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H.Essers at the cradle of Women in Logistics

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Logistics service provider H.Essers and Dow are leading the Women in Logistics initiative, in which a sector-wide consortium aims to promote more gender diversity and inclusion within the logistics sector. WIL is supported by sector associations ECTA and Cefic and joined by Den Hartogh, Bertschi, Suttons Tankers, LyondellBasell, Eastman and Covestro.

H.Essers is led by Hilde Essers, the daughter of Noël Essers. However, the fact that there is a woman at the head of such a large logistics company is the exception rather than the rule. For example, women make up only 6% or less of the truck driver population in Europe. "Addressing this gap, especially during a period of driver shortages, is essential to creating a balanced and efficient workforce. Research has consistently shown that diverse teams deliver stronger performance and better business outcomes. However, operational and leadership roles in logistics are still predominantly held by men, highlighting the need for targeted action to promote gender balance," said Hilde Essers, Chair of the Board of Directors.

"The Women In Logistics consortium aims to become an inspiring platform for business action plans and aims to drive commitment by optimizing conditions that promote diversity while creating an inclusive and thriving logistics ecosystem. The collaboration between the 10 parties in this consortium is an exemplary model of co-opetition: cooperation outside the competition. The joint efforts of these 10 organizations transcend competitive barriers." Cathy Budd, CPO and Vice President of Procurement, chemical company Dow, agrees: "Women in Logistics' mission is to bridge the gender gap by building an inclusive ecosystem that overcomes stereotypes and gender bias. Instead of committing to a single initiative, the group has decided to join forces with several industry players."

The consortium will initially focus on the European chemical logistics industry and on three key target groups: drivers, operators and leadership. "A platform will be developed to raise awareness, engage with leadership support, share best practices, inspire the logistics community, advocate for the promotion of tools and leverage the collective influence for these key target groups," said Hilde Essers.