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**CIRCULAR: FIATA e-Flash: Airfreight, 2026 FIATA Regional Field Meetings and Digitalisation
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CNS 2026: FIATA Director General Driving a Collaborative Path for Air Cargo



Dr Stéphane Graber, FIATA Director General.

FIATA Director General Dr Stéphane Graber participated in the CNS Conference in San Francisco on 19 May 2026, contributing to high-level discussions on the future of the air cargo sector. His keynote intervention, titled “From Compliance to Competitiveness”, followed an opening panel that highlighted an industry facing growing challenges, including geopolitical disruptions, capacity constraints, and increasing pressure for real-time visibility and operational agility.

Building on these exchanges, the FIATA Director General underlined in his keynote that the sector has entered a new phase where resilience is no longer a secondary objective but a central competitive factor. He emphasised that logistics today must deliver not only speed and cost efficiency, but also confidence—confidence - both in data, in execution, and in the ability of supply chains to adapt to continuous disruption.

A central element of the intervention was the need to move beyond fragmented digitalisation efforts. While the panel underscored persistent limitations in data quality and interoperability, FIATA highlighted that real progress lies in transforming compliance into value—through trusted data, shared visibility, and coordinated processes across stakeholders. In this context, digitalisation is not an end in itself, but a key enabler of more efficient, predictable, and resilient supply chain performance.

Particular attention was given to the ongoing Modernisation of the Global Air Cargo Programme, conducted jointly with IATA. The FIATA Director General presented this initiative as a critical instrument to create a global framework that supports innovation, safety, efficiency, and digital progress, while reflecting how the market operates in practice. He also underlined that modernisation can only succeed if stakeholders trust the process: if major changes are developed without sufficient legal, operational, insurance, or technical analysis, the result will not be confidence, but friction—and potentially more disputes rather than fewer. While change is necessary, the industry needs a balanced, collaborative framework that is workable for the entire ecosystem, not only for the largest actors. This is how meaningful and sustainable industry progress can be achieved.

Overall, FIATA's contribution at CNS 2026 demonstrated strong alignment with the concerns expressed by industry leaders, while offering a clear and structured pathway forward. By placing collaboration, governance, and practical digitalisation at the centre of the debate, FIATA reaffirmed its leading role in supporting the transition towards a more resilient, connected, and competitive global air cargo sector.

2026 FIATA-RAP Field Meeting: Last Chance to Register!



Time is running out to secure your place at the 2026 FIATA-RAP Field Meeting, taking place from 2 to 4 June 2026 in Tianjin, China, hosted by China International Freight Forwarders Association

(CIFA).

The 2026 FIATA-RAP Field Meeting, held in conjunction with the 2026 Freight & Logistics Development Forum, brings together freight forwarding and logistics professionals from across the Asia-Pacific region for meaningful dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collaboration. Tianjin, one of China's most dynamic logistics and port hubs, provides the perfect backdrop for this important gathering in the FIATA calendar.

Don not miss your opportunity to connect with peers, engage with regional industry developments, and strengthen the ties that make the global logistics community so resilient.

[Register now!](#)

2026 FIATA-REU Field Meeting: A Successful Event!



The 2026 FIATA-Region Europe (REU) Field Meeting held in conjunction with the SEEFF Congress on 18–19 May in Bucharest, brought together delegates from 22 territories for two days of high-level dialogue on supply chain security, intermodal connectivity, regulatory adaptation, sustainability, digitalisation and the future of freight forwarding in Europe and beyond. FIATA extends its sincere thanks to the Freight Forwarders Association of Romania (USER) for their warm hospitality and for making this such a successful and memorable event.

Stay tuned for the 2026 FIATA-REU Field Meeting special!

Digitalisation: Redefining the Future of Trade and Connectivity



From left to right: Mr Umberto de Pretto, Secretary General of IRU; Mr Simon Sonoo, Group Senior Vice President – Parks and Economic Zones at DP World; Ms Ivana Fernandes Duarte, Central America Regional Country Manager at IFC; Mr Angel Sanchez, FIATA Vice-President; Dr Paul Kent, Senior Vice-President and Managing Director, Ports and Logistics at Monument Economics Group; and Mr Patrick Kuehl, Director of Strategic Expansion at IFZA.

As global supply chains evolve in the face of accelerating Artificial Intelligence (AI) advances, shifting trade dynamics, and new geopolitical realities, logistics hubs are increasingly emerging as the centre of economic resilience and connectivity. Against this backdrop, the panel *Global Gateways: Redefining the Future of Trade and Connectivity* examined how Special Economic Zones and their surrounding ecosystems can drive a new era of integrated, efficient, and sustainable global trade.

The session was moderated by Ms Ivana Fernandes Duarte, Central America Regional Country Manager at the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and brought together Mr Umberto de Pretto, Secretary General of International Road Transport Union (IRU); Mr Simon Sonoo, Group Senior Vice-President, Parks and Economic Zones at DP World; Mr Angel Sanchez, FIATA Vice-President; Dr Paul Kent, Senior Vice-President and Managing Director, Ports and Logistics at Monument Economics Group; and Mr Patrick Kuehl, Director of Strategic Expansion at IFZA.

A major highlight of the discussion was the operational roll-out of the electronic negotiable FIATA Multimodal Bill of Lading (eFBL). Mr Sanchez emphasised how adoption of this digital trade instrument, which is built on the legal principles established by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records (MLETR), is already significantly reducing administrative costs and unlocking vital trade finance for small and medium-sized enterprises.

The MLETR is a model law which enables electronic transferable records, such as the eFBL, to be recognised as legally equivalent to their paper counterparts. FIATA has been heavily involved in promoting its legislative adoption by countries worldwide, working closely with the FIT Alliance and ICC Digital Standards Initiative. In parallel, FIATA was highly involved in the UNCITRAL Working Group VI process that culminated in the UN Convention on Negotiable Cargo Documents (NCD Convention), which was adopted on 15 December 2025 by the UN General Assembly. This is a landmark step for multimodal transport and the digitalisation of global supply chains. While MLETR establishes the general legal basis for electronic transferable records, the NCD Convention builds on those principles by providing a dedicated international framework in line with the MLETR, specifically tailored to negotiable cargo documents across all modes of transport, including electronic negotiable transport records such as the eFBL. Drawing on FIATA's long-standing operational experience with the FBL, the Convention helps ensure that this framework is both commercially practical and future-ready.

The conversation also addressed real-time regulatory shifts, in particular the implementation of the European Union's electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) framework, which is increasingly seen as a benchmark for secure, government-to-business data sharing.

Industry innovators further demonstrated how combining AI-driven logistics with multimodal systems such as the TIR framework allows corridors to automatically reroute freight during maritime and geopolitical crises, ensuring genuine supply chain resilience. The panel concluded that the next generation of global gateways will be defined by their ability to combine digital interoperability, regulatory alignment, and operational agility, positioning Zones as catalysts for a more connected, inclusive, and agile global economy.

Panellists stressed that advancing cross-border data harmonisation is essential, and that the persistent friction of paper-based processes remains one of the most significant barriers to the future of global trade.

[Access the Practical Guide to the electronic, negotiable FIATA Multimodal Bill of Lading \(eFBL\) here!](#)

Upcoming FIATA Events



- [2026 FIATA-Region Asia-Pacific Field Meeting, Tianjin, China: 2-4 June 2026](#)
- [2026 Statutory General Meeting, Online: 26 June 2026](#)
- [2026 FIATA World Congress, Milan, Italy: 6-9 October 2026](#)

- [2026 FIATA-Region Africa and the Middle East Field Meeting, Doha, Qatar: 9-10 November 2026](#)
- [2026 FIATA-Region Americas Field Meeting, Cartagena, Colombia: 25-27 November 2026](#)

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