

MEDIA RELEASE

SWISSPORT LAUNCHES LONG-TERM TEST OF AUTOMATED GUIDED VEHICLE AT FRANKFURT AIR CARGO CENTER

Swissport has launched a pilot with an unmanned, automated guided vehicle at its new cargo center at Frankfurt Airport. In a long-term test, the autonomous vehicle has been substituting the manual transport of cargo. It forms part of Swissport's continuous pursuit of innovative and efficient cargo processes.

Swissport's 17,000 sqm air cargo center in Frankfurt, complete with an integrated CEIV certified Swissport Pharma Center, is equipped with cutting edge cargo logistics and handling innovations. An automated material handling system ensures efficient cargo processing and storage while the FAIR@Link slot booking app controls the access of trucks and optimizes workflows.

Taking the automatization and digitization drive one step further, Swissport now tests an automated guided vehicle, or AGV in short, together with Loedige industries.

"The automated guided vehicle at our Frankfurt air cargo center is an important next step in a long line of air cargo innovations that we have been implementing across the globe." says Dirk Goovaerts, Global Cargo Chair at Swissport. "The AGV has the potential to increase the efficiency, flexibility, and safety of Swissport's air cargo handling services and to take our service delivery to the next level."

Swissport has deployed a wide range of cutting-edge technologies in its Frankfurt cargo center to support its customers as well as its workers in their daily activities. Upon the completion of the pilot, the results will be evaluated to decide on a possible introduction of the vehicle.

With a load capacity of 6,800 kg, the 10-foot automated guided vehicle is designed to independently transport a variety of unit load devices (ULD's), including 15ft containers, inside the air cargo center. It reduces the need for manual handling and frees up staff for more complex and value creating tasks. The AGV is highly mobile thanks to an omnidirectional drive system with secure laser scanning to avoid any collision. It has the potential to connect all areas of the cargo facility, such as the Pharma Center, truck docks, castor decks and the ULD storage area.

The AGV communicates with gates and other automated equipment, can cover large distances and is fully compatible with Swissport's state-of-the-art material handling system, which was also designed together with Loedige Industries and introduced at the start of operations of the new air cargo center in 2020.

In 2021, Swissport International AG provided best-in-class airport ground services for some 97 million airline passengers (pre-COVID 2019: 265 million) and handled roughly 5.1 million tons of air freight (2019: 4.6 million) at over 120 air cargo centers worldwide. Several of its warehouses have been certified for pharmaceutical logistics by IATA's CEIV Pharma and by the British MHRA. The world's leader in airport ground services and air cargo handling, with currently around 46,000 employees, was active at 286 airports in 44 countries on six continents at the end of June 2022.

Media contacts

Swissport International AG, Group Communications, Stijn Vandroogenbroek, Bedrijvenzone Machelen, Cargo 704 Box 3, 1830 Machelen, Belgium group.communications@swissport.com, +32 2 753 0666