



ANTWERP PORT AUTHORITY

PRESS RELEASE

Port of Antwerp is ideal maritime gateway for France

The port of Antwerp aims to position itself more strongly as the ideal maritime gateway for France. In 2009 some 500,000 TEU was carried to and from the French hinterland, and the Antwerp port community wishes to further increase this volume. "This can be done by improving the hinterland connections and implementing our Total Plan," said Port Authority CEO Eddy Bruyninckx today at the Port Day in Paris organised by the Port Authority, the Antwerp private sector and the Customs service.

Around 16% of all container traffic to and from Antwerp's hinterland has France as its origin or destination. Important trading regions for the port are Lille-Roubaix-Valenciennes and Alsace-Lorraine. More than half of the container volume – some 300,000 TEU – is carried by road. This situation is due mainly to Antwerp's favourable geographical location, deep inland, so that most of the landward journeys are only a few hundred kilometres. As a result the transport costs to and from Antwerp are considerably lower than for ports such as Rotterdam and Hamburg.

The rest of the container volume is fairly evenly divided between barge and rail transport. The Rhine and Moselle in particular are important for barge freight. Transport via the Scheldt and the Leie is expected to get a significant boost once the Seine-Scheldt project has been completed. For rail transport there is an increasingly wide range of services to and from intermodal terminals situated near the border, in places such as Kortrijk, Mouscron, Athus and Charleroi. There are also important rail services to for instance Spain, Italy and Switzerland with stops in France. Recently IFB added a French destination to its Spanish rail service, with the intermodal terminal in Bonneuil-Sur-Marne.

At the Port Day in Paris Eddy Bruyninckx also presented the Total Plan for the port that has been drawn up in collaboration with the private sector. The aim of this plan is to attract more conventional freight to the port and to develop Antwerp into **the** general cargo port of Europe. The results of this plan will be reported to the General Assembly of the Antwerp port community before the summer.

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