solutions

"The eCMR software, developed by member companies of the Open Logistics Foundation, provides the much-needed foundation for the digital and efficient organisation of international freight transport," explains Andreas Nettsträter, CEO of the Open Logistics Foundation. "The success factor for the new open source standard is the community. For such so-called commodities, companies still develop their own solutions far too often, instead of bundling their resources with other companies within the Open Logistics Foundation."

In addition to Nettsträter, Markus Sandbrink, CIO Rhenus, Stefan Hohm, CDO Dachser, Robert Recknagel, Head of Operations Blue Yonder, and Reiner Sailer, Lead Service Owner SupplyChainServices Markant, participated in the press conference at transport logistic 2025. Following the proof of concept at the end of 2023 on two transport routes between Rhenus and Dachser, the industry-ready eCMR software has now been rolled out in two joint use cases. The logistics service providers Dachser and Rhenus collaborated with Markant and Blue Yonder.

Rhenus: More efficient through digital transport documents

"We believe that several of the challenges in digitalising logistics are best tackled together," says Markus Sandbrink of Rhenus. "The development of the eCMR has the potential to show how the entire industry can benefit when we work collaboratively. Of course, Rhenus could have solved the task technically on its own, but only as a group were we able to create a legally and organisationally accepted solution. Our commitment to open source as members of the Open Logistics Foundation is not an end in itself. Open source is about creating added value by enabling widespread adoption. Digitalisation and improved interoperability lead to cost savings, quality improvements, and greater efficiency. This was demonstrated in tests with the eCMR solution, for example with our partners Dachser and Blue Yonder. At Rhenus, we estimate internal cost savings of around one euro per document, depending on the use case. Processes become more transparent and less prone to error – from the initial stages through to payment processing."

Dachser: Time savings through standardisation of commodities

"The new eCMR standard shows that open source simplifies entry into digitalisation and drives standardisation of commodities across digital value chains," explains Stefan Hohm of Dachser. "Time savings of up to 60 percent were achieved through the use of the eCMR software, according to tests with our IT partner Markant. This means significant relief for everyone involved in the transport chain – from drivers to dispatchers to recipients of the goods. More than 25 logistics service providers, transport platforms, and logistics and IT service providers – many of them competitors, some with existing individual eCMR solutions – have worked together on the new eCMR standard. The software benefits from considering many different perspectives. Our successful pilot applications with our partner Markant have also shown that we have a great opportunity to digitalise many more transport documents and information. The developments and organisational decisions related to the eCMR provide an ideal starting point."

Andreas Nettsträter adds in conclusion: "The new open source software creates a common standard for the digital consignment note – not a formally standardised one, but one legitimised by community-based development and the backing of companies, a so-called de facto or industry standard." Every company can download, customise, and use the eCMR software from the Foundation's Repository and thus be compatible with other users of the open source software. Companies can implement the software into their existing systems themselves or commission suitable IT service providers. No licence fees apply. "The eCMR is our first lighthouse project since our founding in 2021," says Nettsträter. "With the support of our approximately 50 members and network partners (as of May 2025), as well as future members, and a growing logistics community, many more successful new industry standards based on open source will follow. Everyone is welcome to help shape them."

Members of the Working Group Electronic Transport Documents:

Aventeon, Blue Yonder, CargoLedger, Cargo Sign, Collect + Go, Dachser, DB Schenker, DSLV Federal Association of Freight Forwarding and Logistics, duisport, Editel, Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flow and Logistics IML, Gebrüder Weiss, GS1 Germany, iteratec, LKW WALTER, Markant, Pionira, Rhenus, SITRA, TradeLink, Trans.eu, TransFollow, Translogica, Transporeon, TriNet, ZeKju, ZUFALL logistics group. (as of May 2025)

The origin of the eCMR project was an initiative by the Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flow and Logistics IML. There, as part of the major research project "Silicon Economy" funded by the Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport, components for an eCMR open source software were developed and made available via the Open Logistics Foundation's Repository.

More information about the Open Logistics Foundation can be found at openlogisticsfoundation.org.

A collection of additional quotes from Rhenus, Dachser, Blue Yonder and Markant can be found in the appendix. Visit the Open Logistics Foundation at transport logistic 2025 at the duisport stand B3 101-202.

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About

The Open Logistics Foundation and its supporting association Open Logistics e.V. were founded in 2021 and are independent and neutral organisations. The non-profit and commonbenefit foundation based in Dortmund is completely financed by industry partners and is dedicated to the voluntary development of innovative open source solutions at a commodity level for the logistics industry. The focus is on open and fair cooperation between different companies, which can also be competitors in the free market. The overarching goal is to solve the most pressing existing problems of the logistics and supply chain management (SCM) community with uniform standards, tools and services, based on open source.

Press contact Open Logistics Foundation

Carina Tüllmann • Open Logistics Foundation

Emil-Figge-Str. 80 • 44227 Dortmund

Phone: +49 (0)173 4120374 • Mail: carina.tuellmann@openlogisticsfoundation.org

Internet: www.openlogisticsfoundation.org

Press contact agency

Maximilian Schütz

additiv

a brand of additiv pr GmbH & Co. KG

B2B communications for logistics, robotics, industry and IT

Herzog-Adolf-Straße 3 • 56410 Montabaur

Tel: +49 (0) 26 02- 950 99-13 • Mail: mas@additiv.de

Internet: additiv.de

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