

eFTI4EU First Yearly Conference Recap

Brussels, Thursday, 17th of October 2024

The eFTI4EU project is pleased to share highlights from its first annual conference, which took place on October 17th in Brussels, Belgium. The hybrid conference, themed Freight Transport in the Digital Age, brought together close to 300 participants, industry leaders, experts, and innovators to discuss the wins, challenges, and opportunities in making the eFTi Regulation a reality and driving digital transformation in the logistics sector in the EU.

Key Takeaways:

I° Keynote Address

Annika Kroon, DG Move Head of Unit MOVE.D1 “Maritime Transport and Logistics,” delivered an inspiring and heartfelt keynote address on the eFTI mission, challenges, and vision. “eFTi is all about to eliminate paper documents and make it happen in every Member States,” Kroon emphasized the vision and went a step further to add, that eFTI also has a huge potential on international level of being a global standard. “eFTi is a big building block in making transport fully digital,” Kroon added.

eFTI4EU overview

Eva Killar, eFTI4U Project Coordinator, Estonian Ministry of Climate Head of Mobility Development and Investments Department, gave an overview of the project’s main workstreams and successes so far. Killar emphasized how the community working on the project is varied and shares openly their opinions—from different views, better solutions will be created.

“The main goal of the project is to encourage the whole EU to be more digital,” Killar echoed the points made by Annika Kroon. “We feel that in 2027, we are ready for eFTI to be in place, and based on the work done in the project, other Member States don’t have to start from zero to implement eFTI,” Killar added.

II °Keynote Address

Artemis Siteli, Transporeon, Product Manager Digital Transport Documents and a member of the Open Logistics Foundation, gave a keynote speech on insights and strategies for a digital future topic. She emphasized that digitalization would transform the physical world. Additionally, logistics teams are under more pressure than ever before, and there is a big challenge of logistics teams being isolated and giving the solution as cooperation. “Cooperation is not a strategy but a necessity,” Siteli stated.

eFTI Insights: Navigating the Future of Digital Freight

Teemu Heikura, eFTI4EU, Fintraffic, Head of Logistics and Mohamed Oulmahdi, eFTI4EU, IN Groupe, Senior System Architect, presented a comprehensive overview of the project's technical part – focusing on processes, data, interfaces and reference implementation. Within that, the eDelivery Architecture overview and workflow were presented. In addition, a cross-border testing process was introduced with Finland, France, and Estonia to test the reference implementation next month. Heikura emphasized that the reference implementation provided will always need modification for national implementation. The pilots' overview and examples were given, emphasising that piloting can show the benefits of eFTI. “eFTI is only one part in the logistics puzzle. Combining eFTI with other data can bring greater value,” Heikura said.

Initial insights from EU member states' roadmaps for eFTI regulation implementation

Ulrika Hurt – eFTI4EU project co-coordinator and R&D Lead at the Digital Logistics Center of Excellence, gave an overview of the timeline of the project in regard to the national eFTI roadmaps. A roadmap is a multi-discipline strategy and project plan for the implementation of eFTI in the Member States. Hurt explained that the eFTI4EU project has taken a deep dive into the plans of eight member states that participate in the project: Austria, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, and Portugal. The summary report of national roadmaps will become available for the wider audience and other member states to read and provide clarity and motivation to create similar roadmaps for themselves. “This joint coordinated exercise to create national Roadmaps has helped to solve problems, compare highlights and allow member states to take benchmark potential learning options and collaboration action points from each other,” Hurt pointed out.

Panel Discussions

Expert panels discussed critical topics such as understanding the advantages and challenges and how to overcome them from both the competent authorities and economic operators' points of view. Both panels emphasised the need for effective communication about digitalisation. There was also a common understanding that eFTi needs to be a system that works on both sides – for the competent and economic operators.

The first panel focused on empowering Competent Authorities and addressed the need for harmonisation, training, and educating stakeholders about eFTI. Toomas Korenev, Estonian Police and Border Guard, Group Leader in the Traffic supervision department, shared their experience using data from different governmental registers and how eFTi fits into it. Rudi Hemeleers from eFTI4EU and a consultant for the Flemish Waterway Administration brought examples of how eFTi can be used by the authorities. Heinz Albert Stumpfen, Euro Contrôle Route, Director, brought examples from road transport and checks and how eFTi can relate. In the discussions, it was highlighted that eFTI needs to be easy to use and affordable for authorities and SMEs in the transport sector.

The second panel discussed how to drive business growth, including the benefits and opportunities for economic operators, such as simplifying processes and exchanging data digitally. High hopes were put on eFTI

regulation and its implementation. The panel was moderated by Heiti Mering, eFTI4EU and Digital Logistics Center of Excellence (CEO and founder). Participants of the panel were Toni Penttinen, Ahola Transport, Head of IT; Marc Billiet, IRU, senior advisor; Frederic Laporte, IN Groupe, Director of Platforms & Ecosystems and Barry van Leuven, Pionira NV, Managing Director. Panelists highlighted the numerous benefits of eFTI – such as enhanced security, reduced paperwork, and improved decision-making. However, challenges such as ensuring compatibility with existing legislation and addressing digitalization concerns must be overcome for successful implementation. Marc Billiet named eFTI a door opener, a comparison repeated by other participants. eFTI is a pathway to effective digitalisation that also brings business value. eFTI is paving the way for exchanging data in transport.

eFTI4ALL

Matti Lankinen, CEO of Vediafi also introduced the new eFTI4ALL project, which focuses on economic operators and platforms and interoperability, including use cases. This project will be carried out in close collaboration with eFTI4EU and will build on the results of the previous project.

Attendees had the opportunity to connect with peers, build relationships, and explore potential collaborations. The event served as a great meeting point for the eFTI expertise and implementation community.

About

eFTI4EU's mission is to encourage Member States to work together to develop a well-harmonised and interoperable European-wide eFTI exchange environment. eFTI4EU is a cooperation of a pan-European consortium of 23 partners, including 9 Member States (plus 4 Observers), united in their vision to pave the way for the implementation of Electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) architecture. Co-Funded by the European Union. eFTI4EU project is financed under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) program of the European Commission.

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