

# AHLERS HIGH VALUE LOGISTICS REPLACES ARMED ESCORTS IN TRANSPORT OF HIGH VALUE GOODS WITH IOT-TECHNOLOGY

Interview - Ellen Theeuwes  
Business Unit Director  
High Value Logistics, Ahlers



Ahlers organizes all logistic processes for producers of theft-sensitive and valuable products. Our focus markets are CIS and Eastern Europe. "We started in Russia 27 years ago," says Ellen Theeuwes, business unit director at Ahlers. "Meanwhile, we are also active in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, and the Baltic States. "

Initially, Ahlers organized the transport, but gradually other activities were added. Think of customs formalities, the in- or outsourcing of warehousing and logistics projects, but also trade facilitation for starting up a business in Russia. Ahlers also carries out the transport of large industrial projects and heavy machinery.

## Secured transports

The Ahlers' business unit mainly has customers from the tobacco sector in the region. "The classic way of organizing transport is to work with armed escorts," explains Theeuwes. "But this comes with certain risks. Due to the growing number of transports, the increase in theft attempts, there is a constant shortage of personnel. Corona times don't make it easier either, an armed guard sitting next to a driver in the cabin is not an option today".

That's why Ahlers decided to build a state of the art solution, which the company initially developed itself. "We are a forerunner in the region. The logistics sector is fairly conservative, but we often motivate our customers to move faster towards automation and digitalization," says Theeuwes. "Innovation and digital transformation are at the heart of Ahlers and are key to maintain and expand our share in a declining market. We are now bringing the next version 'Ahlers Safe-T' to the market. We developed this together with Bagaar, a Belgian IoT company.

"**Technology only offers advantages,**" continues Theeuwes. Not only does it reduce the risk of fraud, but the technology also makes attempted thefts much more difficult. Of course, we are thinking first and foremost about people's safety. The installation of the safety kit, which is suitable for every type of truck, is done by Ahlers people, who are regularly screened. With 'Ahlers Safe-T' we offer an ideal solution for the shortage of armed escorts". The monitoring system ensures that the transport is monitored in real-time, 24/7. "We keep that in our own hands to control the entire flow. According to TAPA standards, these people are housed in a bunker with redundant utilities".



Ahlers sets itself aside from its competitors by its many years of experience in the region, offering a complete end-to-end solution that supports every step of the transport process, before, during, and after underpinned with the required data analysis. But the technology is only one component, the know-how simply cannot be replaced. "Transport is the last step in the chain. The previous stage is very intensive, but the customer doesn't notice a thing. Amongst other things, we always look at the most optimal route for transport. the various stops the driver is allowed to make and where the safe parking spaces are. We also do background checks of the transport companies and the staff".

It's not just the tobacco sector that is susceptible to theft. Ahlers also has customers in the electronics, fashion, sportswear, and semiconductor sector. "Toothpaste and shampoo, for example, are less valuable, but these products are prone to theft and are easily traded on the black market," adds Theeuwes. "The question remains how much the customer is ultimately prepared to pay for security. We work mainly for international companies, who do not want to suffer damage to their brand image by being linked to transport crime, theft, let alone incidents of violent hijackings. They, too, support our transport security solution".

Ahlers still sees growth opportunities with other customers, such as alcohol producers. "Excise goods add to the complexity, but that specialization sits in our DNA. We follow the customs legislation country by country. That makes it complex, but also interesting for our employees to put their teeth into".

## About Ahlers - [www.ahlers.com/en](http://www.ahlers.com/en)

Founded in 1909 in the Port of Antwerp, Ahlers currently employs over 650 members of staff and operates in 3 regions (Europe, CIS, Asia) helping customers to drive future growth in complex markets, Ahlers is a family-owned company, 3rd generation Ahlers-Leysen, headquartered in Antwerp, Belgium, supported by a worldwide partner network and offices in key locations. We enable our customers to stay focused on their core business by creating and managing innovative solutions that add value and solve their supply chain challenges in complex markets.