



New Ways

Nº 2 2025



New crane improves service

New opportunities
for container shipping

Successful procurement in
a volatile transport market

Correct loading is a puzzle
with many pieces

An exciting future awaits!

When I wrote my last editorial at the end of 2024, we were hoping for an economic upturn in 2025. This proved not to be the case. Instead, new external factors seem to constantly appear that have a negative impact on us.

The big news during the first six months of the year has undoubtedly been the trade war so vigorously launched against virtually every country in the world by the United States, alongside its stated desire to reduce its military commitments in Europe.

Another significant issue is Europe's weak performance economically and with regard to the green transition. It is becoming increasingly clear that significantly increased bureaucracy, taxes and regulation are not the answer to the challenges facing Europe.

On the positive side, the realisation is beginning to sink in that we in Europe need to take greater responsibility for our own economic development and the defence of our fantastic part of the world. Perhaps, in the end, something positive will come of it?

During a study visit to Morocco in the spring, I was struck by the positive developments in the country. While still lagging somewhat behind developed countries, they are developing rapidly.

We saw many construction cranes, as they are building housing, developing industrial acceleration zones and constructing major solar and wind parks to produce cheap green energy, linked to the national hydrogen strategy and electricity-intensive sectors. They are building roads and railways and supporting investment in new industries and tourism. In 2030, Morocco will co-host the 2030 FIFA World Cup.

It is splendid to see and hear such belief in the future in this part of the world. This is a positive development that is flying under the radar for many of us, who mainly hear gloomy news from around the world. Perhaps this part of Africa will eventually become a new growth engine of considerably greater dimensions than we can foresee today?

In any event, seeing this development certainly gave me a welcome boost. One can imagine how many forest products, metals, etc. will be needed to build this continent and its future industries and consumption, things we have in abundance in Sweden. So, our future jobs in logistics seem likely to be secured!

With that, I would like to conclude by wishing all of our customers, employees and partners a very happy summer.

Kind regards,

Magnus Svensson
President SCA Sourcing & Logistics



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New arrangement streamlines shipments to the United States

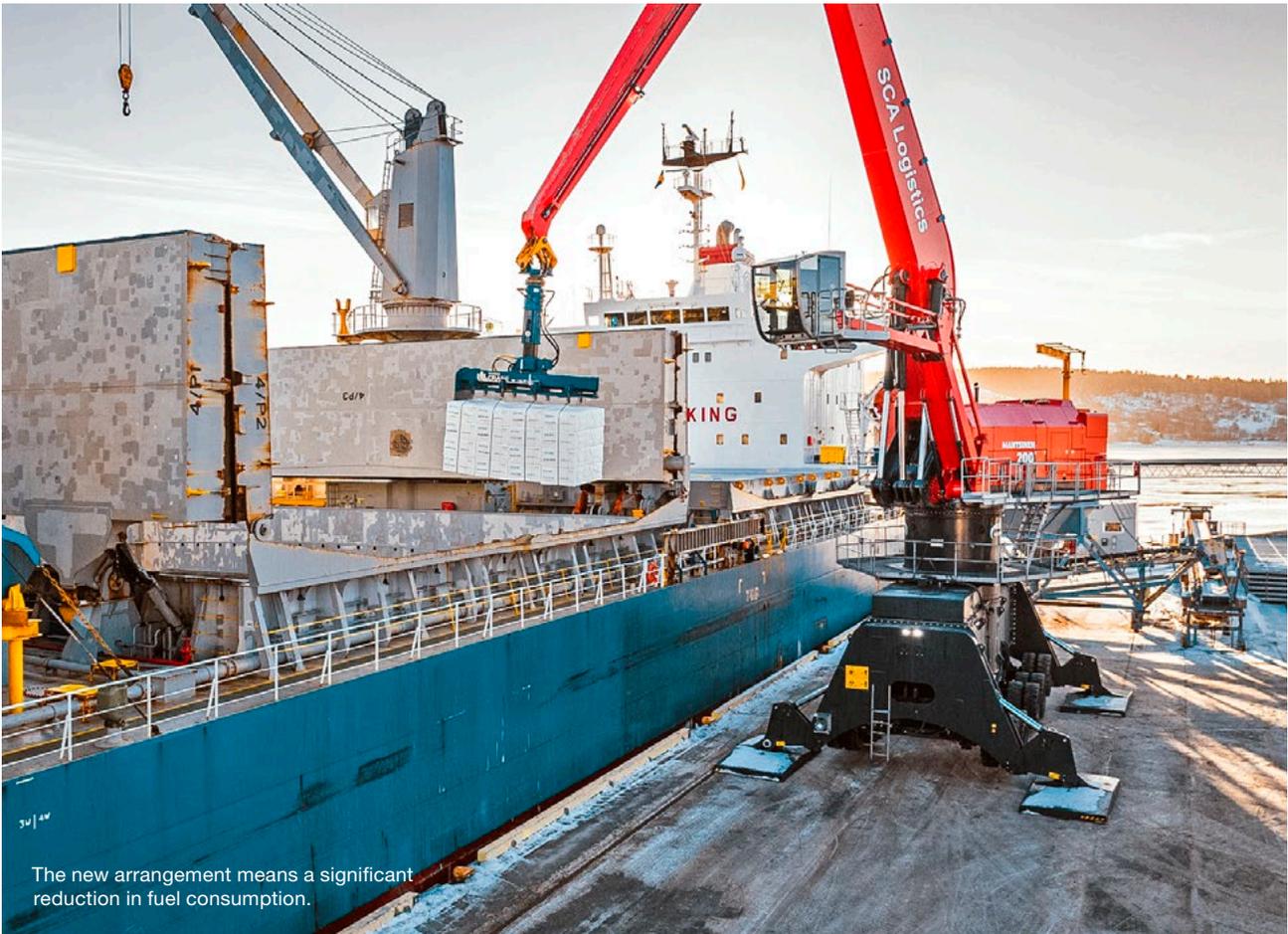
Since the start of this year, SCA Logistics has had a new arrangement for shipping cargo to the United States. By consolidating sawn timber products, kraftliner and pulp cargoes from the Sundsvall terminal, much larger vessels can be used. “This arrangement has significant economic and environmental advantages. This is possible thanks to the considerable investments we have made in the Sundsvall terminal over recent years,” says Terminal Manager Dennis Melarti.

Text: Kerstin Olofsson. **Photo:** Håkan Sjödin.

SCA sells large volumes of sawn timber products, kraftliner and pulp to the United States. Previously, sawn timber products were shipped from the Port of Rundvik close to SCA’s Rundvik Sawmill, kraftliner from Umeå and Sundsvall, and pulp from Sundsvall. Now, all of these products are consolidated at the terminal in Sundsvall. “This means that we can use much larger vessels, which is crucial to the cost per tonne. The vessels we now use can be loaded with around 30,000 tonnes, while the vessels we used previously could be loaded with around 14,000 to 18,000 tonnes,” says Dennis.

Significant environmental benefits

Roughly calculated, doubling cargo volume reduces fuel consumption per transported tonne by approximately 30 per cent. “While in this case we do not always reach double the cargo volume, we are not far off. This means a significant reduction of fuel consumption that is not only vital from an economic perspective but also with regard to the environment and climate,” says Dennis. The new arrangement involves hauling timber products by road from Rundvik to Sundsvall, while kraftliner is shipped by SCA Logistics’ own RoRo vessels from Umeå to Sundsvall.



The new arrangement means a significant reduction in fuel consumption.



Investment provides opportunities

Shipping company Norden provides the vessels that transport the products to the United States. It is estimated that there will be 10 departures this year. The first vessel, the 183-metre-long and 30-metre-wide Amstel Confidence, was loaded in February. “It wouldn’t have been possible for a vessel of this size to call at the port without the considerable investments we have made in the terminal over recent years. We have constructed a new container port, new warehousing and the deepest quay on the Gulf of Bothnia. Even if we don’t load the US vessel in the container port, we can move other vessels there to make larger areas and greater capacity available to us,” says Dennis. Vessels are loaded with dual cranes: a knuckle boom crane that loads the side closest to the quay and a rail-mounted crane that loads the far side.

Stored under cover

While the new arrangement for shipments to the United States has demanded considerable preparation at the Sundsvall terminal, everything has gone smoothly. “In a short time, we managed to adjust to the increased volumes, coordinate with other traffic and solve issues related to warehousing, marshalling, equipment and staffing. The need to store sawn timber products from Rundvik under cover was an additional challenge, but one we were able to meet,” says Dennis. SCA Logistics has made a number of investments in equipment, including a new knuckle boom crane. See separate article.



“It wouldn’t have been possible for a vessel of this size to call at the port without the considerable investments we have made in the terminal over recent years.”

Dennis Melarti
SCA Logistics Terminal Manager in Sundsvall



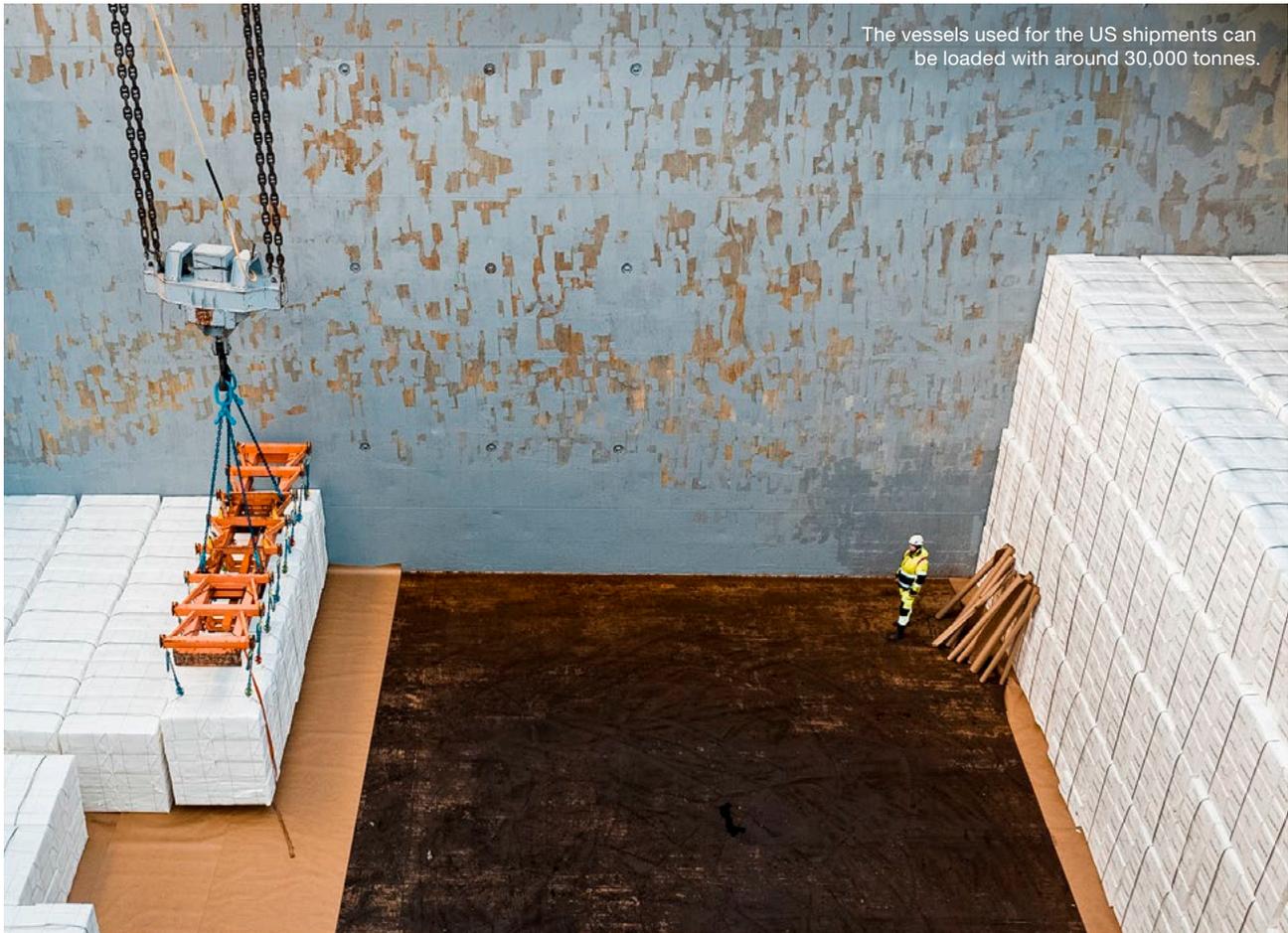
“This will both streamline and quality assure administration.”

Ellenor Nordborg
Head of Forwarding at SCA Logistics



“It is vital that the forest industry in northern Sweden does not fall behind in competitiveness in global markets.”

Magnus Svensson
President SCA Sourcing and Logistics



The vessels used for the US shipments can be loaded with around 30,000 tonnes.

Calling at four ports

Vessels will call at three to four ports in the United States: Port Arthur in Texas, Fernandina Beach in Florida, Philadelphia in Pennsylvania and Searsport in Maine.

“When sawn timber products were shipped directly from Rundvik on a smaller vessel, aside from some containers bound for Houston, most were unloaded in Philadelphia. We can now unload sawn timber products at several different ports closer to our customers,” says Ellenor Nordborg, Forwarding Manager at SCA Logistics. The terminals at Port Arthur and Fernandina Beach will be integrated with SCA Logistics’ data systems, so that information can be transferred via these rather than by email. “This will both streamline and quality assure administration. Among other things, the terminals will receive information via the system concerning the products on the docked vessels and whether and how customers want them delivered. In turn, the terminals will report on which cargo they have delivered and when via the data system,” says Ellenor.

Volumes are a key issue

The global development towards using larger and larger vessels is unmistakable. “US and Asian forest companies have long shipped on large vessels at lower costs. Naturally, it is vital that the forest industry in northern Sweden does not fall behind in competitiveness in global markets, even if the dominant volumes are sold to Europe,” says Magnus Svensson, President of SCA Sourcing and Logistics, who points out that progress is unavoidable and that what may

well have been a good arrangement 10 to 15 years ago is now second-rate. “The key issue is whether one can consolidate sufficiently large volumes and have ports that can handle larger volumes and larger vessels.”

15-metre-deep quay

The Sundsvall terminal can accommodate much larger vessels than those currently operating the US route. “Our quay is 15 metres deep and can accommodate vessels with a capacity of around 70,000 tonnes. While we don’t ship these kinds of volumes from here at present, it does mean that we have the conditions to, for example, consolidate cargoes with other companies located around the Gulf of Bothnia and Baltic Sea. By first loading vessels in a shallower port and then doing the final loading in Sundsvall, with its capacity for really heavy vessels, we can offer incredibly efficient shipping,” says Dennis.

Smart shipping arrangement strengthens Rundvik Sawmill

A new shipping arrangement to the United States has major benefits for Rundvik Sawmill. “This significantly reduces our transport costs while at the same time providing access to more ports, thus bringing us closer to our customers. This will be an amazing improvement for us,” says Sawmill Manager Magnus Karlsson.

Text: Kerstin Olofsson. **Photo:** SCA, Adobe Stock.

SCA manufactures solid wood products in both spruce and pine at the Rundvik Sawmill, which is located roughly 60 kilometres southwest of Umeå in northern Sweden. While the sawmill has customers all over the world – including China, Southeast Asia, Scandinavia and the rest of Europe – its largest single customer is based in the United States: Home Depot, the gigantic multinational home improvement chain, buys between one quarter and one third of Rundvik’s annual production.

“We’ve been doing business with Home Depot since 1997 and as their supplier we are responsible for ensuring that they always have access to our products. We have built up a system of 12 distribution centres in the south and east of the United States, including Detroit, Atlanta and Dallas. We are responsible for maintaining a certain stock level, so that the stores can collect the goods they need,” says Magnus.



“Being able to ship our solid wood products together with pulp and kraftliner means savings in many different aspects.”

Magnus Karlsson
Sawmill Manager at Rundvik Sawmill

Major savings

Given this supplier responsibility, reliable logistics are obviously vital so that stock levels can be maintained at the agreed levels. Another important parameter is that logistics are cost-effective. “As it’s a long way from Rundvik to the United States, transport accounts for a significant percentage of total costs. Being able to ship our solid wood products together with pulp and kraftliner means savings in many different aspects, says Magnus.

Closer to the customer

Previously, Rundvik’s products were mainly shipped to the Port of Philadelphia on smaller break-bulk vessels. Some volume has also been shipped to Houston in containers. All products are now shipped on large break-bulk vessels that call at four US ports. “We unload solid wood products at three ports located close to our distribution centres. Having access to more ports significantly reduces the distance to several of our distribution centres, thus reducing transport costs,” says Magnus.

Lower emissions

This arrangement has major environmental benefits, as it significantly reduces fuel consumption per tonne shipped. “While the new arrangement admittedly involves transporting timber products by road from Rundvik to Sundsvall, this is more than adequately compensated for by reduced fuel



The logistics need to be highly reliable to ensure that the agreed inventory levels are consistently maintained.



SCA has a supply responsibility, ensuring that Home Depot always has access to their products and that a certain inventory level is maintained.

consumption for shipping. It also reduces the distance of road haulage in the US,” says Magnus. “That said, we’re constantly working to further reduce our emissions, so at the moment we are exploring other possibilities for land transport in Sweden.”

Fantastic solution

Cost-effective transportation is the key to profitability in the highly competitive global market for timber products. “This new arrangement for transport in the US creates new opportunities for us. It is vital that we have a competent logistics function that looks at the big picture and creates solutions that benefit the entire company,” concludes Magnus.

Rundvik Sawmill

The main product of Rundvik Sawmill is solid wood products in spruce, although it also produces a smaller quantity of pine products. Home Depot buys planed timber products in spruce that are mainly used in fine woodworking. The raw material is sourced from slow growth forests in northern Sweden. Slow growth produces high-quality timber with small knots, which is highly sought-after by customers.

New opportunities for container shipping

Beginning in April this year, SCA Logistics will procure all container transport directly from shipping companies. This will strengthen relationships with suppliers, improves control over the logistics chain and pave the way for the future development of the company's logistics solutions – both for its own operations and for customers such as SCA Wood.

Text: Håkan Norberg. **Photo:** Adobe Stock.



Andreas Hamm, Commercial Manager, Marine at SCA Logistics, has been instrumental in developing the new strategy for container transport.

“Previously, our procurement has been a mixture of freight forwarders and shipping companies, which can sometimes create conflicts of interest. By doing it this way we obtain clearer business terms and better control over volumes.”

According to Andreas, the change facilitates a more long-term, development-oriented collaboration with container shipping companies, especially given SCA Logistics’ container port in Sundsvall. And the benefits of long-term container traffic from Sundsvall are not only economic but also environmental, as the alternative is to transport the timber by truck to a port further south.

Shipping companies and customers welcome the change

For shipping companies, the change means a more predictable business relationship.

“They see this as something positive. We have become more stringent in our purchasing strategy and can offer clearer and more long-term partnerships. Our purchasing power has been strengthened, not necessarily through increased volumes, but through greater clarity and structure,” says Andreas.

Markus Henningsson, Vice President Marketing & Sales at SCA Wood, comments on the change from a customer perspective, emphasising that logistics is a key competitive factor for SCA Wood, whose products are relatively bulky in relation to their value.

“Having a competitive logistics solution is crucial to our profitability. It will be interesting to see how this change can further strengthen service and pricing,” he says.

Future collaboration beyond simply transportation

The new model also offers greater opportunities to improve processes, booking systems, cost monitoring and deviation management.

“We will have better opportunities to develop our services,” says Andreas. “For example, we can reuse empty import containers to a greater extent and have a more coordinated dialogue with shipping companies about the entire business.”

The ambition is to establish long-term regular container traffic to and from both Sundsvall and Umeå, further increasing accessibility and capacity.



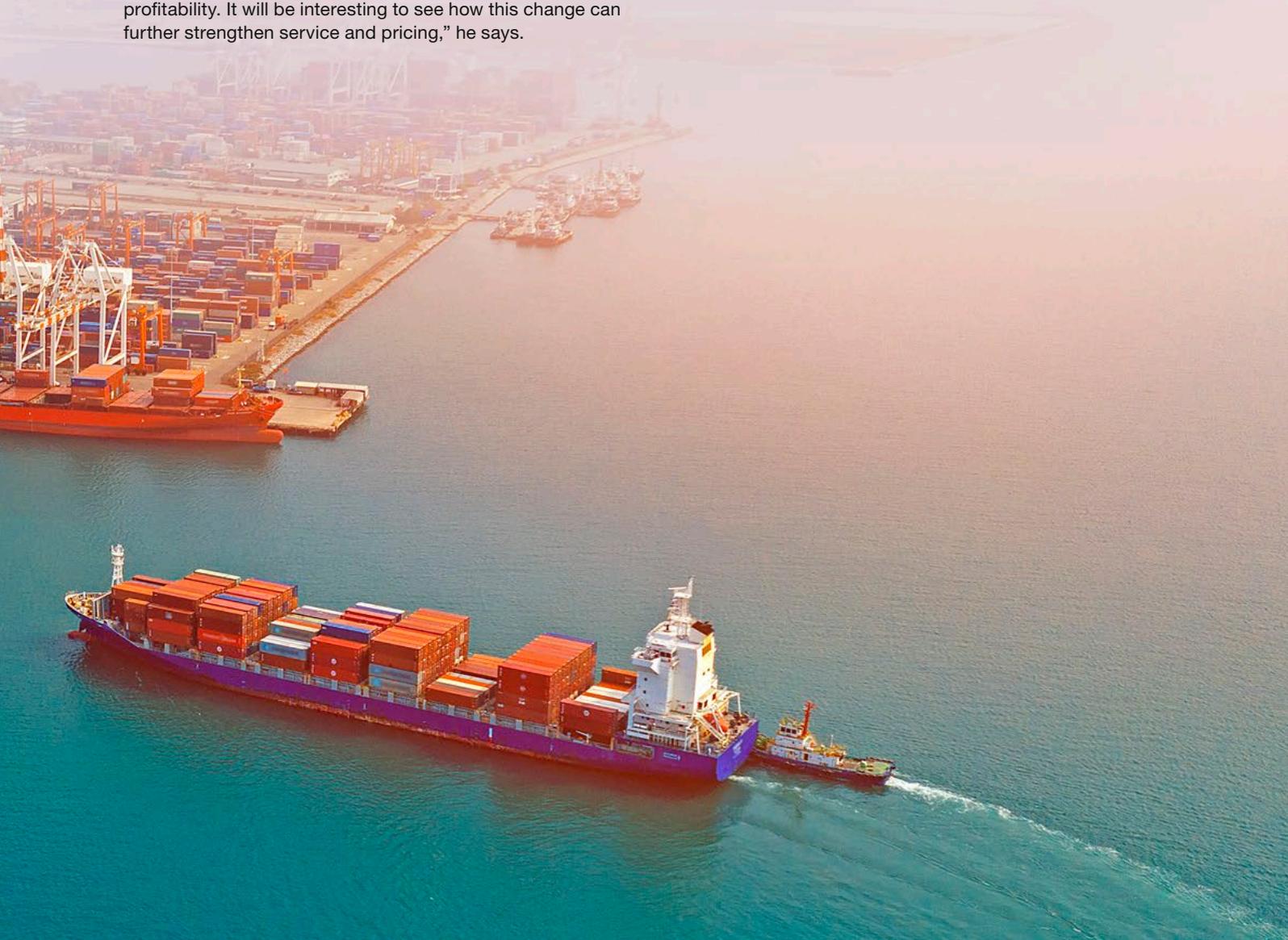
“We can offer clearer and more long-term partnerships.”

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Commercial Manager,
Marine at SCA Logistics



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Markus Henningsson
Vice President Marketing
& Sales at SCA Wood



Successful procurement in a volatile transport market

SCA Logistics continuously procures transport services for its shipments of timber products, pulp and containerboard to meet the demand for efficient logistics and sustainability. Lotta Åkre, Commercial Manager at SCA Logistics, is responsible for these processes.

“We have now concluded this round of procurements and, despite a highly volatile market, we have achieved a good result,” she says.

Text: Håkan Norberg. **Photo:** SCA, Håkan Sjödin.





The procurement of rail transport has presented particular challenges.



SCA Logistics has awarded all contracts, for various modes of transport, in this round of procurements.

SCA Logistics has conducted a number of parallel procurement processes for various modes of transport and with different time horizons. All contracts in this round have now been awarded.

The contract for road haulage of timber products in Scandinavia was concluded just before the turn of the year. SCA Logistics has developed a structured work process in close collaboration with SCA's sawmills.

"For example, we have prepared a year wheel planner for activities that allows us to refine our communication concerning procurement both internally and externally," explains Lotta.

New procurement tools streamline work

To meet the challenges associated with large volumes of tenders, and to increase efficiency, SCA Logistics is testing new digital tools, including TenderEasy for road haulage in England.

"Having previously used TenderEasy for container transport, we have now tested the tool on road transport as well," says Lotta.

The solution best suited to a given context depends on volumes and market conditions, as needs vary depending on the market and customer requirements.

In addition to TenderEasy, SCA Logistics also uses systems such as C-Load and TI Contract to manage its procurement. These digital solutions help manage the extensive tender materials submitted for the transport of timber products, paper and pulp in Scandinavia and the rest of Europe, where large numbers of routes and tenders must be processed.



"The transport market is highly susceptible to fluctuations in the economy."

Lotta Åkre
Commercial Manager
at SCA Logistics

"We receive tens of thousands of tenders, so these tools are invaluable for distributing RFQs and managing that amount of data," says Lotta.

Rail transport under pressure

SCA logistics faces particular challenges with regard to rail transport.

"There are only a few market actors and increased infrastructure charges are pushing up costs. The operator Green Cargo is experiencing major problems and has closed several lines, including some routes that we have been using," explains Lotta.

She describes the situation as complex, as the difficulties railways have in providing stable transport run counter to the environmental goals that both politicians and SCA Logistics' customers are striving for.

"It's difficult to choose rail when quality is negatively impacted. We are therefore reviewing the alternatives," says Lotta.

Volatile markets demand flexibility

SCA Logistics works with different types of contracts in the United States and Europe. While procurement in Europe usually covers one-year contracts, procurement in the US is done on a quarterly basis.

"The US market is more volatile, and it can be difficult to foresee what prices will look like in a year," explains Lotta, who emphasises the importance of finding a balance in pricing. "If prices are too low, we risk lacking capacity, while if they are too high, we may lose competitiveness."

By working with flexible contract structures, SCA Logistics can adapt to changing market conditions in both the US and Europe, and the process is optimised by using effective digital tools and a structured approach.

"The transport market is highly susceptible to fluctuations in the economy. Right now, the situation is complex, with geopolitical unrest, new tariffs and customs duties and high cost pressures on haulage companies," says Lotta. "Through our procurement processes, we have succeeded in securing transport services that meet our quality and sustainability requirements while at the same time responding to market changes."

Electric buses from China to Sweden present logistics puzzle

Some 80 electric buses are on their way from China to Söderhamn in an example of precision logistics with the emphasis on sustainability, efficiency and collaboration. Norwegian company Tangen Shipping is in charge of the project and has entrusted SCA Logistics with transportation from Rotterdam to Iggesund. “SCA Logistics fulfils a vital function as the only company offering regular maritime transportation to this part of Sweden,” says Nils Christian Øvrum at Tangen Shipping.

Text: Håkan Norberg. **Photo:** Eurobus.





The buses will enter service as part of the Hälsingland county's investment in electric public transport.

The buses are being imported by Eurobus Nordic of Porsgrunn, southern Norway, on behalf of Mohlins Bussar. On delivery, the vehicles will go into service as public transport in Hälsingland.

The electric buses are manufactured in China, from where they are shipped to the Port of Antwerp before being transported to SCA Logistics' associated terminal in Rotterdam on trailers. From there, they are shipped to the Port of Iggesund in Sweden and then driven the 50 kilometres to their final destination, Söderhamn. Nils Christian Øvrum at Tangen Shipping has assembled the transport chain.

"The less we need to drive the buses before they enter service the better. The alternative was to ship them to the Wallhamn vehicle port in Gothenburg and then drive them all the way cross-country," says Øvrum.

Lengthy experience of maritime transportation

Nils Christian Øvrum has been running Tangen Shipping since 2000 and he has many years of experience of international shipping, including products for the oil industry and buses destined for the Scandinavian market.

"I have delivered between 400 and 500 buses to Denmark and Norway over recent years. These days they are exclusively electric buses. That's the future," says Øvrum.

The collaboration with SCA Logistics took shape when Øvrum was searching for a suitable maritime route to northern Sweden. He recalled SCA from previous

assignments in the wood processing industry and contacted Sandra Lindroos, Sales representative at SCA Logistics.

"We had a good dialogue and she was able to offer a solution that was ideal for this project," says Øvrum.

Challenging weather conditions in the Indian Ocean

SCA Logistics guaranteed space for ten buses on each departure from Rotterdam, meaning eight shipments in all. The first cargo was scheduled to be loaded on 1 June, arriving in Iggesund on 5 June, but weather conditions have delayed the schedule.

"There has been bad weather in the southern Indian Ocean, close to Madagascar, and when things get out of phase it has a domino effect. Still, we are aiming to deliver the first shipment between Rotterdam and Iggesund during the first half of June," says Øvrum.

Maritime transportation with enormous potential

Øvrum is positive about the project and future possibilities.

"This is a great transport solution for us. The capacity of SCA Logistics for third-party logistics has enormous potential as an alternative for sustainable transport to Norrland," he notes.

On arrival at Iggesund, the buses have only a short journey to Söderhamn, where they will enter service as part of the municipality's investment in electric public transport; a tangible step in the green transition made possible by a well-coordinated global logistics collaboration.

New crane improves service at the Sundsvall terminal

SCA Logistics has invested in a new mobile crane for its Sundsvall terminal, a Mantsinen 200. This means that the terminal can now offer even better service. “We already have one crane of the same model, now that we have two we can load large vessels more effectively.” says Tommy Berglund, Head of Operations at SCA Logistics in Sundsvall.

Text: Kerstin Olofsson. **Photo:** Håkan Sjödin.

The new crane, a Mantsinen 200, was shipped from Rauma in Finland. It reached land after a 12-hour voyage across the Gulf of Bothnia.



Investing in a new crane has multiple benefits. First and foremost, it increases both capacity and flexibility. “The time a vessel spends on the quay loading or unloading will be significantly shorter when we can use two cranes at once. We will also be able to receive two larger vessels at the same time and use one crane for each. Previously, the second vessel would have had to wait while the first vessel received service,” says Tommy.

Increased safety

The new crane will also improve safety and the work environment. Among other things, the crane is equipped with a safety system that eliminates the risk of equipment such as beams striking the cab. The crane also has an overload alarm so that the operator can work efficiently and safely. There are also new functions that allow the operator to adjust settings for various tools via a computer in the cab. “Different tools require different hydraulic pressure and in older cranes you need to manually adjust pressure reducing valves on the attachment. Now this can be done with a few keystrokes on a computer. The work environment in the cab is also better in general,” says Jonny Strömståhl, Head of Planning and Warehouse.



“The time a vessel spends on the quay loading or unloading will be significantly shorter.”

Tommy Berglund
Head of Operations at SCA
Logistics in Sundsvall



“The new crane is one more step in increasing our productivity and service level.”

Jonny Strömståhl
Head of Planning and Warehouse
at SCA Logistics in Sundsvall

Easier maintenance

Another benefit of the investment is that it will be easier to plan maintenance of the cranes.

“We can now service one crane while the other is loading and unloading large vessels. This will make it easier to maintain a service schedule, which is vital if equipment is to last as long as possible,” says Jonny.

More freely suspended attachments

The crane is equipped with Stevenel attachments and can lift six units of pulp bales weighing a total of 12 tonnes. The attachment itself weighs around four tonnes. “This is a new type of pulp handling attachment that is more freely suspended and we therefore expect it withstand impact better,” says Jonny.

Equipped for the future

SCA has invested almost SEK 460 million in the Sundsvall terminal over recent years, including a new container port and new marshalling areas. “The new crane is one more step in increasing our productivity and service level. We are well-equipped to handle the increased volumes of cargo in our region,” concludes Jonny.



Watch a video of the new crane arriving to the Sundsvall terminal.



Regular service to Szczecin

Growing demand for SCA products has prompted SCA Logistics to resume regular services to Szczecin in Poland. “It’s a cost-effective route for our deliveries to Poland and the rest of Eastern Europe,” says Lotta Åkre, Commercial Manager at SCA Logistics. The vessel sails once a month from Sundsvall to Szczecin. SCA Logistics delivers products to customers throughout Eastern Europe from the warehouse in Szczecin.

Text: Håkan Norberg. Photo: Adobe Stock.



Taking the temperature of the industry at Breakbulk Europe

Breakbulk Europe is one of the world's largest trade fairs for breakbulk and project cargoes. SCA Logistics was in Rotterdam to take part and meet an industry facing considerable uncertainty.

“There was a great deal of discussion about geopolitical tensions, threatened industrial action and tariffs that change from one day to the next. This obviously creates uncertainty in the market,” says Mikael Toft, Sourcing Manager, Logistics.

Text: Håkan Norberg. **Photo:** SCA.

The Breakbulk Europe event in Rotterdam is a forum for the logistics and transport sector, with the focus on breakbulk and project cargoes. This year's event was held in May and SCA logistics was in attendance to meet business partners and to network.

“It's a really good trade fair that attracts exhibitors and visitors from around the world. We can meet virtually all of the suppliers associated with the services we offer,” says Sourcing Manager Mikael Toft, who attended the event in Rotterdam.

Meetings come thick and fast

Exhibitors represented every part of the logistics industry, including shipping companies, terminals, agents and brokers. Mikael and his colleagues took the opportunity to meet SCA Logistics' suppliers, both spontaneously and in booked meetings.

“Attending Breakbulk Europe saves us five or ten trips to take individual meetings,” he explains.

Mikael describes the trade fair as a chance to take the temperature of the market, giving attendees a feel for the state of the industry.

“My impression is that shipping companies are facing a fairly weak market right now, that it is a little sluggish. Vehicle sales are down, for example, which is having a knock-on effect on the steel industry, something that has a significant impact on shipping companies,” he says.

Uncertainty on the world market

Geopolitical uncertainty was also a hot topic in Rotterdam, as was US trade policy.

“By imposing and suspending tariffs, the Trump administration is creating enormous uncertainty. No-one knows how to act from one week to the next when tariffs can suddenly be imposed on a given type of cargo from a particular market.

“There is also a proposal on the table to charge Chinese vessels additional fees for calling at US ports from the autumn. If introduced, this will have a significant impact on both bulk and container vessels. It's a real mess.”

Mikael sees considerable worth in Breakbulk Europe and has already circled next year's date.

“It's a great opportunity to take the temperature of the industry and I really enjoy the opportunity to meet so many people in one place. We'll certainly be back in 2026!”



Ahoy Rotterdam hosts Breakbulk Europe, one of the world's largest trade fairs for project cargo.



Correct loading is a puzzle with many pieces

Loading a break-bulk vessel is like piecing together a complicated jigsaw puzzle, and planning is vital to ensure that as much cargo as possible can be accommodated. Meanwhile, consideration must be given to the order cargo is to be unloaded and to distributing weight so that neither loading nor unloading adversely affects the vessel's seaworthiness. "It takes teamwork to make sure everything runs smoothly," says Tommy Berglund, Head of Operations at SCA Logistics' Sundsvall terminal.

Text: Kerstin Olofsson. **Photo:** SCA, Per-Anders Sjöquist, Foreside Photography.

Work on the stowage plan begins long before the vessel arrives at the quay, and many aspects need to be considered: How large is the vessel? How wide is the cargo hold and what shape is it? What is the distance from the waterline to the highest point of the vessel? What cargo needs to be loaded and where will it be unloaded?

"These are just some of the questions that we need to take into consideration when planning how and in which order to load cargo, and what equipment and personnel we need," says Tommy.

To calculate how best to load cargo, each vessel has its own load template. These take into account both space optimisation and safety.

Challenging angles

Generally speaking, the cargoes that need to be loaded are not uniform in either dimensions or weight.

"Even when we load pulp bales, which are one of our regular cargo types, the bales have different dimensions depending on the quality of the pulp. This makes the whole thing that much more complex. Sometimes there will already

be cargo onboard as well, in which case we need to adapt accordingly," says Tommy.

The easiest thing is if the vessel is empty when it arrives on the quay and has a box-shaped cargo hold. But there will usually be some angles, or part of the tank might be sticking up somewhere in the cargo hold.

"Not only that, but the hull is often angled inwards slightly at the top, meaning that cranes are unable to place cargo up against the hull. Then we need to lift a wheel loader on board to move the cargo to the correct place," explains Erik Johansson, Team Leader at SCA Logistics' Umeå terminal.



"Even when we load pulp bales, which are one of our regular cargo types, the bales have different dimensions depending on the quality of the pulp."

Tommy Berglund
Head of Operations at SCA Logistics





“Unloading cargo at the various ports will affect the vessel’s balance. The weight must not be so unevenly distributed that the vessel can’t sail on.”

Erik Johansson
Team Leader at SCA Logistic’s Umeå

Even weight distribution

Loading is planned in consultation with the chief mate and the ship’s agent.

“The most efficient way to load the vessel from our point of view might not work for that type of vessel. For example, most vessels have several different hatches, and we need to consult regarding which cargo to place in which hatch and how to organise the work,” says Tommy.

It is not usually possible to fill the hold under one hatch at a time, as this would mean the vessel would have an uneven load. Loading must be planned to ensure that weight is evenly distributed while working.

“At the same time, we want to minimise the number of times we have to move cranes and other equipment, so we can work as efficiently as possible. We also need to take into account that it’s only possible to open a certain number of hatches at one time,” explains Tommy.

Planning for the route

Another important factor that needs to be considered is the destinations the vessel will be calling at to unload cargo. It is important that the cargo that is to be unloaded first is not blocked by other cargo.

“It’s also important to keep an eye on how unloading cargo at the various ports will affect the vessel’s balance. The weight must not be so unevenly distributed that the vessel can’t sail on,” says Erik.

Even if all cargo is to be unloaded in the same port, advance planning is a must. This applies to the vessels that sail regularly from SCA Logistics’ Umeå terminal to Alexandria in Egypt. These vessels carry solid wood products destined for a large number of customers.

“This often involves 15 to 20 customers who are each responsible for unloading their own cargo in Egypt. This means that we need to sort the cargo so that everything belonging to a given customer is in one place. As there are so many different customers involved, this becomes fairly complicated,” says Erik.

Communication is the be-all and end-all

Ensuring the optimal loading of a vessel demands good communication between sawmills and other industries, ship’s agents, ship’s officers and SCA Logistics team leaders. “Communication is the be-all and end-all when it comes to working efficiently and smoothly with as few interruptions as possible. It is also the key to being able to work safely – and that is the most important issue of all,” says Tommy.

With so many machines in motion, so many employees involved and all the heavy lifting, there are a great many risky moments during loading. “We always perform a risk assessment before loading begins. We look at everything from fall protection and good lighting to ensuring that the descent into the cargo area is safe. We also hold a meeting each morning with everyone involved to go through safety issues and the plan for the day,” says Tommy.

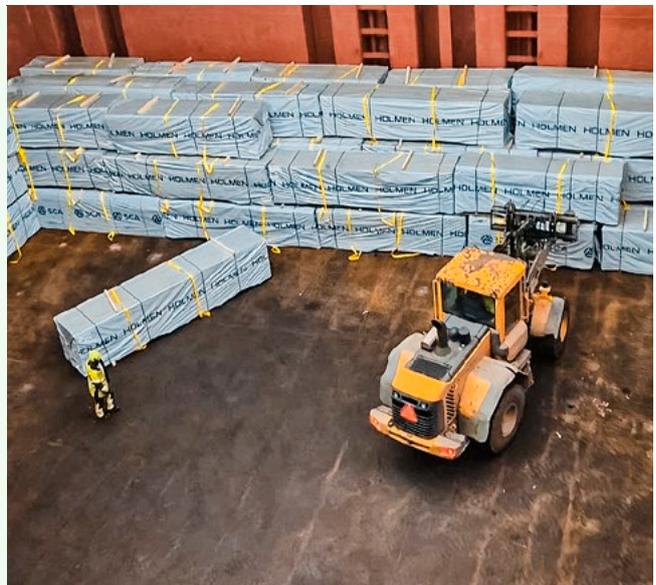
Taking care of cargo

Protecting cargo during handling is another key issue.

“It’s important to work calmly and methodically, without stress. We also check equipment such as clamping devices and forks every day to ensure that they have no defects that could cause damage. And then it’s vital that everyone has the basic attitude that we take responsibility and take care of the cargo. It must be in good condition when it reaches the customer,” concludes Erik.

Wheel loaders stow goods in place

The hull on many vessels is angled inwards at the top. This means that the cranes cannot place the goods up against the hull in the cargo hold; instead, a wheel loader must be lifted on board to stow the goods in place. This called truck loading. In the case of timber products, as seen in this photograph, the wheel loader can reach to stack timber packets three high. Once the three layers are placed against the hull, the wheel loader is lifted out of the ship while the rest of the hold is loaded by crane. Thick plates are then placed over the timber packets so that the wheel loader can be lifted back in and stow the timber packages on the next layer without damaging the cargo underneath.





To calculate how to load the cargo, so-called load templates are used, which take into account both space optimization and safety for each specific vessel.

SCA Logistics mitigates the impact of industrial action in Swedish ports

The Swedish Dockworkers Union called members out on strike at the end of May. Industrial action, which is ongoing at the time of writing (3 June), is affecting some 15 ports in Sweden, including SCA Logistics' terminals in Sundsvall and Umeå. "While we are working to minimise the impact on our customers, a strike always involves some disruption," says Peter Gyllroth, HR Manager at SCA Logistics.

Text: Håkan Norberg. **Photo:** Linda Snell.

The Swedish Dockworkers' Union issued a strike notice in May and on 21 May its members downed tools from noon until 6 pm. The strike affected some 15 ports in Sweden, including SCA Logistics' terminals in Sundsvall and Umeå. Industrial action has continued from late May and into June in the form of both selective and broader strikes.

"When a strike notice is issued, we analyse the situation to understand the implications of any industrial action, says Peter. "After that, planning and communication are vital. We talk to our terminals, freight forwarders and customers to minimise disruption to operations to the greatest possible extent. Because there will be disruption."

One of two unions is on strike

Industrial action by the Swedish Dockworkers' Union involves day-long strikes, overtime bans and notices prohibiting recruitment and the use of agency staff. Meanwhile, the Swedish Transport Workers' Union, the other trade union organising workers in Swedish ports, has signed a collective agreement with employer organisation Ports of Sweden.

"The fact that a new agreement is in place means that we have access to personnel who are members of the Swedish Transport Workers' Union and those who are not members of a trade union," says Peter.



Dennis Melarti, Terminal Manager in Sundsvall (centre), talking to co-workers at the port.

Industrial action by members of the Swedish Dockworkers' Union left Dennis Melarti, Terminal Manager in Sundsvall, needing to find answers to a number of questions: "How much work can we move? Can we adjust departure times for our vessels? What can we get done before industrial action and what can we put off until afterwards? And how can we make the most of our limited resources?"

Emphasis on customer production

Dennis describes a situation in which long-term planning becomes more day-by-day, adapting to ensure that work does not grind to a halt. Anything to minimise the impact on SCA Logistics' customers. "We received early notice of a ban on new recruitment, so we decided to employ our temporary summer personnel a few weeks early, before the ban came into effect. Although this leaves us overstaffed at times, it means that we are better equipped to cope with industrial action."

"We have a responsibility to serve our customers as far as possible. If we are unable to load their products, the production line will grind to a halt, as warehousing is located in our ports in Sundsvall and Umeå," explains Peter. "It's a matter of finding solutions and cooperating to keep our customers' products moving," concludes Dennis.



"We talk to our terminals, freight forwarders and customers to minimise disruption to operations to the greatest possible extent. Because there will be disruption."

Peter Gyllroth
HR Manager at SCA Logistics



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