

DAVIES TURNER BUILDS GREENER SUPPLY CHAIN WITH TURKEY

45 years after identifying the potential of the Turkish market, Davies Turner is set to further expand its multimodal presence in the trade between the UK and Turkey, developing more environmentally friendly supply chain solutions between the two countries.

Davies Turner is offering a re-engineered supply chain service using greener transport modes thanks to an ever growing relationship with its long-standing partner, Istanbul-based Ekol Logistics.

One of the most innovative transport, logistics and warehousing companies in Turkey, Ekol is developing rail and ro-ro alternatives to traditional direct overland operations between Turkey and the EU.

Philip Stephenson, chairman of Davies Turner, explains: "We were amongst the first to increase our focus on Turkey because we saw the country as both completing our pan-European coverage and operating as a gateway to countries such as Iraq. Working with Ekol, our partner of more than 20 years in the region, we are now ready to provide some of the most environmentally friendly multimodal services between Turkey and the EU.

"The recent moves by Ekol to charter three ro-ro ferries to run between Istanbul and Trieste with a capacity of 250 trailers per ferry and to operate thrice-daily block trains between Trieste and Cologne, as well as Ostrava on the Czech-Poland border, means removing thousands of tonnes of pollution and carbon dioxide emissions as this routing uses significantly less fuel per kilometre/tonne of freight than a direct road truck journey, without impacting on overall fast transit times."

Joint services with Ekol see each forwarder playing to its strengths, considers Stephenson, as Ekol is strong on full loads while Davies Turner is the leader in groupage services over the UK-Turkish two-way trade lane.

Stephenson says: "Our trailer, sea-container and air cargo services between the UK and Turkey have for many years been amongst our fastest growing and most successful, comparable to the best Far-East markets. Turkey is right up there amongst the new wave of countries with the strongest economies, and with its rapidly growing private sector its GDP is predicted to increase by more than 4% during 2013, compared to 0.1% at best within the Eurozone."

At present, Britain and Ireland import the equivalent of many more trailer loads weekly from Turkey than we export Southbound from the UK. Normally this would create a significant problem with repositioning trailers but Ekol is continuing to win large contracts from the UK's continental neighbours like the Netherlands and Germany into Turkey, including major and regular traffic flows from car manufacturers.

Under Ahmet Musul, the majority shareholder and Ekol chairman, the freight forwarder has grown rapidly and now employs 5,500 staff with

warehousing capacity of half a million square metres throughout Turkey and Europe. Its latest facility opened in Cologne in early November with a 5,000 sq m warehouse adjacent to the main rail freight terminal. Ekol has also attracted substantial investment from the Gulf States which has further strengthened and supported the company's phenomenal growth.

At the start of Davies Turner's development of services with the Balkans and Turkey, trucks were routinely driven overland between the two countries via Europe's advanced but over-used motorway system. In the years since, however, popular opinion in many markets has turned away from freight transport being based solely on long-distance truck journeys. This has encouraged many operators and manufacturers to look at alternative combined transport solutions.

Davies Turner is a market-leader between Turkey and the UK in switching some of its services away from absolute dependence on road traffic towards a competitive mix of alternative modes, says Mr Stephenson. He adds: "We had been cautious earlier about taking on too many more northbound customers and prospects, but Ekol's investment in the ferries and the block train services has sent a clear message to the market, and recent success on the southbound leg has allowed us to canvass and take on more northbound business.

"Now, the public rightly look to the freight industry to ensure no truck journey is wasted through empty-running and we have to green the supply chain from start to finish. Many customers are now almost as keen on reducing carbon emissions in logistics operations as they are on our cost-effective, on-time deliveries.

"Anyone who knows Ahmet and his team will realise that he is a visionary and they are all passionate about the business the same as we are at Davies Turner. Our joint services and developments with Ekol show the market that we have the capacity and resource to continue developing this trade."