

IATA

CARGO

EXPERTS

CONFERENCE

Budapest, Hungary
23-24 September 2026

PROGRAM



IATA CARGO EXPERTS CONFERENCE

Three dynamic, specialized tracks

CARGO PHARMA & OPERATIONS

This two-day track will focus on the operational excellence and regulatory requirements of air cargo, with a particular emphasis on the safe, compliant, and efficient transport of pharmaceutical products by air. The program will explore end-to-end cargo operations, including ground handling, temperature-controlled logistics, quality management systems, risk mitigation, and contingency planning. Through expert presentations, case studies, and interactive discussions, participants will gain practical insights into industry standards, emerging operational challenges, and best practices for maintaining product integrity across complex global air cargo supply chains.

SAFETY & SECURITY

The Safety & Security agenda will focus on current and emerging threats, information sharing, and global oversight, to equip participants with actionable insights to strengthen risk assessment across air cargo supply chains. Through expert presentations and interactive discussions, the program will address critical topics such as geopolitical risk, the growing challenges of dangerous goods detection, the need for digital transformation and examining how the industry can further improve data quality, compliance, and efficiency.

DIGITAL CARGO

The Digital Track will explore how the air cargo industry can transform digital ambition into operational execution in an increasingly dynamic and interconnected world. This track will bring together airlines, freight forwarders, ground handlers, technology providers, and regulators to discuss practical implementation of digital solutions that enhance efficiency, transparency, resilience, and collaboration across the cargo supply chain. Through real-world case studies and interactive discussions, sessions will focus on topics such as ONE Record adoption, API-driven connectivity, AI and automation, cargo visibility, data quality, interoperability, and sustainability enabled through digitalization, while highlighting how industry standards and collaboration initiatives such as Cargo IQ are helping move the industry from innovation pilots to scalable operational reality.

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23 September 2026

CARGO PHARMA & OPERATIONS

09:00 – 09:10

Welcome Adress: Keynote Speech

Welcome to Budapest

09:10 – 09:20

Air Cargo Outlook

Air Cargo has again shown resilience in challenging times. Some regions have been affected more than others while air cargo stakeholders adapted trade flows.

09:20 – 09:35

Operations and Pharmaceutical Priorities - the Value of Air Cargo

This session aims at describing the future trends in cargo operations and pharmaceutical transport. The delegates will be provided with an opportunity to provide their pain points and interact with experts to define the future roadmap.

09:35 – 09:50

Transparent e-Commerce

E-Commerce has been for some time now a strong driver of air cargo growth, Our way of living has changed drastically with the spread of smart devices and the internet. The industry has now adopted the creation of a new Special Handling Code to enable visibility and services to capitalize on e-Commerce shipments.

09:50 – 10:30

The Budapest e-Commerce Experience

One of the major key entry gate of e-Commerce into the EU is through Budapest. Why Budapest and how did the actors of the Budapest Airport community adapted operations to satisfy the requirements posed by the e-Commerce business.

10:30 – 11:00

NETWORKING BREAK

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23 September 2026

CARGO PHARMA & OPERATIONS

11:00 – 11:20

Pillar #1 – Pharma and Operations – Standard Update 2027

In this session, we will provide a forward-looking update on the evolving pharma regulations and operational standards.

11:20 – 12:00

The Ground Handling Agents Implementation Experience

There are hundreds of Ground Handlers at thousands of airports which poses a risk of deviation and errors. This session will focus on implementation, difficulties, and benefits for a standardized operations.

12:00 – 12:30

Q&A

12:30 – 14:00

NETWORKING LUNCH

14:00 – 14:15

Pillar #2 – The Training Component

A strong standard on its own is useless if the personnel is not trained to understand and implement correctly. What are the latest advancements in training and how can you benefit from it.

14:15 – 14:30

Pillar #3 – Verification and Compliance

Once a standard is applied, we need to verify the understanding in order to assess the correct use. Experts in certification will elaborate on the need and benefit of certification to reassure airlines and regulators.

14:30 – 15:00

Differences in Air Cargo Operations

In 2017, IATA published the first edition of the IATA Cargo Handling Manual (ICHM).

The goal was and is still to standardize operations globally to provide the same level of services. However, some airlines still require something different. Why, and how can we simplify the way we do handling.

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CARGO PHARMA & OPERATIONS

15:00 – 15:30

Green Cold Chain: Challenges and Opportunities

The pharmaceutical cold chain is under increasing pressure to reduce its carbon footprint, as the growing reliance on air transport for temperature-sensitive products drives the need to build more sustainable solutions, including the shift from active to passive packaging and the reduction of CO₂ emissions in air cargo.

15:30 – 16:00

NETWORKING BREAK

16:00 – 16:45

Panel: Handling Pharmaceuticals –What Matters?

What are the critical handling factors that impact pharmaceutical integrity? In this session, we will explore the importance of adhering to strict handling standards and the need for proactive intervention in case of deviations, as failure to do so can render the product unusable.

16:45 – 17:25

Smart Compliance: AI, Quality Standards, and the Human Factor in Pharma Air Logistics

As AI transforms pharma air logistics, ensuring compliance with GxP, GDP, and IATA standards remains critical. This session explores how airlines can leverage AI to enhance safety and efficiency while maintaining strict quality oversight—highlighting the essential role of human judgment behind every automated decision.

17:25 – 17:30

Closing Remarks of Day 1

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CARGO PHARMA & OPERATIONS

09:00 – 09:45	<p>Resilience and Contingency planning in Pharma Supply Chain</p> <p>How compliance is supported when shipments need to be rerouted due to market changes, trade war, etc.</p>
09:45– 10:30	<p>Smart Packaging and Data loggers</p> <p>Handling Active and Passive Packaging and the advantage of sensors and smart labels – AI SME for Pharma.</p>
10:30 – 11:00	NETWORKING BREAK
11:00 – 12:30	<p>Specialized Pharma</p> <p>C&G Therapy and Precision Therapy – This session will explore how logistics models evolve to support the rise of personalized medicine.</p>
12:30 – 14:00	NETWORKING LUNCH
14:00 – 14:30	<p>Joint Session: Operations/Pharma and Security: The future of Mail and Pharma security</p> <p>Experts from Operations, Pharma, and Security will explore how the air cargo industry must evolve to meet the growing challenges and opportunities in Mail transport and Pharma Industry.</p>
14:30 – 15:30	<p>Joint Panel : Operations/Pharma and Security - Special Cargo – the balance between security and efficiency</p> <p>This panel will explore best-practice security to ensure the integrity, viability, and operational efficiency of special cargo throughout the supply chain.</p>
15:30 – 16:00	NETWORKING BREAK

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CARGO PHARMA & OPERATIONS

16:00 – 17:30

Joint session with Digital Track

Cargo visibility & real-time data sharing across the supply chain

Joint session exploring enhanced shipment visibility, using ONE Record for Enhanced Tracking and Data Exchange. Experts explore how enhanced visibility and data exchange are transforming pharma shipment tracking and operational decision-making.

Smart cargo facility, automation & digital handling operations

This session examines how automation and connected technologies are modernizing cargo handling and cargo facility operations.

Sustainability through digitalization – innovative ways for measuring operational efficiencies

This session will explore how digitalization can drive more sustainable air cargo operations by enabling precise measurement of efficiency and environmental performance. It will highlight innovative tools and data-driven approaches that help identify inefficiencies, optimize resource use, and reduce emissions. Through practical examples, speakers will demonstrate how improved visibility and smarter data utilization can translate into both operational gains and measurable sustainability outcomes across the air cargo value chain.

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SAFETY & SECURITY

09:00 – 09:10	Opening remarks
09:10 – 09:50	Threat assessment and information sharing Presentation on the circularity of information sharing to inform risk assessment across the supply chain.
09:50 – 10:30	Drugs smuggling and the nexus with security Presentation on leveraging public-private partnership to enhance narcotics detection in air cargo supply chains.
10:30 – 11:00	NETWORKING BREAK
11:00 – 11:30	Outstation security oversight Presentation on global operations and the need for global oversight and quality control.
11:30 – 12:30	Geopolitical upheaval and airspace risk (panel) A discussion on the foundations of conflict zone and airspace risk assessment with a focus on air cargo operations in a fragmented world.
12:30 – 14:00	NETWORKING LUNCH

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SAFETY & SECURITY

14:00 – 14:45

Safety and security in the supply chain (panel)

Undeclared, mis-declared, and weaponized Dangerous Goods present significant safety and security risks to air cargo and global supply chains. This panel discussion will examine both the opportunities and challenges of strengthening alignment between safety and security in the detection of Dangerous Goods.

14:45 – 15:30

Audience-driven interactive session on Dangerous Goods detection

Exploring the real-world opportunities and challenges of Dangerous Goods detection and interdiction across the supply chain, with dynamic audience engagement.

15h30 – 16:00

NETWORKING BREAK

Joint Session: Digital and Security

16:00 – 16:20

ONE Record implementation for Customs/Security agencies

Update and lessons learned in the deployment of the current pilot using ONE Record for the Canadian Pre-load Air Cargo Targeting (PACT) Program

16:20 – 16:40

Driving e-CSD adoption

Presentation on the path to enhanced efficiency, data accuracy and compliance with consignment security declarations.

16:40 – 17:30

Air Cargo: Is digitization lagging behind passenger operations? (panel)

This panel will examine the need to advance digitization across the air cargo sector with a focus on safety and security. It will explore the opportunities, challenges, and benefits of digital transformation, and consider what is needed to ensure air cargo remains resilient, efficient, and ready for the future.

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SAFETY & SECURITY

09:00 – 09:30	<p>Lithium batteries in the cargo supply chain. Who is the weakest link?</p> <p>An examination of the parties in the supply chain, from manufacturer to end consumer, and the roles that they play in strengthening, or weakening, aviation safety.</p>
09:30 – 10:30	<p>Finding the answer to a safer supply chain – It's not "somebody else's problem"</p> <p>Join our panel of regulators and supply chain partners in exploring the limitations (financial, regulatory and operational) to strengthening the cargo supply chain.</p>
10:30 – 11:00	<p>NETWORKING BREAK</p>
11:00 – 11:30	<p>Safer cargo terminals – managing Dangerous Goods through an airport facilitated, trust-based ecosystem</p> <p>This presentation will look into a number of airports which have actively adopted an approach of working with their supply chain partners to build confidence and trust in reducing undeclared and mis-declared dangerous goods.</p>
11:30 – 12:30	<p>To report or not to report....?</p> <p>....that is the question. Whenever something goes wrong, the true test of a reporting culture is found between the instinct to stay quiet and the responsibility to speak up. Can we have too much reporting? Is it mostly noise? Does the company morph from the business of transporting cargo into a compliance-focused business that happens to transport cargo.</p>
12:30 – 14:00	<p>NETWORKING LUNCH</p>

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SAFETY & SECURITY

Joint Session: Operations/Pharma and Security

14:00 – 14:30

Joint Presentation: The future of Mail and Pharma security

14:30 – 15:30

Joint Panel: Special Cargo – the balance between security and efficiency

This panel will explore best-practice security to ensure the integrity, viability, and operational efficiency of special cargo throughout the supply chain.

15:30 – 16:00

NETWORKING BREAK

16:00 – 17:30

SMS and SeMS: Connecting risk, culture and decision-making

Audience-driven, interactive session exploring how Safety Management Systems and Security Management Systems can work together, while recognizing that safety and security have different drivers, risks, reporting cultures, controls, and governance needs.

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DIGITAL CARGO

09:00 – 09:15	<p>Welcome Address: Keynote Speech</p> <p>Opening overview of the digital cargo track, key themes, and operational priorities for the industry.</p>
09:15 – 09:30	<p>Building Scalable Digital Cargo Operations</p> <p>Exploring how digitalization can move beyond pilots into scalable operational deployment.</p>
09:30 – 09:45	<p>Operational Priorities for Cargo Digitalization</p> <p>Industry perspectives on the most important operational and implementation priorities across cargo digitalization.</p>
09:45 – 10:30	<p>Scaling Digitalization Across Cargo Operations</p> <p>Panel discussion on interoperability, collaboration, standards, and scaling implementation across the ecosystem.</p>
10:30 – 11:00	NETWORKING BREAK
11:00 – 11:30	<p>ONE Record Orchestration: News and Operational Updates</p> <p>Latest developments and implementation updates related to ONE Record orchestration and operational deployment.</p>
11:30 – 11:45	<p>Results of the IATA Digital Maturity survey</p> <p>Overview of current industry readiness, adoption trends, and implementation maturity across stakeholders.</p>
11:45 – 12:30	<p>Chapter 2: Scaling ONE Record Adoption Across the Industry</p> <p>Discussion on accelerating operational adoption and practical implementation of ONE Record globally.</p>
12:30 – 14:00	NETWORKING LUNCH

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DIGITAL CARGO

14:00 – 15:30

From Adoption to Impact: Real-World ONE Record Benefits and Challenges

Real-world deployment examples highlighting operational gains, lessons learned, and implementation challenges.

15:30 – 16:00

NETWORKING BREAK

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DIGITAL CARGO

09:00 – 09:15

Welcome back & key takeaways from day one

Jonathan Parkinson, Head of Cargo Digitalization, IATA

Summary of key themes, operational insights, and major discussion points from Day One.

09:15 – 09:30

AI in Cargo Operations: From Experimentation to Deployment

Examining how AI is evolving from experimentation into practical operational cargo applications.

09:30 – 10:30

AI in Cargo: Practical Applications Beyond the Buzzword

Use cases demonstrating how AI supports forecasting, automation, operational efficiency, and customer interaction.

10:30 – 11:00

NETWORKING BREAK

11:00 – 12:30

Collaborative Development and Open Digital Standards

Discussion on collaboration models, open standards, and shared digital frameworks supporting interoperability.

12:30 – 14:00

NETWORKING LUNCH

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DIGITAL CARGO

14:00 – 14:45

Collaboration Between Cargo Operations and Technology Providers

Interactive discussion on improving collaboration between operational stakeholders and technology partners.

14:45 – 15:30

Automating the Physical: Robots on the Cargo Floor

Operational examples of robotics and automation technologies deployed within cargo facilities.

15:30 – 16:00

NETWORKING BREAK

16:00 – 17:30

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