



INTERVIEW WITH
Didier Weerts, co-CEO

TRANSPORT

COMPANY

Weerts Supply Chain (Weerts Group)

REGION

Wallonia

Founded: towards the end of the 2nd World War

Location: Liège

Number of employees: over 600 in the logistics division

Turnover (2019) logistics division: EUR 49 million

Growth (2019): 30% compared to 2017 (EUR 37 million in 2017); 38% growth in employment

Investments (2019): EUR 50 million

Start of activities abroad: 2000

Prizes, awards: Logistics Employer of the Year (2020)



Headquartered in Liège, the Weerts Group, a fourth-generation family-owned business, is active in three different yet complementary fields of activity: Logistics, Real Estate and Motorsport. The main point of attention of the present article is the Logistics division.

Weerts Supply Chain (WSC), the general logistics division of the Group, offers comprehensive solutions for transport, warehousing and value-added logistics, with a strong focus on technological innovation and a full end-to-end approach. Today, WSC mainly operates in Benelux, Germany and Eastern Europe (Hungary), where it provides its customers with tailor-made logistics solutions.

"Large international companies but also small and medium-sized enterprises call on our innovative solutions to carry out their operations within the integrated logistics chain," explains Didier Weerts, co-CEO of WSC. "Today, we mainly serve four industries: the food industry (with large players such as Mondelez), the household and electronics industry (Bosch and Siemens Hausgeräte GmbH and Miele, for example), the automotive industry (Audi among others) and, finally, the pharmaceutical and life sciences industry," Weerts adds.

"We have recently signed a concession agreement with the Liege Port Authority to operate several multimodal and partially automated logistics platforms at Liège Trilogiport."

"Our main objective is to stick to double-digit growth, year over year, while continuing to create employment. Furthermore, by continuously improving and investing heavily in information technologies and engineering capabilities, we nurture the ambition of expanding our activities into new industries and sustaining our growth in the existing ones," declares Weerts.

END-TO-END LOGISTICS PROVIDER

Originally, Weerts was a transport company that later extended its logistics activities to become a versatile all-rounder capable of managing each and every link in the logistics chain. Today, WSC mainly provides three comprehensive



services: transport, warehousing and value-added logistics.

"WSC obviously still responds to the transport demands of its customers by managing its own transport fleet, but also by subcontracting transport operations to other entrusted partners," emphasizes Weerts. "Moreover, we are also working more and more in a multimodal fashion (waterway, rail, and road) and have recently signed a concession agreement with the Liege Port Authority to operate several multimodal and partially automated logistics platforms at Liège Triligiport," Weerts adds.

As regards its warehousing services, WSC meticulously operates ca. 210,000m² of state-of-the-art storage facilities. "However, our warehousing solutions must be broadly defined," says Weerts. "On receipt, goods are subject to satisfactory quality control and, if necessary, are customs cleared by our experts before being put in storage. Our high-tech facilities allow the compartmentalization of stored goods according to specific needs – such as storage at controlled temperatures – while ensuring that space is optimized. Subsequently, our highly trained staff efficiently pick and pack orders and prepare them for shipment under perfect conditions," Weerts explains.

"In addition, WSC has extensive expertise in industrial real estate and can offer an entire range of build and operate solutions. As a matter of fact, WSC can build logistics distribution

centers or warehouses for its customers, who then have two options: either to run the logistics operations themselves or let us handle them," Weerts continues.

In addition to traditional transport and warehousing services, WSC also provides value-added logistics services tailor-made to its customers' needs. "At our customers' request, WSC customizes products by carrying out co-packing activities ranging from repackaging, labelling and, wrapping to putting together multi-packs," adds Weerts.

WSC can also serve as an intermediate station in the logistics chain by undertaking cross-docking activities during which incoming goods are transloaded directly into outbound vehicles. "These operations require an extremely efficient organization and have to meet a strict schedule in which every minute counts and there is no room for errors or time loss," says Weerts.

Finally, WSC also has its proprietary Warehouse Management System (WMS) and Transport Management System (TMS) through which it provides utterly reliable track and trace records to its customers in digital form at every step along the supply chain. "Whether nationally or internationally, during warehousing, transport or our value-added logistics, WSC can closely track and trace products thanks to the development of its own software and equipment," stresses Weerts. "Innovation and proactive investments in technology to improve the speed and

efficiency of our customers' goods flow will always be a top-priority for WSC," affirms Weerts.

DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN EXPANSION

"Thanks to the ideal geographical location of Wallonia and Liège in the center of Europe and the presence in the Region of multimodal infrastructure (waterway, rail, road, air) connected to the main European trade corridors, WSC has succeeded in positioning itself on the European market with strongholds in Benelux, Germany, and Eastern Europe," declares Weerts.

Relying on a skilled multilingual workforce, WSC's international growth started from Belgium and now tackles new markets while always following its customers' needs. "For example, WSC addressed the German and Hungarian markets by building new state-of-the-art warehouses as a result of listening to the need of one of its clients for business expansion," Weerts says.

With ongoing warehousing projects in Belgium (Liège Triligiport and Limburg with Tessenderlo-Beringen and Tongeren) and abroad (Budapest), the Weerts' team have their hands full. "Even in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, we believe that the future of our sector is bright. As a matter of fact, a lot of transport and logistics business opportunities will arise because supply chains will probably be redesigned to be shorter while the demand for local logistics presence and warehousing will increase," Weerts concludes.