



 **FORWARD**
BELGIUM

ANNUAL REPORT

2021

FORWARD BELGIUM COMMITTEES

Various committees are active within FORWARD Belgium where members are able to discuss all kinds of current topics. An overview of the various committees can be found [here](#).

You can find a selection here of some of the themes discussed in these committees in 2021 ...

Maritime Transport Committee

In recent weeks reports have reached us that bookings made by freight forwarders are no longer being accepted by Hamburg Süd.

We have confirmed that colleagues are also confronted with this problem at foreign ports.

This situation comes as no surprise, given Maersk's long-standing strategy to control the entire logistics chain as a 'container integrator'.

The historic profits that this shipping company has recorded over the past two years, in times of **complete disruption** of the **global maritime chain**, have enabled it to **integrate** extensively into the **logistics chain** through acquisitions.

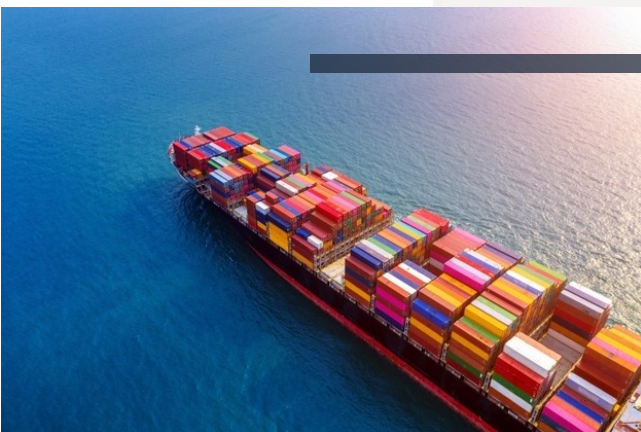
These acquisitions, of freight forwarding companies, customs agents and logistics service providers, mean Maersk is no longer profiling itself as a mere provider of ocean transport.


This development has not escaped FORWARD Belgium's notice. For several years now we have been calling on our sector to reflect on its own added value by investing in digitisation, sustainable logistics solutions and other innovations to be in a position to face down 'external market forces'.

CMA CGM spent around six billion euros in recent months on acquisitions of freight forwarders, container terminals, an intercontinental air cargo fleet, an e-

commerce platform with direct access to a hundred thousand new customers around the world. Moreover, they funded the deals out of their own pockets.

Amazon has been chartering cargo ships and intercontinental air freight for some time, building its own shipping containers, etc. Amazon has been working for years to establish its own logistics strategy and network. Not so much to reduce costs, but to reduce dependence on logistics service providers.





Amazon has set up its own ocean freight forwarding business through a Chinese subsidiary. That service accounts for 10,000 ocean containers between China and the US each month. This puts it in the top five on ocean freight forwarders in that market.

Let's not forget that shippers today are still confronted with high sea freight, additional costs due to disruptions in the maritime chain, lack of ship capacity and containers, delays in their supply chains resulting in economic damage. It is to the **credit** of neutral **logistic service providers** and **freight forwarders**

In this respect, we are also currently examining whether all applicable legal provisions are respected by all new market providers.

that goods flows continue to move, by independently searching for the **ideal solution**, across the various ports and modes and by weighing up various shipping companies. Shippers who are currently being approached directly would do well to bear this in mind.

The Italian competition authorities recently handed down a 1.1 billion euro fine against Amazon for abuse of its dominant position. As a logistic services intermediary on its own platform it disadvantaged other logistic service providers and suppliers.

Very expensive containers. What are the consequences?

There are enormously long waiting lists for bicycles and other products. Why? Because the **price** of a **container** has **risen sharply** due to the **COVID-19 pandemic**. Watch the report by Terzake (17 June 2021) [here](#) in which, among others, Jens Roemer – board member and chairman of the maritime transport committee within FORWARD Belgium – explains.

Predictability is becoming increasingly important for the supply chain

The **COVID-19 pandemic** is causing **serious disruption** for the global **supply chain**. KMO-insider spoke with Jens Roemer, FORWARD Belgium's Maritime Transport Committee Chairman, about how shippers are best able to respond to these and other **challenges**. Read the full article [here](#).

Is international trade disrupted by a shortage of shipping containers?

The **COVID-19 pandemic** has thrown the **supply chain** out of balance. Market prices of shipping containers are three to four times higher than before the outbreak of the pandemic. KMO-insider interviewed Olivier Schoenmaeckers, FORWARD Belgium director, on this topic. Read the full interview [here](#).



Terminal Congestion

At FORWARD, we are trying, through various channels, to keep pressure on the current difficult situation regarding **congestion and waiting times**. We note that other European ports are facing the same significant problems as a result of a **total disruption** of the **international maritime supply chain**.

The additional costs this incurs are causing immense frustration for all parties concerned.

We believe that these costs should not be borne by forwarders or other logistics players, who are also victims of this situation.

Digitalisation Committee

Certified Pick up

To increase the safety, operational efficiency and transparency, the Port of Antwerp launched **Certified Pick up**, a digital solution for container release.

CPU will replace the current PIN code release and consequently all forwarders / recipients will have to register with NxtPort to take receipt of any containers.



The roll-out of this phase will be terminal by terminal, gradually moving away from the use of PIN codes. All shipping companies will have to assign a release right to their clients..

⇒ Watch the CPU animated video [here](#)

⇒ Watch the CPU Tutorial [here](#)

The CPU implementation is very complex, in view of the involvement of many stakeholders and is therefore slightly delayed

CPU is expected to be operational for all parties in Q1 of 2022.

The Way Forward

The way FORWARD is the name of the project that was launched under Alfaport VOKA to examine which processes can be digitised in the port in the future. All stakeholders are represented in this project.

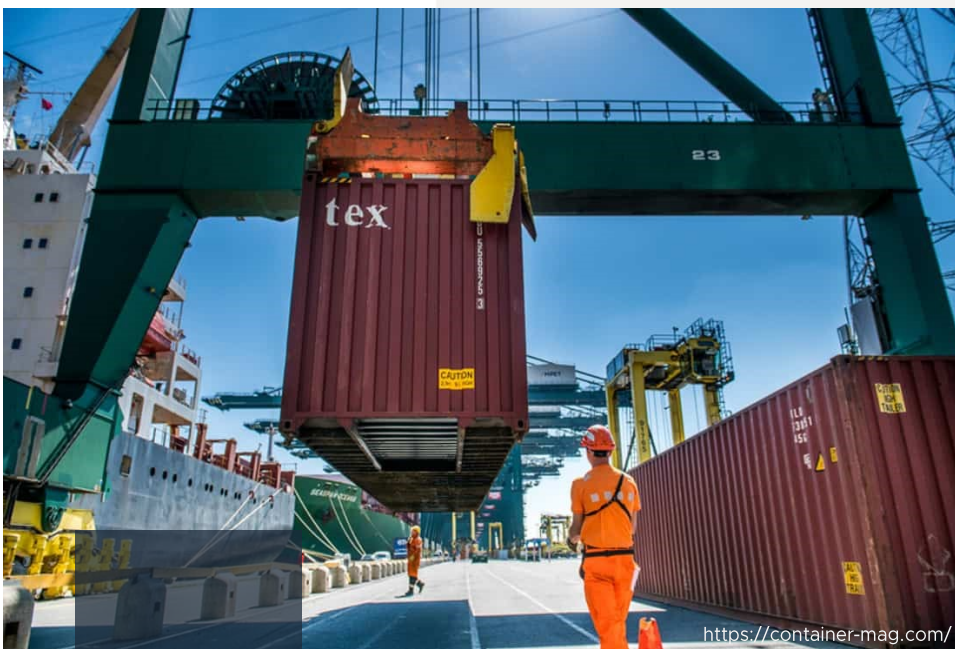
A list has been made of all projects that are important for FORWARD Belgium and they were discussed with the other stakeholders.

The result of the study was discussed with NxtPort and Port of Antwerp and was the reason for a MOU between the private port community and NxtPort.

Legal Committee

Shipping company Delivery Conditions / PIN Code - CPU

We recently advised caution regarding the **delivery conditions** unilaterally imposed by shipping companies via PIN code release messages or LOUs. We have found that shipping companies are increasingly attempting to recover all kinds of costs (freight, demurrage and detention, etc.) by extending the 'merchant clause' to third parties that are not part of the transport agreement.



We are always happy to review the terms of such release notices or LOUs on your behalf.

Insurance distribution - applicable to the logistics sector

On 28 December 2019, the Act of 6 December 2018 transposing the Insurance Distribution Directive (IDD) entered into force. With the introduction of this Act, the status of the insurance intermediary was changed.

Many forwarders are offering cargo insurance to their customers in the form of a subscription policy. The new regulations mean the forwarder runs the risk of being considered as an insurance intermediary.



FORWARD Belgium spoke to the competent authorities and based on this drew up a number of practical recommendations for the sector.



FIATA Best Practice Guide on Abandoned Goods

FIATA developed a 'Best Practice Guide on Abandoned Goods'.

This guide provides information for forwarders on mitigating the risks involved in abandoned goods. The guide contains a number of practical tips.

FORWARD Belgium made a summary which you can download [here](#).

Consultation FORWARD Belgium - transport federations

Over the past year, there have been regular discussions with FEBETRA, TLV and UPTR on the model conditions and the standard contract drawn up by FORWARD Belgium for the forwarder/transporter relationship.

During the constructive discussions, both parties have developed an understanding of each other's position in frequently occurring problems such as waiting times, overloading, congestion at the terminals, poor condition of containers and the transporter's inspection obligation, etc.

The different parties are on the point of reaching agreement on the various texts.

Suspicious shipments reporting point

Given criminal organisations' level of ingenuity, it can prove difficult for a logistics provider to spot any suspicious shipments. We also note that these rogue organisations often 'shop around' among various logistics service providers until finding a victim.

Following our belief that together we are able to achieve greater things, FORWARD Belgium has launched an **anonymous reporting point** for its members. You can stay up to date of suspicious situations reported by fellow forwarders via the reporting point.

**VERDACHTE ZENDINGEN
MELDPUNT**

Meld elke verdachte activiteit
<https://forwardbelgium.be>

**FORWARD
BELGIUM**



Customs Committee

Collaboration agreement FORWARD Belgium – GAC&E

Over the past year, several consultations have been held between FORWARD Belgium and GAC&E in the context of the existing MOU.

A pilot project is currently being considered with a number of members to set up improvement processes and avoid penalties.

We are also looking at ways of exchanging mutual information to enable customs agents to make a better risk analysis.

Finally, a structural dialogue will be launched in which the roles and responsibilities of the freight forwarder on the one hand, and the customs agent on the other, will be defined in more detail.



Lawsuit increased penalties

FORWARD Belgium, together with some of its members, instituted legal proceedings against the GAC&E concerning the increased penalties (5,000 - 7,500 euros) in case of removal for verification.

The aim was to challenge the illegality of these increased penalties. The court ruled that customs agents always have the possibility to reject an amicable settlement and to challenge the dispute before a tribunal correctional. A ruling beside the point, which unfortunately is little help.

However, the implementation of CPU (green lights) should avoid such situations in the future.

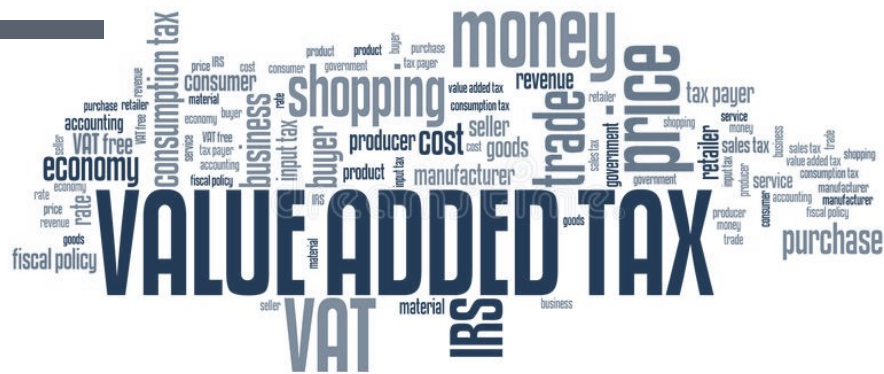
VAT exemption in case of export

Following European judgement 288/16, VAT exemption shall no longer be applied in Belgium to transport services provided on a subcontracting basis and involving the export of goods.

An information session was held on 6 December to discuss the practical impact of this judgement.

The associated Circular 2021 C/96 will come into effect on 1 April 2022.

Following the coverage on the practical impact that this implementation will have on the internal processes of companies in the sector, we would like to enter into further discussions with the Cabinet.



New VAT rules for e-commerce as of 1 July 2021

Starting on 1 July 2021, the VAT exemption for the import of goods with a value of no more than EUR 22 will disappear. These new VAT rules create a level playing field between EU and non-EU businesses and simplify VAT rules.



National Forum & Regional consultation

During the various meetings of the National Forum and the regional consultation FORWARD Belgium continues to broach all kinds of problems that have an impact on the operation of the sector.

The newsletters of the FORWARD Customs committee provide an overview of all discussed topics.

Seminar on customs law reform

A **seminar on customs law reform in Belgium** is set to take place on 28 October. The GAC&E, magistracy, legal profession and European Public Prosecutor shared their views on the need to reform customs law. FORWARD Belgium also offered its vision on the role of logistics service providers and insisted on a change to the prosecution policy.



Breakbulk Committee

Bulkchain platform

One of the 'The Way Forward' projects high up on the priority list is the further expansion of the **Bulkchain platform**.

Bulkchain is a collaboration platform built on NxtPort-technology which enables the stakeholders to collaborate on the administrative processes required to ship breakbulk.

FORWARD Belgium will continue to support and promote BulkChain.

Sustainability Committee

FORWARD Belgium launches sustainability label for freight forwarders

FORWARD Belgium has launched a sustainability label for freight forwarders. FORWARD Belgium's aim is to recognise members who are committed to sustainability.

"We are very approachable. Especially for smaller companies, it's not always evident to free up the necessary people and resources for a sustainability project," says Olivier Schoenmaeckers, Director of FORWARD Belgium. [Read more.](#)

FORWARD Goals for Sustainable Development

The logistics sector bears an important responsibility in achieving **climate targets** and **reducing CO2**.

Both the government, but also your customers and young employees within your company, expect you to actively participate in working towards these sustainability goals.

By participating in the '**FORWARD Goals**' you are demonstrating that you can legitimately present yourself as a sustainable logistics provider.

The participating companies undertake to achieve a minimum of five sustainable projects spread across the 17 different SDGs.

These five projects of your own choosing must fulfil at least two of the five P's:



- *People: SDG 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5*
- *Planet: SDG 6, 12, 13, 14 and 15*
- *Prosperity: SDG 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11*
- *Peace: SDG 16*
- *Partnership: SDG 17*

Participating companies must clearly indicate which SDGs the projects fall under. We encourage creativity and are committed to **accessibility**. No endless written reports or manuals!

To show what your project is all about, create a fun video, use TikTok or an original application, give the evaluation committee members a tour, etc.



FORWARD Belgium awards first sustainability labels to its members

A couple of months ago, FORWARD Belgium launched a sustainability label for freight forwarders, customs agents and logistics service providers. The label is called 'FORWARD Goals for sustainable development' and has its own logo.

Companies that can demonstrate their commitment to the **SDGs** through **concrete actions** taken within their company qualify for the label.

The FORWARD label distinguishes itself from other certifications or similar sustainability charters by its easy access. It involves no heavy procedures or audits. Instead a company visit, video or presentation is used to assess whether the proposed actions meet the 17 SDGs.

FORWARD Belgium's ambition with this initiative is to position the Belgian logistics community as providers of **sustainable logistics solutions**.

FORWARD members who obtain the label can show their customers how important sustainable business practices are to them. Moreover, in the midst of the ongoing labour shortage, it is an asset to attract young people.

The following companies were awarded the **FORWARD Goals label**:

- Embassy Freight Services Europe
- Haeger & Schmidt Logistics Belgium
- TCI Carriers
- Portmade
- Deloitte Belgium

The following companies were awarded the **FORWARD Goals Gold label**:

- H. Essers
- Ahlers Belgium
- Ziegler
- Fast Shipping & Forwarding Belgium





AirCargoBelgium

External Relations Committee

Air freight / Air Cargo Belgium

Collaboration Air Cargo Belgium

In 2021, various talks were held between FORWARD Belgium and Air Cargo Belgium to see how collaboration could be intensified.

An exchange of information has already been set up between the various committees active in the two organisations and ideas between different representatives have also been exchanged.

Representatives of the Forwarders cluster at Air Cargo Belgium will represent Belgium in the air freight area within the international organisations Clecat and FIATA.

BRUcargo accelerates its digital transformation with large-scale roll-out of Digital Green Lane

Brussels Airport and Air Cargo Belgium have taken a big step towards further digitalisation of cargo processes as of 1 June. Eight freight forwarders and four ground handlers have agreed via an MoU to roll out the 'Digital Green lane' starting on 1 June. [Read more.](#)

VEREXZ

In the past year, various talks were held between FORWARD Belgium and the Zeebrugge forwarders association Verexz to examine how a more intensive cooperation can be set up. In the coming period we will examine how a further integration can be realised.

Intermodal Committee

How-to-guide

There were various meetings with Port of Antwerp to reach agreements on how to draw up **'how to' Guide** for **intermodal transport**.

This practical guide is to offer insight into the possibilities & practices of rail and inland waterway booking and will be a manual for any operational operator.



Promotion Committee

Promotion of the sector

FORWARD Belgium continues to work closely with the various colleges and universities to bring our sector to the attention of young people.

For the second year in a row, the on-the-job training project was launched with the Karel de Grote Hogeschool. Several students will learn the tricks of the trade on the shop floor of our members.

Together with the Port Centre Lillo, we are working on a game for young people to bring the profession of freight forwarder to their attention in a fun way.

Young FORWARD Belgium regularly sends its representatives to give practical testimonies to students. These fascinating presentations are always appreciated by the students.

FORWARD Belgium LIVE networking event

On 16 November, FORWARD Belgium organised a LIVE networking event for its members at De Ark Antwerpen.

The chairpersons of the different FORWARD Belgium committees provided an overview of the files that are currently being handled.

A networking opportunity was provided afterwards.



New FORWARD Belgium website online

FORWARD Belgium launched a brand new website in 2021:

⇒ <https://forwardbelgium.be>

Social media channels

FORWARD Belgium aims to expand its reach, using various social media channels.



[LinkedIn](#)



[Instagram](#)



[YouTube](#)



[Twitter](#)



Young FORWARD Belgium Committee

Maritime drug trafficking via the port of Antwerp

On **Thursday, 17 June**, ASV TNG organised, in collaboration with Young FORWARD, a well-attended webinar 'Maritime drug trafficking via the Port of Antwerp – a framework of the drug problem'.



During this online info session, FGP clarified several topics and provided some tips on how to protect yourself and respond when you are approached. In addition, the awareness campaigns launched by Ceba & Alfaport Voka over the past month in the context of '[Making our port drug-free](#)' were discussed.

Supply Chain Sector Transformation

On Thursday 30 September, Young Supply Chain Masters and Young FORWARD Belgium visited The Beacon | Innovation Community in Antwerp. The topic of this successful evening was 'Supply Chain Sector Transformation'.



Young Logistics Challenge

On Tuesday 19 October – during the Transport & Logistics fair – Young FORWARD Belgium organised a Young Logistics Challenge. This first edition of the challenge focused on the **theme of sustainability** across three business cases.

Business case 1: What do you expect from your employer as an attractive, sustainable company? What attitude can your employer expect from you?

To bring the theory as close to practice as possible, the youngsters also had the opportunity to visit the fair and test their ideas against the exhibitors.

At the end of the day, a winning team for each business case was selected by an expert jury. These winners competed in the finals.

The first edition of the Young Logistics Challenge was won by a team from the Thomas More Hogeschool Mechelen. They came up with a proposal to make e-commerce more sustainable with a reusable curver box. The winning team tried to find a solution for the many packaging materials used in e-commerce. Inspired by the idea of the uniform Europallet format, the team decided to design a standardised packaging and also came up with solutions for return logistics.

In second place, a team from the University of Antwerp came up with a solution for sustainable commuting and flexible wages for employees. In any case, a topical theme with plenty of growth potential within the sector.

In third place was another team from Thomas More Hogeschool Mechelen. They focused on the construction of a sustainable company building as a way for a logistics service provider to contribute to the climate goals.

Throughout the day, the youngsters showed enormous enthusiasm and dynamism in their search for sustainable solutions within our sector.

It is clear that the young generation is committed to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and we look forward to their future input and original ideas on the shop floor within our companies.

Business case 2: How can you make e-commerce sustainable?

Business case 3: How can a logistics service provider contribute to the climate goals?

Over the course of the day, 100 young logistics talents/students — spread across 19 teams — set out to find sustainable logistics solutions.



HOMO DIGITALIS

Digitalisation will make us
more human

Homo digitalis – Digitisation is making us more human

On **Tuesday 26 October**, Young FORWARD Belgium organised a live event in collaboration with its initiator ASV The Next Generation, with keynote speaker **Thierry Geerts** following his recent publication of [Homo Digitalis](#).

The speaker discussed the **risks and opportunities** associated with the **digital revolution**. His conclusion was clear: **technology itself is neutral**, it is up to humanity to handle it consciously and confidently.

‘Christmas countdown’ Young FORWARD LinkedIn page

On Wednesday 15 December, Young FORWARD Belgium launched a ‘**Christmas countdown**’ on their LinkedIn page – to highlight a different ‘Young Potential’ from our sector every day. You can find an overview of these Young Potentials, with their experiences of the sector over the past year and wishes and expectations for 2022 [here](#).



FORWARD AWARD

FORWARD Belgium Award

Greenhouse gas emissions in container transport. A calculation method

No fewer than 11 dissertations were submitted in 2021 in a bid to win the **FORWARD Belgium Award**. The eventual winner was Lukas De Maeyer with his work:

“Greenhouse gas emissions in container transport. A calculation method.”

submitted by Karel de Grote Hogeschool in the professional bachelor programme in business management - major in logistics management with Mrs Ilse Van Vlierberghe as supervisor.

PORT OF ANTWERP BRUGES

The City of Antwerp and the City of Bruges have come to an agreement on merging their respective ports. The joint city agreement signals the official start for a unification process that is expected to take twelve months.

Read the response of FORWARD Belgium chair Jef Hermans [here](#).



**Port of
Antwerp
Bruges**



INTERNATIONAL

FORWARD Belgium continues to actively focus on the representation of the Belgian forwarding industry on the international stage through various representatives.

CLECAT

Marc Huybrechts, chairman of the FORWARD Belgium External Relations Committee will remain active as Treasurer in the Board of Clecat.

Dimitri Serafimoff will take over as president of the Clecat customs committee on behalf of FORWARD Belgium.

Johan Gemels will take over as president of the Clecat Rail working group on behalf of FORWARD Belgium.

FIATA

Jens Roemer, president of the FORWARD Belgium Committee Sea and president of the FIATA Working Group Sea was recently elected Senior Vice President of FIATA.

FIATA Congress Brussels moved to 2023

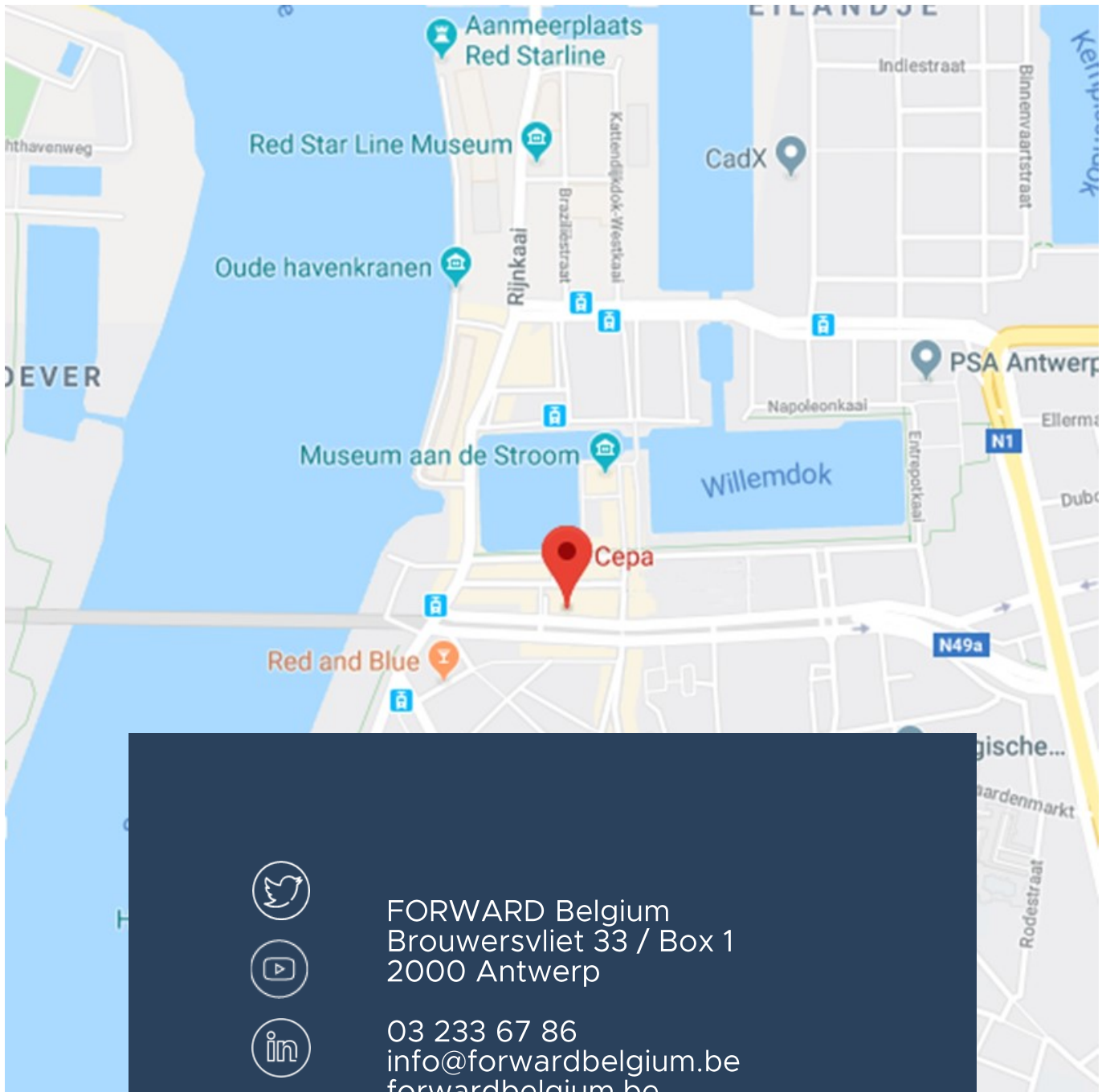
“The changing climate of logistics” was the slogan of the planned FIATA world congress in Brussels.

Due to COVID, it was decided to move the congress to October 2023. The congress will be the ideal platform to put the Belgian freight forwarding community in the international spotlight.

We have several partnership opportunities to put your company in the spotlight. Be sure to give us a call.



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