AIR CARGO COMMUNITY FRANKFURT - MORE COURAGE FOR DIGITISATION

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The Third Air Cargo Conference in Frankfurt was a great success for the organisers, not only in numbers of visitors who attended, but also concerning the content of the conference: with focus on digitisation of the supply chain, innovations in air freight and impulses from start-ups. In the end, there was a considerable consensus: Digitisation will not do any good without people.

Over 180 participants came to the House of Logistics and Mobility (HOLM) at Frankfurt Airport. The Air Cargo Community Frankfurt (ACCF) together with the Fraunhofer Institut fuer Materialfluss und Logistik (IML), the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences and the Hochschule RheinMain had invited to this two-day conference. "We are very pleased that so many experts and practitioners have followed our call to exchange views", said Joachim von Winning, Managing Director of the Community. "The lively participation is a signal to us that our conference concept as well as the topics on the agenda have struck a nerve", the air freight expert continues. The intention of the organisers was to unite the "best of two worlds": scientists and air freight practitioners should meet at a common forum for information exchange and reflection on joint projects and innovations in air freight. The topic of digitisation through the key-notes, the question-and-answer sessions with the audience and the discussions on the sidelines of the conference were a common thread.

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More courage for digitisation

"One insight resonates in all keynotes. We need more courage to digitise, but for that we need to get our colleagues involved early on", said Joachim von Winning. "Scientific research projects show that digitisation works. Company founders bring a breath of fresh air", added Professor Kai-Oliver Schocke of the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences (FRA UAS) and key note speaker. Many start-ups also presented their concepts at the conference, like a new booking platform in airfreight or a special analysis of work processes or innovations in the field of unmanned transport aircrafts. Well-established companies and researchers on the market completed the view on digitisation with their own projects. For example, in the area of cross-border eCommerce, the introduction of a ramp control system in the Frankfurt Cargo City Sued (CCS) or autonomously operating cargo trailers. "Digitalisation is becoming tangible for companies", Kai-Oliver Schocke continued. Many companies understood the impulse to move to Internet of Things and implemented technical processes. However, this only works if employees receive information as well as training and are thus taken along in the process of change. "Nobody should be afraid of digitisation", Kai-Oliver Schocke said. The many questions from the audience and the discussions on the sidelines of the conference showed that it is important to discuss digitisation in concrete terms with examples from air freight practice and to look at possible solutions. "We now understand even better that we will be able to make progress in the airfreight industry as a whole and at Frankfurt Airport in special only with common concepts", emphasized Joachim von Winning. The conference offered a great platform for this.

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