



# AHOLA

Annual Report 2021



WAY AHEAD



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Our drivers are our most visible calling card, which is why we want to invest in them. Pictured is our driver Juho.



>>> THE YEAR IN BRIEF

# Ahola equals people

For Ahola, 2021 was a year of looking forward. The ongoing Covid crisis did not depress us; rather, it united Ahola more than ever.

IMAGE: Christoffer Björklund

**THE SHORTAGE OF COMPONENTS**, rising fuel prices, the EU's Mobility Package and the war in Ukraine which broke out in early 2022 have affected our operations, but our choice to invest first and foremost in people has carried us through difficult times.

We wanted to secure the future of people important to us at a time when it seemed uncertain to many. Digital skills and sustainable values become more important from year to year, and we have all the capacity needed to respond to the challenge by being a leader in our sector.

### A return to the family

After five years as a public company, we returned to being a family business. Being listed raised our profile and credibility and brought our administration to a new level. However, taking the company private again was the most sensible option from both the financial and corporate structure perspectives. Notwithstanding, our goals continue to be increased market share and maintaining a high level in our work.

»» *We would like to thank our cooperation partners, customers and employees for the shared year behind us.*

### A more united Ahola

Last year, we began to build a consolidated Ahola brand even more strongly, both in terms of perception and our operations. We harmonised our brand so that in future Transport, Special and Digital share the Ahola name. Consequently, work done in the different group segments raises the entire Ahola Group's recognition and strengthen us as a whole. That also makes us more flexible internally and readier to take on the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

### Content drivers at the core

Content drivers are at the core of what Ahola does, a fact particularly highlighted during the Covid years. Satisfied drivers enable smooth logistics and thus a functional Finland, which is why last year, too, we invested in our employees' professional development.

Professional skill gives employees greater pride and confidence in their work. Lifelong learning facilitated by the employer sends a message about Ahola's deep appreciation for its employees. We want to continue to be a beacon of heavy goods vehicle drivers' well-being in the future.

### Digitalisation and sustainable development

Green competence continues to be one of the cornerstones of Ahola. We develop our digital competence to ensure we can continue to plan and provide sustainable, responsible transports.

We are committed to building not only a more responsible Ahola but also a more sustainable world: for example, last year we facilitated the construction of new wind turbines. ●

>>> GROUP CEO'S REVIEW

# On the road to the future

The ownership reorganisation we began in 2020 was the largest change in our group in 2021.

**WE REDEEMED THE LAST** Ahola Transport shares on the stock market in May 2021. Since then, Ahola Group has been a purely family company. At the same time, we transferred one main owner's shares in a partial generational handover forward within the family.

The brand overhaul we began in 2020 continued in 2021. We invested more in marketing and communications and have also engaged outside talent in this work.

Total environmental efficiency plays a large role in the Group's strategy and, through that, in all of our segments. We have succeeded in significantly reducing emissions from our transports. In this regard, the biggest efficiencies come from knowledge management, which would not be possible without a strong investment in digital. Emissions reductions are also sensible because they have, through efficiency, a direct impact on profitability.

Our strong investment in digital, dating over 20 years, will continue strongly in the future.

## Market situation and societal conditions in general

When we entered the new year of 2021, our expectations for an easing to the Covid situation were high. The Covid caseload dropped fast in spring 2021, but we could not have foreseen how dogged the pandemic would be. I remember well how we began to make provisions for a return to normality over the summer and how we expected normal conditions to return after the summer holidays. However, that did not happen; only at the end of the spring in 2022 did we enter some sort of normal situation.

The Covid pandemic notwithstanding, the market has remained extremely strong. Transport volumes re-

mained extremely high throughout 2021. The end of the year, in particular, was strong. On the demand side, we could have expanded our operations even further, but the shortage of drivers and resources limited our growth.

The driver shortage, in turn, stems in the long run from a change in appreciation. A driver's work is sometimes very lonely and a driver has to spend long periods away from home. At the start of this year we conducted a survey to establish the views of 15-24-year-olds on the work of a driver. The survey raised two issues to the fore: young people find a driver's work hard and dangerous.

In my opinion, this description would have been better suited to the 1970s, when I began working as a driver. Nowadays, a driver's work is, in my opinion, extremely varied and modern in many ways. The work includes customer services and demands a lot of digital competence. One example is inclusion of drivers in Teams meetings, which is a very effective means of communication.

This study gives us food for thought on how we should market the attractiveness of our sector and company as a workplace.

## Costs and inflation

Signs of the market overheating and of prices rising began to be seen as early as 2021. During the last year, fuel prices rose by approximately 45%, and for an obvious reason this has continued strongly this year, too.

The total price/cost index for heavy goods vehicles rose by approximately 10% last year. This year, the total price/cost index has risen by 15% between January and May. The largest, but not exclusive, factor is naturally fuel. In international traffic, prices are also pushed up by

» *The EU's Mobility Package is fundamentally a good thing, as it aims at levelling drivers' earnings levels in different countries and at harmonising and improving drivers' working conditions.*

the EU's Mobility Package. The Mobility Package is fundamentally a good thing, as it aims at levelling drivers' earnings levels in different countries and at harmonising and improving drivers' working conditions. However, the Package also includes regulations which drivers themselves would not necessarily have hoped for. One such regulation prohibits drivers from staying in their vehicles for longer breaks. To our mind, staying in a cheap hotel is not as attractive an option for a driver as overnighing in the cabin of their lorry, which becomes almost a home for the driver during their journey.

These changes in costs have fortunately been met with understanding by our customers, for which we thank you warmly. I believe that everyone understands that no single transport firm can bear the costs for such large cost increases alone; they inevitably affect prices for customers. In truth, it is not a question of price changes but of cost neutralisation through contractual clauses which are flexible as costs change.

## Ahola's action in the green transition

One important strategic focus of Ahola Group is total environmental efficiency, which extends to all of our operations. As a pioneer, we pave the way in emissions measurements and reporting. As far as can be ascertained, we are the only player on the market that measures the true emissions of transport. This is achieved by combining vehicle and operational data. In this way, we can report to the customer on transport-specific emissions per dispatch.

We have also launched a new development project in which we aim for GHG Protocol-compliant monitoring and reporting. The Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHG Protocol) is the world's most widely used standard devel- ▶



» **The position of Ahola Special in project and specialist transports will continue to be reinforced this year.**

oped for the calculation of environmental impacts. The GHG Protocol divides emissions into three scopes:

- **Scope 1** includes emissions which the company can directly affect and which the company can control most easily.
- **Scope 2** includes indirect emissions from purchased energy, such as generation of electricity and heating.
- **Scope 3** includes all emissions from the end use of sold products and the procurement of goods and services; in other words, all indirect emissions.

In Ahola Group, we are at present at the stages of Scopes 1 and 2.

**Ahola in 2021**

This was an excellent year for Ahola Transport. Turnover grew by 9.29% on the previous year. The Europe-wide driver capacity and component shortage presented challenges, but there was strong demand for transports, and transport volumes stayed at a high level throughout the year. We also concluded several significant partnership agreements with new and existing customers.

For Ahola Special, 2021 was a year of strong development, with turnover growing by as much as 46.17% on the previous year. The employee headcount doubled. The largest growth factor was our strong investment in wind power and industrial projects. The wind power projects were concentrated in the second half of the year. Front-loaded investments were seen in the development of profit for the start of the year.

In April 2021, we carried out the largest highway transport in Estonian history. Such projects require a great deal of preparation to succeed. The transport distance was 70 km, but three days were needed to complete the transport.

In Ahola Digital in 2021 we invested in developing products and services (City and Road) for the future, meaning the turnover and profit were on the same level as the previous year, with turnover growing by 4.78%.

**Outlook for 2022**

The start of the year has exhibited strong growth in the entire Group, and outlooks are positive.

Ahola Transport's customers' trust in the service and quality of our operations is at a high level, which grants us growth opportunities. We are delighted by our long-term customers' willingness to expand collaboration with us, particularly in the steel and automotive industries. This is expected to generate strong growth for this year and the future. Collaboration includes development of operations with our customers.

The position of Ahola Special in project and specialist transports will continue to be reinforced this year. A new service which we offer is power transformer transports and the related skidding. 3D scanning and route planning for wind farms are establishing themselves as a service which saves costs for all parties. Wind power projects require large investments in vehicles, which we are continuing this year.

This year, Ahola Digital has gained a firm foothold as a technology provider in the City segment. The developmental stage of the City segment will continue strongly this year, and this will give us good growth opportunities in the future too.

In Road, development will continue within technological renewal. The focus will be placed on reliable emissions measuring and reporting in the entire multimodal supply chain. Success in this creates a competitive edge for export industries.

We are enormously grateful to the entire staff of the Group for this extremely positive development of ours, both this year and in the preceding years. Our shared journey has been exciting and interesting.

Thanks also go to our customers, of course, who have trusted in what we do together, and to our co-operation partners for their reliable collaboration.

**Hans Ahola**  
Group CEO

**Key figures 2021, Ahola Group**





>>> RESPONSIBILITY

# Fine words do not reduce emissions

Care for the environment has been part of the Ahola Group strategy since the mid-1990s.

## Ahola Transport highway transport greenhouse gas emissions 2005–2021

Greenhouse gas emissions, gram/tonne-kilometre\* (ton-km), all market areas.



**WE STRIVE CONSTANTLY** to raise our environmental profile and reduce our emissions. We were delighted to state in our 2021 environmental report that we had achieved the 2030 EU emissions reduction targets over ten years ahead of time. Ahola Transport has managed to reduce its highway transport emissions by 63% on 2005 levels, which is the benchmark year for the EU and Finland.

In 2021 we continued to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on previous years. The share of bio-based fuels in our fuel consumption is now 25.3% in the Nordic countries and 17.6% in all market areas. Of our vehicles, 91% in the Nordic countries and 79% in all market areas conform to the Euro 6 European emission standard.

### Four most important development areas

The most important development areas of our environmentally friendly transport services are:

- eco-driving
- operational efficiency and waste minimisation
- lower fuel consumption and higher payload
- carbon neutrality.

In 2022, our goal is to continue improving in these de-

» Ahola Transport received an award for best eco-driving index in an international economic driving style competition in 2021.

velopment areas, conduct research and development on new technologies and energy options, and further develop the energy efficiency of our services.

The numerical goal set for 2022 is 27.39 grams of CO<sub>2</sub>e/tonne-km in road traffic, which is 0.56 grams less than in 2021.

### Using digital to rationalise traffic

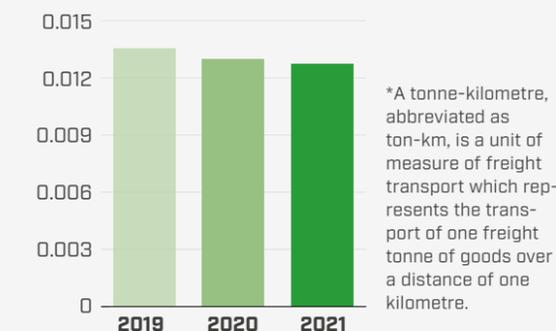
Two tasks form the core of Ahola's action on the environment:

- We constantly reduce our fuel consumption and emissions in relation to the volume of transported freight.
- We raise our employees' environmental competence. Success in our environmental goals is to a large extent due to the dynamic logistics concept system we have developed. In our unique concept, the customers' freight needs are the basis for all routing. That allows us to reduce delivery times, minimise freight handling, increase flexibility and reduce emissions.

In other words: we transport more efficiently over fewer kilometres and at the same time serve customers in the best possible way.●

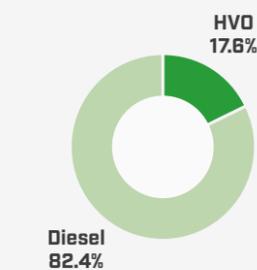
### Fuel economy development

Litre/completed tonne-kilometre\*



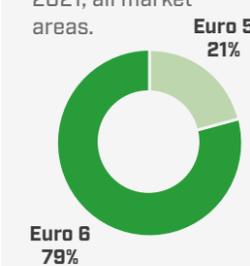
### Biofuels

Share of bio-based fuels in all Ahola Transport highway transport fuels, 2021, all market areas.



### Vehicles' European emission standards

Distribution of Ahola Transport's proprietary and contractual vehicles by European emission standards, 2021, all market areas.





The new wash station saves time and is kind to the environment.



Water saved at Naantali wash station

Volume of water saved per wash

**200 litres**

>>> RIGHT NOW

# Environmentally friendly HGV wash works round the clock in Naantali

In the autumn of 2021, Ahola Transport opened a brand new, environmentally friendly HGV wash station at its Naantali site. The HGV wash uses a modern closed-loop water system which minimises water consumption.

IMAGE: Christoffer Björklund

**AHOLA'S ACTIONS** towards an even environmentally friendlier transport sector do not end with reducing emissions. We make sustainable choices in many different sectors, from driving style and transport planning to large investments.

The HGV wash station at the Naantali site is one example of tangible actions towards a greener future. Whereas washing an HGV in a standard lorry wash uses up to 2,000 litres of clean water, the new Kärcher washer and unique closed-loop water system allow us to reduce the volume of fresh water used to about 200 litres per wash.

“This investment follows on seamlessly from our environmental programme, in which we strive constantly to become more ecologically efficient. The closed-loop system is estimated to recoup its own cost in about two years, making this a good example of how an investment can be justified on both environmental and financial grounds,” Ahola Transport Business Director **Åke Nyblom** says.

## Speed from automation

When the washer was purchased, the focus was on speed, in addition to environmental considerations and

good wash result. A highly automated washer recognises the shape and length of a vehicle and starts an appropriate wash cycle.

“A normal maintenance wash lasts just 20 minutes, without the driver needing to leave the cab. The wash station also works without staff, so it’s easier to fit a wash in with the lorries’ schedules,” **Alf Nyblom**, Site Manager of the Naantali unit, says.

## Regular washes yield savings

Our vehicles are driven virtually every day of the year and are recognised on the roads of Finland and Northern Europe by their white background and red letters. Articulated vehicles are washed at least fortnightly, if schedules allow. Skimping on washes does not save money, nor does it any longer make environmental savings.

“With regular washes, the lorries’ paint surface and tape last for their planned life cycle. When the lorries are washed often enough, less strong chemicals are needed to remove dirt,” Alf Nyblom says.

The Naantali HGV wash has raised interest further afield, too. The wash station will in future be opened to the public to also serve other professional drivers. ●



>>> AHOLA TRANSPORT

# An eventful year at Ahola Transport

In 2021, Ahola Transport's operations were affected by many large changes, both globally and in-house.

IMAGE: Christoffer Björklund

## Ahola Transport in 2021

FREIGHT TONNES

**1.7 M**

NUMBER OF DISPATCHES

**140,000**

VEHICLES ON THE ROAD

**500**

NUMBER OF SHIP DEPARTURES

**44,000**

KILOMETRES DRIVEN

**41,600,000 km**

EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

**8.1/10**

An environmentally friendly driving style plays a crucial role in Ahola Transport's action on the environment. Drivers track their progress on their own driving style in real time via vehicle monitors.

**THE ONGOING PANDEMIC** and the global political situation were reflected in the transport sector in 2021 in such issues as rising fuel prices, a lack of components and a shortage of transport capacity. There was high demand for transports, but a growing paucity of drivers and transport operators. Exports from Finland grew during the year, which affected the balance of transport volumes.

On the whole, 2021 was, however, a good year for Ahola Transport. In addition to existing customer accounts, we concluded new cooperation agreements that were extremely significant both in terms of value and transport volume. The future of the markets also looks good, and we entered the new year in a spirit of strong growth.

### Investments in competence and quality

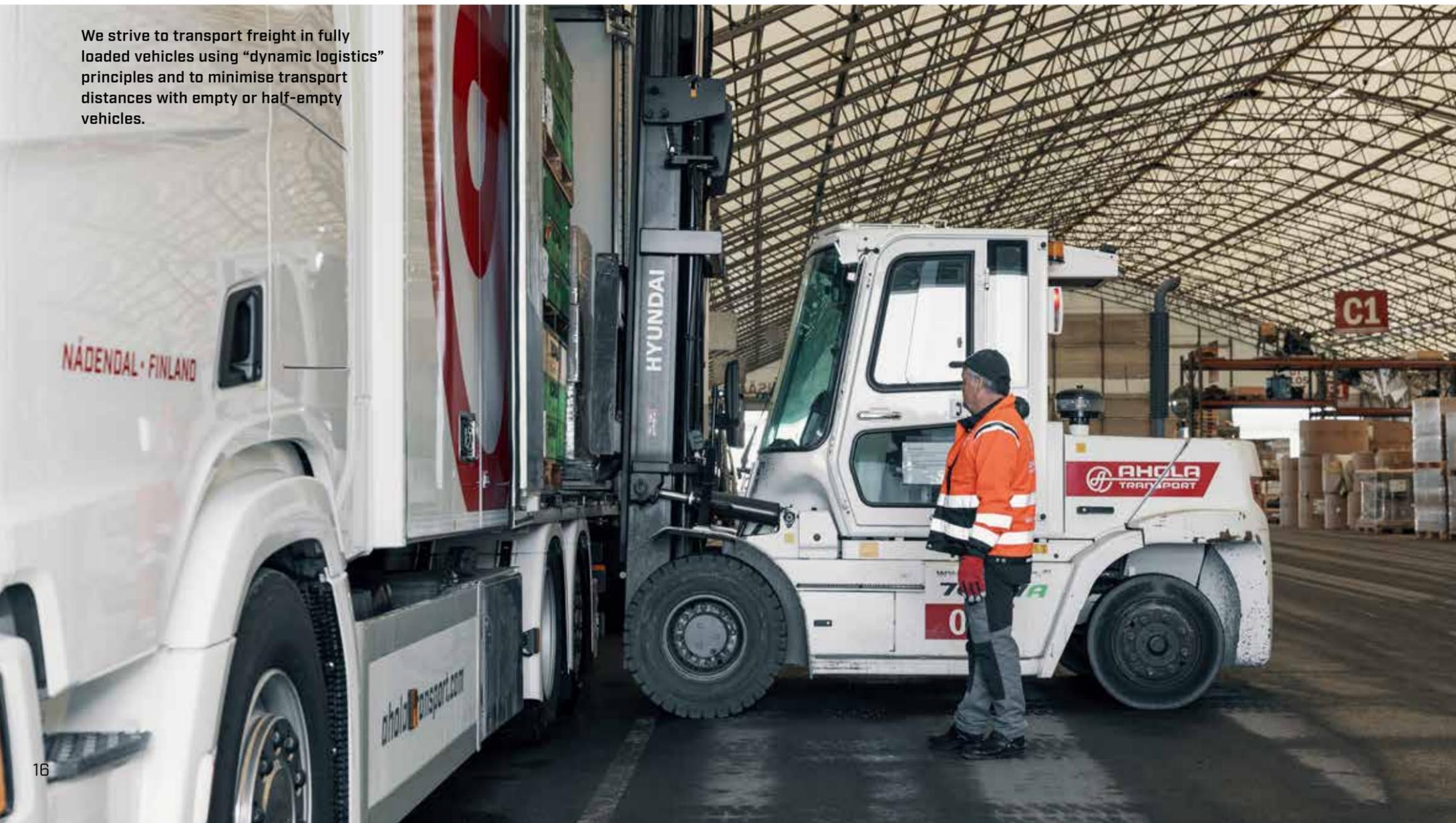
During the year, we continued to invest in employee training. We developed our staff's customer service skills both through internal training projects by learning from each other and through external training sessions. We also continued the Ahola driver certification programme, which allows us to grow drivers' competence in areas such as economic driving style and customer service. The aim of this approach is to secure a consistent quality of our services.

We also clarified and implemented our management system to give everyone a forum for continually developing their own work. In addition, we audited and renewed our ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certificates. The

» *In our customer satisfaction survey, well over half of respondents believed that Ahola was a better transport service provider than its competitors.*



We strive to transport freight in fully loaded vehicles using "dynamic logistics" principles and to minimise transport distances with empty or half-empty vehicles.



results of our customer satisfaction survey for last year were extremely positive. Well over half of respondents believed that Ahola was a better transport service provider than its competitors. Almost half also considered Ahola's action on the environment better than competitors'.

### Implementation of the EU Mobility Package for road traffic brings changes

The aims of the new legislative package include harmonising the conditions for market competition of road traffic companies in the entire EU, tackling the grey economy, harmonising wage levels and improving drivers' social security and working conditions. The Mobility Package has been implemented in stages, and the most significant changes entered into force last year and at the start of 2022. The changes presented challenges amidst a driver shortage, but they were successfully put into practice and are now part of our daily work.

### Action on the environment central

Ahola's sustained work for an environmentally friendly transport sector was rewarded with victory at the AddSecure competition. The Ahola driver team won the ecological driving style category in 2021. We continued in-house training sessions and competitions on this topic. Our unique new environmentally friendly wash station was opened in Naantali in autumn 2021.

The share of bio-diesel in our fuel mix increased last year and continues to grow. At the start of 2022, we began pilots and development projects related to electrification and the use of alternative energy sources. ●

>>> AHOLA SPECIAL

# Ahola Special doubles headcount

A busy year saw many events.  
The whole year was marked by strong growth.

IMAGE: Christoffer Björklund

**FOR AHOLA SPECIAL, 2021** was a year of significant growth. Our employee headcount doubled and we expanded our operations significantly. That strong growth notwithstanding, we were able to maintain our quality services, which was reflected in the positive feedback from our cooperation partners.

## Wind turbine transports growing

The strongest growth in 2021 was seen in wind power. The number of wind turbines in Finland is constantly growing, which was reflected in our operations. We significantly increased our fleet of wind turbine transport compatible vehicles last year. We also strengthened our jacking and skidding operations by increasing appropriate equipment.

## Estonia's largest special transport

In 2021, we performed one of the largest transports in Estonian history. We transported a large tank weighing over 200 tonnes for Estanc, which required multiple various preparations because of its size. Changes had to be made along the route and the vehicles had to be planned to complete this challenging operation. The transport went well and our collaboration with Estanc is continuing this year.

## Synergy benefit from acquisition

We completed our acquisition of A&J Kivijärvi Oy in early 2022. Thanks to this acquisition, we were able to raise the commercial use of our fleet even further. The new vehicles support all kinds of special transports. The acquisition brings us a synergy benefit and was a good continuation of the strong growth in 2021.

This year we are continuing to expand and develop our operations. ●



» This year we are continuing to expand and develop our operations.



In 2021, we transported a total of 66 wind turbines, which required 792 transports. Preparation plays a large role in special transports. Pictured is our driver Henrik securing a wind turbine blade for transport.

>>> AHOLA DIGITAL

# Ahola Digital becomes a product provider



For Ahola Digital, 2021 was a year of strong growth and product development.

**IN THE 1990S, AHOLA BEGAN DEVELOPING** its own ERP system, as there was no system on the market capable of managing, planning, optimising and guiding transports in line with our dynamic logistics concept. The first version was deployed at Ahola Transport in 2003.

The program and systems developed and grew to the point where Ahola's IT was incorporated as a separate company, Attracs, in 2009. Last year, our brand overhaul

saw the name change to Ahola Digital. At the same time, we completed a reorganisation in which Ahola Digital withdrew from the Group's other IT services and became purely a logistics product provider.

What makes Ahola Digital unique is the company's firm, authentic experience and understanding of the logistics sector. This has formed a good basis for developing digital solutions for logistics needs. The present City and Road segments are good examples of this.

» **In 2021, we particularly invested in our employees' continual information security and developing information security practices and processes**

## ATOS City grows

ATOS City is a digital tool for enhancing the efficiency of people and small goods transports.

Since the end of the Covid pandemic, City has grown steadily. In 2022, the aim is to be Finland's most used taxi ERP system for publicly provided journeys (pursuant to the Social Care Act and the Act on Disability Services and Assistance) and to open sales on the private taxi market.

## ATOS Road helps reduce emissions

Road products enable such functions as factual CO2 emissions measurements and monitoring. Because up to 30% of freight transport costs comes from fuel, Road can yield significant savings for operators. Road consists of between ten and twenty products ranging from transport ordering to invoicing.

In 2021, Ahola Transport was the largest beneficiary of the Road service. The service is used in all Ahola vehicles. At the start of 2022, we launched the development of a next-generation ERP system.

## Strong investment in information security

We want to provide the best information secure logistics control systems to our customers. Information security is also one of our most important ongoing development areas. In 2021, we particularly invested in our employees' continual information security and developing information security practices and processes, which allowed us to achieve ISO 27001 certification in information security alongside our existing ISO 9001 certification.

## Collaborative development projects

Ahola Digital has participated in several development projects in consortia involving other companies, both in Finland and at the EU level. One significant project was Driving Emissions Out of Shipping, conducted by PBI Research Institute Oy.

The goal of this successful project was to improve competitiveness in multimodal supply chains and implement real-time factual emissions tracking.



>>> CASE STUDY: SSAB EUROPE OY

# Efficient loading through co-development

Ahola Transport and SSAB Europe Oy have joined forces to develop the efficiency of transports. A new loading procedure improves safety and yields significant time savings.

IMAGES: Christoffer Björklund

◀ The transport bedding co-developed by Ahola Transport and SSAB can be scaled to the steel coil being loaded.



*“The goal of the joint development is for both parties to win. When safety is enhanced and the coils can be loaded quickly and efficiently, everyone’s a winner.”*

—HEIKKI HELLSTEN

**SSAB EUROPE OY IS A LEADING NORDIC** manufacturer of high-quality steel products and part of the global SSAB group. In Finland, SSAB has mills in locations such as Hämeenlinna and Raahé. The company has collaborated with Ahola Transport for many years.

“Ahola is one of our main road transport partners. They transport our goods over a wide area, to our main markets of Norway and Sweden, but also to Poland and the Baltic countries,” says **Heikki Hellsten**, Head of Logistics at SSAB Europe Oy.

Until now, the transport of steel coils had used wooden coil racks which were placed in the vehicles at the mill when loading. The problem has been that the one-off coil racks fill recipients’ waste facilities and take up warehouse space at the steel mill.

### Solution: a new kind of bedding

The need for a more secure and efficient loading procedure made the companies search for a new kind of solution. Ahola Transport and SSAB developed a new kind of transport bedding which met the mill’s and recipient’s needs better than before. At the same time, it speeds up loading and makes transport as a whole more efficient.

The new transport bedding is suitable for long-term use and can be scaled to steel coil size. Hellsten says that the procedure has been developed to be so simple that a driver can use it when loading without spending any additional time.

“That significantly speeds up loading compared to before. We estimate that Ahola loads 4,000 lorries at our mills annually. A ten-minute saving per lorry saves a total of 40,000 minutes a year. The less time loading takes, the better it is for both parties,” Hellsten says.

### Tangible benefits visible

The loading method has been developed in cooperation over about a year through regular testing and piloting. Both Ahola Transport and SSAB employees have con-

tributed to the work, from management to logistics experts and loading personnel.

The present model was chosen from a range of options and was piloted on a small scale at the start of 2022 on a couple of dozen vehicles. Now the plan is to begin to roll it out in cooperation.

“We have reviewed the loading method together, and Ahola have provided an employee on site at the mill to teach the drivers the procedure. The aim is to have the lorries prepared so that the loading itself takes just ten minutes,” Hellsten says.

The new loading model has been proven to work, and according to Hellsten it is already displaying tangible benefits.

“The goal of the joint development is for both parties to win. When safety is enhanced and the coils can be loaded quickly and efficiently, everyone’s a winner.”

### Transport provider is an important partner

A transport partner plays an important role in a steel mill’s operations. The mill dispatches a lot of direct customer deliveries, and the transport company is the last calling card seen by the customer.

“We have limited storage space at our mills, so it’s important to get deliveries out at the agreed times. We want to be able to track shipments, and that’s something we can do very well with Ahola,” Hellsten says.

Ahola Transport plans routes digitally to make transports as flexible and cost-efficient as possible. This is a clear benefit for the customer, as excess costs are reflected in prices.

“It is also important for environmental reasons to drive with a high fill rate and as few empty kilometres as possible. We’ve got good results from this with Ahola,” Hellsten says.

The joint endeavours of SSAB and Ahola Transport will continue after this experience, too. In future, the aim is to pilot solutions which reduce emissions across the entire transport chain. ●



>>> CASE STUDY: ESTANC AS

# Record large transport demands extremely precise planning

An articulated transport more than 60 metres long and as tall as a small block of flats turned heads on the road in the spring of last year. The largest transport performed by Ahola Special to date was also one of the largest special transports in Estonian history.

**AHOLA SPECIAL CONDUCTED** one of its largest special transports to date in cooperation with the Estonian company Estanc in the spring of 2021. The assignment was to transport a 195-tonne tank from Jüri, near Tallinn, 70 km to Paldiski harbour, where the journey would continue by ship to Uruguay.

Estanc is the largest manufacturer in the Baltic and Nordic countries of process equipment for industry and energy production. The company's most significant recent projects have included large feed tanks, columns and reactors for a range of industries in Scandinavia and Central Europe. Ahola Special has been the company's partner for special transports.

"We've done large transports for them in the past, but this was exceptionally large and demanded extensive preparation," CEO **Jonas Ahola** says.

» *Transporting the 195-tonne tank required a flatbed with 26 axles and 104 tyres. In addition, two vehicles were needed: one to pull and one to push.*

## Precise route planning

An articulated load around 60 metres long, eight metres high and weighing a total of 300 tonnes is difficult to move in any conditions. Now, the challenge was not just the schedule but also the timing. In the winter, permafrost helps the ground sustain large loads, but in April that is less certain. The roads' load-bearing capacity was tested on the departure day, after which the transport was given the green light.

The transport itself took a total of three nights and required 30 people. The dimensions of the articulated load meant a special route had to be chosen and the roads taken had to be planned with particular precision.

Several special arrangements were made along the way to keep the transport moving. Roads and junctions had to be widened and reinforced. At level crossings, power lines had to be loosened so they could be raised high enough. Train traffic needed to be halted for this, which was a challenging procedure at such short notice.

## A challenge to the fleet

"Planning the transport required a lot of simulation to ensure correct measurement of all the necessary chang-

es along the way. The permit processes also took time. All in all the operation demanded very intense preparation," Ahola says.

The large special transport was also a challenge for the fleet. Two vehicles were needed: one to pull and one to push. The trailer was built of modular flatbeds to suit the transport. There were 26 axles and thus over a hundred tyres.

"This was the first time we'd used so many axles. The whole operation had to be planned jointly with the factory to ensure everything worked," Ahola says.

## Expert partner

Estanc CEO **Priit Haldma** says the company expects its transport provider to be a professional partner with industry-leading preparations, communication and implementation.

"Transporting large equipment is a challenging task and a lot can happen if preparations fail. Ahola has the team and the necessary fleet to take on all the projects we presented. In addition, communicating openly and understanding the nature and challenges of our business are things that Ahola has done well over the years." ●





Ahola image archive

Helge Ahola and road administration representatives in the 1950s.

>>> SUMMARY OF AHOLA

# 67-year- young family company

Helge Ahola realised that there was a demand on the market which he and his lorries could satisfy. In Finland in the 1950s, there was a need to transport the components of the future welfare state, including gravel and other useful materials. A transport business was born, one which his sons Hans, Lars, Nils and Rolf gradually entered.

**1955**

Helge Ahola began transporting goods 67 years ago

**1960-1990**

**1973** First international transport to Sweden

**1977** Hans Ahola becomes his father's partner

**1986-1988** Turning point in company's profitability development: decision to focus on proprietary, direct transports: Online concept begins.

**1990-2010**

**1992-1996** Strong growth period

**1996** Decision to develop system supporting transport planning in-house. Attracs project begins.

**2002** Company receives ISO 14001 environmental certification.

**2000s** Ahola Group parent company established, Attracs incorporated and AT Special Transport established

**2010-2021**

**2010** Growth plans

**2014** Share offering to employees and next generation

**2017** New Service Tower planning and control centre inaugurated. In the Service Tower, specialists monitor operative data, such as weather and vehicle movements, in real time on wall-mounted monitors

**2015-2021** Company traded publicly

## Ahola Group

A Finnish family business established in 1955 that employed an average of 700 people in 2021.



**Values**

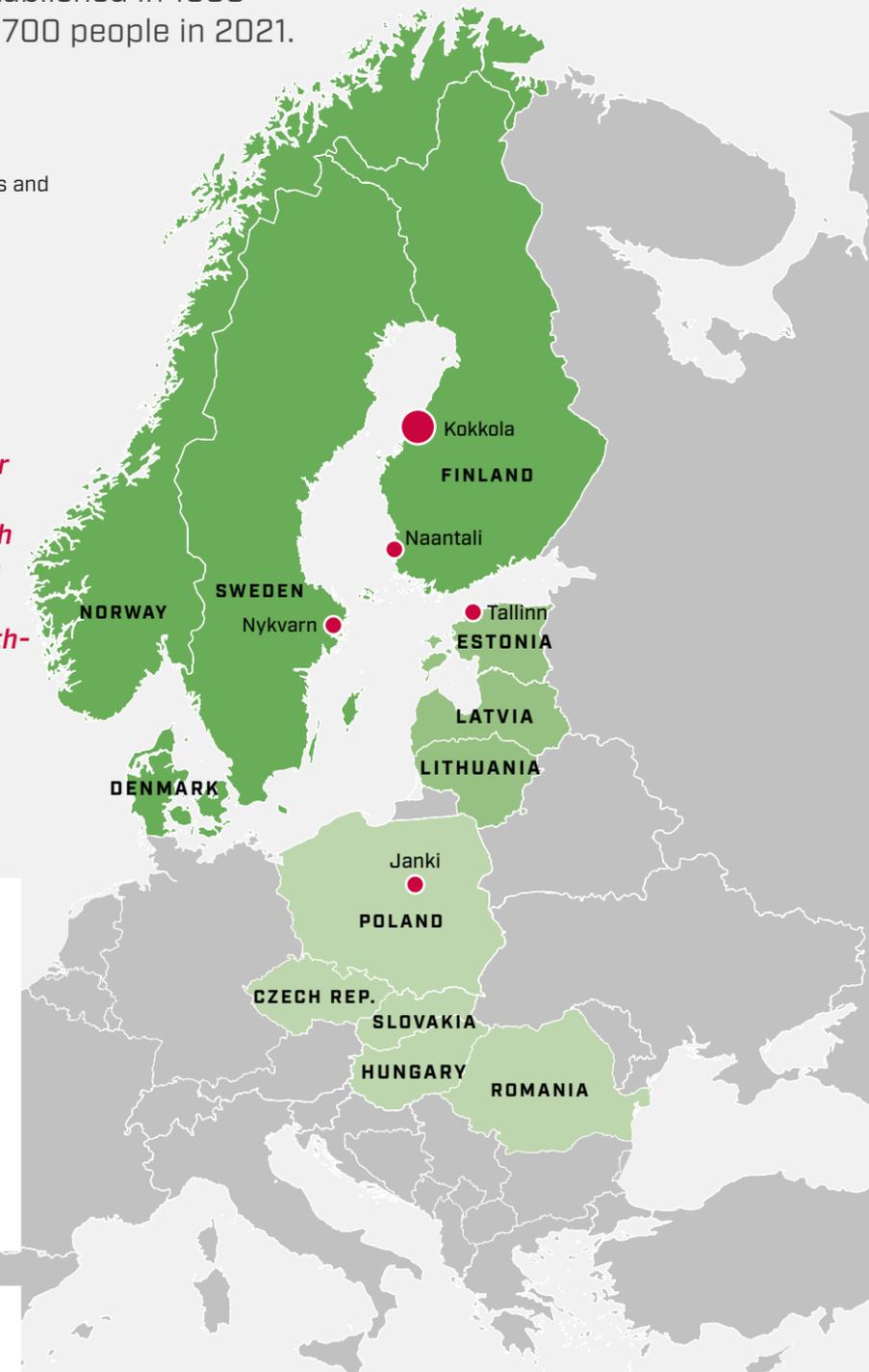
Total responsibility, openness and respect for the individual



**Mission**

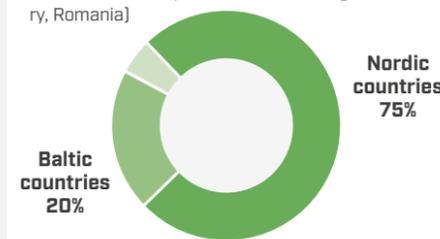
Logistics flows on our responsibility.

*Our years of experience in retail and transport, combined with our dynamic logistics concept, form an unbeatable combination which has helped us become one of the leading transport companies in the Nordic countries and a growth-oriented operator in the Central and Eastern European markets.*

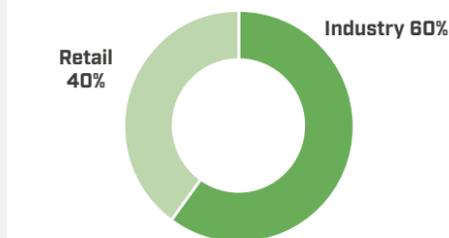


**Market areas**

**CEE countries 5%**  
(Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania)



**Market segments**



**Certificates**





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AHOLA  
SPECIAL

SCANIA  
AHOLA  
SPECIAL

281 1177



[aholagroup.com](http://aholagroup.com)

WAY AHEAD



**WAY AHEAD**



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