



USER
FREIGHT FORWARDERS
ASSOCIATION
OF ROMANIA



ESC
EUROPEAN
SHIPPERS'
COUNCIL

BUCHAREST DECLARATION ESC – USER ON TRUSTED, SECURE AND FUTURE-READY SUPPLY CHAINS

Bucharest, Romania | 9 September 2026 | TransLogistica Romania 2026

The **European Shippers' Council (ESC)** and the **Freight Forwarders Association of Romania (USER)**, bringing together the perspectives of shippers and freight forwarders at TransLogistica Romania 2026 in Bucharest,

Recognising that European supply chains are undergoing profound transformation, driven by increasingly complex regulation, accelerated digitalisation, sustainability requirements, geopolitical uncertainty and growing security risks;

Recognising that the traditional relationship between shippers, freight forwarders and carriers must evolve beyond transactional cooperation towards stronger, transparent and long-term partnerships;

Acknowledging that freight forwarders increasingly play a strategic role in connecting supply chain actors, managing regulatory complexity, coordinating transport operations, providing visibility and supporting shippers in building more resilient supply chains;

Recognising that reliable, complete and high-quality data are becoming essential for regulatory compliance, digitalisation, security, sustainability reporting and effective supply chain management, while data quality across today's supply chains remains too often below the level required;

Recognising that cargo theft, identity fraud, fake carriers, cyber-enabled fraud, criminal infiltration, human smuggling and the misuse of transport operations for other criminal purposes require stronger due diligence, better information sharing and closer cooperation across borders;

Acknowledging that security, resilience, digitalisation and sustainability come at a cost, and that these costs and responsibilities cannot be placed on one supply chain actor alone;

Recognising that greater resilience requires not only an effective response to disruptions, but also conscious choices in sourcing, procurement, network design, inventory, transport planning and internal crisis preparedness;

believe that the competitiveness and resilience of European supply chains will increasingly depend on the ability of shippers, freight forwarders, carriers and their partners to build trust, share responsibility, improve data quality and adapt together.



USER
FREIGHT FORWARDERS
ASSOCIATION
OF ROMANIA



ESC
EUROPEAN
SHIPPERS'
COUNCIL

ESC and USER therefore support the following principles:

1. FROM TRANSACTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS TO STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The shipper–freight forwarder relationship should increasingly move beyond individual transactions and price-based procurement towards long-term strategic cooperation based on transparency, mutual understanding, clearly defined responsibilities and shared objectives.

Trust cannot be built by one party alone. Shippers, freight forwarders and carriers should recognise their interdependence and work together to anticipate risks, improve visibility and respond effectively when disruptions occur.

A strong service provider should not merely execute instructions. Freight forwarders and logistics service providers should act as constructive sparring partners and strategic advisers to their customers, challenging assumptions where appropriate and explaining the operational, regulatory, sustainability, security and resilience consequences of important supply chain choices.

2. REGULATION SHOULD ENABLE EFFICIENT AND COMPETITIVE LOGISTICS

European and national regulation should be implemented in a practical, predictable and harmonised manner, avoiding unnecessary administrative complexity and fragmentation.

The logistics industry and shippers should be involved at an early stage in the development and implementation of rules affecting supply chains, so that regulatory objectives can be achieved without undermining operational efficiency or European competitiveness.

Effective compliance also depends on the availability of accurate, complete and timely information. Regulatory requirements should therefore be designed and implemented in ways that promote clear data standards, interoperability and efficient exchange of information between supply chain actors and public authorities.

3. DIGITALISATION REQUIRES HIGH-QUALITY DATA, TRANSPARENCY AND TRUST

Digitalisation should not simply replace paper with electronic processes. It should enable better connectivity, reliable data exchange, greater transparency and more efficient cooperation between shippers, freight forwarders, carriers and public authorities.

We support interoperable digital solutions, electronic transport and customs documentation and secure data-sharing mechanisms that reduce administrative burdens while improving visibility, traceability, compliance and decision-making across supply chains.

However, digital systems can only be as reliable as the information entered into them. **Accurate, complete, timely and consistent data are essential for regulatory compliance, customs processes, transport execution, security controls, emissions reporting and effective risk management.**



USER
FREIGHT FORWARDERS
ASSOCIATION
OF ROMANIA



ESC
EUROPEAN
SHIPPERS'
COUNCIL

At present, data quality within many supply chains remains far from optimal. Shippers do not always provide logistics service providers with sufficiently complete, accurate or timely information. At the same time, service providers do not always challenge inadequate data or clearly explain the operational and compliance consequences of missing or incorrect information.

Improving data quality is therefore a shared responsibility. Shippers should take responsibility for the quality of the information they provide, while freight forwarders and other service providers should actively identify inconsistencies, request corrections where necessary and make customers aware of the consequences of insufficient data.

High-quality data should be regarded as a fundamental component of compliant, secure, sustainable and resilient supply chains.

4. SUSTAINABILITY REQUIRES TRANSPARENT AND INFORMED CHOICES

The transition towards more sustainable transport and logistics requires investment, operational changes and closer cooperation throughout the supply chain.

The costs and responsibilities associated with greener logistics cannot be transferred exclusively to carriers or freight forwarders. Shippers, logistics providers and other supply chain partners must work together to identify realistic solutions and recognise the true cost of more sustainable transport.

More sustainable transport options may involve trade-offs. Depending on the solution chosen, these can include changes in cost, transit time, capacity, flexibility, frequency, reliability or exposure to disruption.

Freight forwarders and logistics service providers should therefore clearly explain the consequences of different sustainability options to their customers, including their expected impact on emissions, costs, reliability and operational performance.

Providing this transparency enables shippers to make well-informed choices and to balance sustainability objectives with service requirements, resilience and commercial considerations.

Sustainability should consequently be based on informed decisions and shared responsibility rather than on shifting costs, risks or obligations from one supply chain actor to another.

5. TRUST MUST BE SUPPORTED BY VERIFICATION

In an environment where identity fraud, fake carriers and increasingly sophisticated forms of cargo crime are growing concerns, trust alone is not a sufficient risk-management strategy.

Companies should apply appropriate due diligence and partner-verification procedures before entrusting cargo, including verification of company identity, contact persons, transport licences, insurance coverage and other relevant credentials.



USER
FREIGHT FORWARDERS
ASSOCIATION
OF ROMANIA



ESC
EUROPEAN
SHIPPERS'
COUNCIL

Digital freight platforms and other technology providers can play an important role by providing reliable verification tools, company information and mechanisms for identifying and reporting risks.

Trust does not replace verification. Trust is built through verification.

6. CARGO AND TRANSPORT SECURITY MUST BE PART OF SUPPLY CHAIN PLANNING

Cargo and transport security should be considered from the moment a supply chain and transport operation are designed, rather than only after an incident occurs.

This includes appropriate route planning, risk assessment, carrier selection, partner verification and the systematic consideration and use of safe and secure truck parking areas, particularly for high-value, theft-sensitive or commercially sensitive cargo.

Shippers and logistics service providers should jointly create transport conditions that encourage the use of secure parking and other appropriate security measures. Commercial agreements, routing requirements and delivery planning should not unintentionally create incentives for drivers or carriers to avoid secure facilities solely because of cost or time pressure.

Supply chains must also be protected against a wider range of criminal activity. Risks can include cargo theft, fraud and identity misuse, but also human smuggling, facilitation of irregular migration, criminal infiltration and the misuse of vehicles, trailers, facilities or logistics networks for unlawful purposes.

Shippers, freight forwarders, carriers and other partners should therefore consider transport security as part of broader supply chain integrity and cooperate to reduce opportunities for criminal organisations to exploit legitimate logistics operations.

The additional costs associated with secure transport – including verified partners, secure parking, technology, additional controls and adequate insurance – should be recognised as part of the real cost of responsible transport, rather than treated merely as optional additional expenses.

7. INFORMATION SHARING IS ESSENTIAL TO PREVENT REPEATED FRAUD AND CARGO CRIME

Information about cargo theft, attempted fraud, identity misuse and other security incidents has greater preventive value when it can help protect the wider logistics community.

We encourage stronger mechanisms for timely and responsible information sharing between shippers, freight forwarders, carriers, digital platforms for freight exchange, insurers, secure parking operators and public authorities, including across national borders.

Greater cooperation and information exchange can help identify emerging fraud patterns earlier and prevent the same methods from being successfully used against multiple companies.



USER
FREIGHT FORWARDERS
ASSOCIATION
OF ROMANIA



ESC
EUROPEAN
SHIPPERS'
COUNCIL

Where legally and practically possible, relevant information concerning new criminal methods, suspicious entities and serious security incidents should be shared rapidly enough to enable other supply chain actors to take preventive action.

8. RESILIENCE STARTS BEFORE A CRISIS OCCURS

Resilience is not only the ability to recover from disruption. It begins with the choices organisations make before a crisis occurs.

Sourcing strategies, supplier selection, production locations, inventory policies, transport modes, routing, network design and contingency arrangements can all increase or reduce a company's exposure to disruption.

Shippers should therefore consider resilience as an integral part of strategic and operational decision-making rather than as a separate emergency-management activity.

At the same time, resilience starts within the organisation itself. Companies should develop the ability to anticipate potential crises, understand critical dependencies, establish clear responsibilities, prepare alternative scenarios and make timely decisions when circumstances change.

Freight forwarders and other logistics service providers should act as strategic sparring partners to shippers in this process. Through their knowledge of transport markets, infrastructure, capacity, routes, regulations and operational risks, they can help customers identify vulnerabilities, evaluate alternatives and understand the resilience consequences of different sourcing, planning and logistics decisions.

A resilient supply chain is therefore created jointly: through informed choices by the shipper, professional advice from service providers and effective preparation by all parties involved.

9. RESILIENCE IS PROVEN WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG

No verification process, technology, security measure or resilience plan can eliminate risk completely.

The true strength of a trusted partnership therefore becomes most visible when disruption or a serious incident occurs.

Clear contractual responsibilities, adequate insurance, transparent communication, rapid information exchange, escalation procedures and agreed incident-response arrangements should be established before problems arise.

Shippers and service providers should understand in advance how they will cooperate when capacity disappears, infrastructure fails, borders close, systems become unavailable, cargo is compromised or other serious disruptions occur.



USER
FREIGHT FORWARDERS
ASSOCIATION
OF ROMANIA



ESC
EUROPEAN
SHIPPERS'
COUNCIL

A trusted partnership should not end with the first serious claim or crisis. It should be designed to withstand it, learn from it and become stronger as a result.

A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The supply chains of the future will require closer cooperation between shippers, freight forwarders, carriers, technology providers, insurers, infrastructure operators and public authorities.

ESC and USER therefore encourage all stakeholders to work towards supply chains in which:

Trust is earned through transparency, supported by verification, strengthened through high-quality data and cooperation, and proven when disruption occurs.

Responsibility for secure, compliant, sustainable and resilient supply chains must be shared. Shippers must provide reliable information, make conscious supply chain choices and invest in their own preparedness. Freight forwarders and other service providers must provide professional advice, challenge weaknesses where necessary and clearly explain the consequences of alternative choices. Carriers, technology providers, infrastructure operators, insurers and public authorities each have an important role in creating the conditions in which responsible logistics can operate.

The future of European supply chains will depend not only on how efficiently goods move, but also on how effectively the organisations behind those movements share responsibility, manage risk, exchange reliable information and build partnerships capable of adapting to change.

Secure and resilient supply chains require trusted partnerships – and trusted partnerships require shared responsibility.

European Shippers' Council (ESC)

Freight Forwarders Association of Romania (USER)