

## Women in Logistics a new industry-wide consortium to close the gender gap in chemical logistics Europe

Today marks an important day for the logistics sector in Europe as the Women in Logistics consortium launches. This pioneering industry-wide consortium aims to promote greater gender diversity and inclusion within the traditionally male-dominated logistics sector. Led by Dow and H.Essers, and supported by sector associations ECTA and Cefic, this initiative is joined by six other key players—Den Hartogh, Bertschi, Suttons Tankers, LyondellBasell, Eastman, and Covestro. The WIL-consortium is committed to driving meaningful change and fostering a more inclusive and diverse logistics industry landscape through collaboration beyond competition.

Despite gradual improvements, the gender imbalance in logistics remains significant. For instance, women constitute only 6 percent or less of the truck driver population in Europe. Addressing this gap, particularly during a time of driver shortages, is essential for creating a balanced and efficient workforce. Research has consistently shown that diverse teams drive stronger performance and better business outcomes. However, operational and leadership roles in logistics continue to be predominantly held by men, highlighting the need for targeted action to promote gender balance.



Achieving gender equality in the workforce could significantly impact the global economy, potentially adding \$28 trillion, or 26 percent, to annual global GDP by 2025<sup>1</sup>. The International Labour Organisation analysed diversity management in 13,000 companies across 70 countries and concluded that more diverse companies perform better in terms of talent recruitment and retention, creativity, innovation, and turnover. Similarly, BlackRock's analysis of 1,500 MSCI companies over the past decade found that companies with the most diverse workforces outperformed their less diverse peers in return on assets by 29 percent per year from 2013 to 2022. Yet, bridging the gender gap globally is projected to take 131 years, according to the World Economic Forum. While these figures provide a general overview, the challenge is even more pronounced in the logistics industry. These statistics triggered the founders to set-up a unique initiative and join forces beyond competition.

Based on data-driven top-down awareness, the WIL consortium wants to become an inspiring platform for company action plans and aims to drive commitment by optimising conditions that promote diversity while creating an inclusive and thriving logistics ecosystem.

The collaboration between the 10 parties in this consortium is unique within the industry. It is an exemplary model of co-opetition: collaboration beyond competition. The collaborative commitment of these 10 organisations transcends competition barriers and is illustrative for the importance of diverse perspectives and backgrounds.

Cathy Budd, CPO, and purchasing vice president of Dow emphasised that "Women in Logistics' mission is to bridge the gender gap by building an inclusive ecosystem that overcomes stereotypes and gender bias. Rather than embarking on a single initiative, the group has decided to join forces with several industry players." Hilde Essers, chairwoman of the board of H.Essers added that "by combining resources and efforts, a more substantial impact can be made. Achieving a more balanced male-female representation benefits everyone, and it all starts with this consortium."

The consortium is initially focusing on the European chemical logistics industry, leveraging the expertise of its 10 board members, and addressing sector-specific needs such as compliance, safety, and sustainability through enhanced gender diversity. To provide a concrete roadmap, the WIL consortium has chosen to concentrate efforts on three key target groups: drivers, operators, and leadership. The consortium will develop a platform to raise awareness, address leadership endorsement, share best practices, inspire the logistics community, advocate for promoting instruments and to leverage the collective influence for these key target groups.

For more information visit [www.women-in-logistics.eu](http://www.women-in-logistics.eu)