



DHL Express Introduces AI-Powered Item Identification for International Shipping — A First in the Global Express Logistics Industry

- One photo, instant customs-compliant description – complexity removed at source
- Higher data accuracy, fewer delays, faster clearance, better customer experience

Bonn, May 7, 2026: DHL Express, the world’s leading international express services provider, today announced the launch of its AI-powered item identification — a first in the global express shipping industry. This innovative capability uses advanced computer vision to analyze a customer-generated photo of a shipment item and instantly generate a precise, customs-compliant description, transforming one of the most complex steps in international shipping into a seamless experience.

The development marks the latest in DHL Express’s ongoing commitment to simplifying cross-border shipping through practical, customer-centric innovation. Accurately describing shipment contents to meet customs requirements has traditionally required specialized knowledge and careful wording. By embedding AI directly into the booking process, DHL Express removes this complexity, improving data quality, reducing the risk of delays, and making international shipping more accessible and reliable for customers of all experience levels.

A customer simply photographs the item they intend to ship using any standard smartphone or connected device. The AI system processes the image via a server-side computer vision model, classifies the object, and generates a structured, customs-compliant item description aligned with international documentation standards — all within seconds. The suggested description is then presented to the customer, who can easily review, edit, or override the entry before submitting the shipment. No DHL Express account is required, ensuring a simple and accessible experience. This deployment marks a significant step forward in applied AI within logistics, representing the first-time item identification has been seamlessly integrated into a live, customer-facing international express booking flow at scale.

Dirk Olufs, EVP & Global CIO at DHL Express, says: “Computer vision is now live for customers across multiple markets, but what matters most is the impact. Accurate item classification at the point of data entry means cleaner data across the entire shipment lifecycle: fewer holds, faster clearance, and a better outcome for the customer.”



Enna Zarate, Senior Vice President, Digital Customer Solutions at DHL Express adds: “The item description field was not a minor inconvenience — it was a critical moment where the customer experience broke down. This AI feature is a direct response to customer feedback, and we are proud that DHL Express is the first in our industry to bring it to customers.”

The international express industry has long relied on shippers to self-declare item contents without substantive assistance. While customs documentation tools have evolved in other respects, the fundamental task of item description has remained manual, text-based, and dependent on the shipper’s knowledge of customs authority requirements. DHL Express’s deployment is the first time computer vision item identification has been embedded in a live, customer-facing international express booking flow at scale.

The feature is now live across eight markets: Canada (CA), Germany (DE), Hong Kong (HK), Netherlands (NL), Singapore (SG), South Africa (ZA), Spain (ES), and United Arab Emirates (UAE). The further rollout is planned throughout 2026.

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You can find the press release for download as well as further information on group.dhl.com/pressreleases

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DHL – The logistics company for the world

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fulfillment solutions, international express, road, air and ocean transport to industrial supply chain management. With approximately 389,000 employees in more than 220 countries and territories worldwide, DHL connects people and businesses securely and reliably, enabling global sustainable trade flows. With specialized solutions for growth markets and industries including technology, life sciences and healthcare, engineering, manufacturing & energy, auto-mobility and retail, DHL is decisively positioned as “The logistics company for the world”.

DHL is part of DHL Group. The Group generated revenues of approximately 82.9 billion euros in 2025. With sustainable business practices and a commitment to society and the environment, the Group makes a positive contribution to the world. DHL Group aims to achieve net-zero emissions logistics by 2050.