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## Logistics Indicator in Q1 2021

### Logistics proves to be resilient

*Commentary by Prof. Thomas Wimmer,  
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The economy in general and the logistics sector in particular were not affected to any great degree by the social and political “corona fatigue” that began to spread during the first quarter of 2021. Despite the persisting and extensive lockdown, the February survey for the Logistics Indicator supplies an overall score “close” to the normal value of 100. It is encouraging to note that the score has not fallen below 90 points since August 2020, even though the sector had to adapt to constantly changing lockdown scenarios in the months from November to February.

On March 22, it will be one year since the federal and regional governments in Germany first decided to impose mobility and contact restrictions – just a few days after all the external borders of the EU and the internal European borders had been closed. As a result, supply chains came under pressure and production plants came to a standstill. Compared to the scenario back then, the economy is faring quite well in the current situation – and this may partly explain the relatively relaxed mood when it comes to assessing the current business situation. The glint of optimism with regard to future business expectations is likely driven by the fact that vaccinations are picking up pace after a slow start and that rapid tests before vaccination provide hope of reduced risk when people come into contact with each other.

Many production and sales figures are still less than favourable. Not only trade, tourism, hospitality and passenger airlines but also inland waterway shippers and other mobility service providers are being hit extremely hard due to the lack of demand volume in the market and because pandemic safety regulations are making it impossible for these sectors to operate effectively in economic terms.

The job situation remains tense, and everyone is aware that short-time work schemes are perhaps only delaying the threat of unemployment. Still, all the measures taken by the government have certainly helped us to gain valuable time in this respect.

For their part, logistics managers are clearly opting for pragmatism over alarmism. They are doing their jobs as best they can – and have picked up the tempo on a wide range of projects, including the digitalisation of their structures and processes. A new, more flexible mindset and action strategy have come to the fore and are helping to make supply chains more resilient.

In the same vein, BVL is also gearing up for a dynamic reboot – following the shock of the cancellation of the International Supply Chain Conference as an in-person event. The BVL Chapters have continued to symbolise the vibrancy of the association’s activities. A successful digital Forum Automotive Logistics in early 2021 set the scene for the new year. And the dates for the conference in October have been confirmed, together with an extremely flexible format, a first-rate programme on the Internet and as much in-person communication as possible – all at the traditional venue in Berlin.