

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF THE BELGIAN PORTS:

Flemish maritime ports, Liège port complex
and the port of Brussels – Report 2009

Working Paper Document

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1.4 Direct and indirect employment in the Belgian ports

Direct employment was down by 3 % in 2009 and total employment including indirect effects dropped by 5 %. Indirect employment therefore declined faster than direct employment. This fall in indirect employment was more marked in the fuel production sector, chemicals, metalworking, car manufacturing and other supporting transport activities.

As in 2008, direct employment in the port of Antwerp suffered mainly from a marked decline in car manufacturing. There was also a significant fall in the case of cargo handling and shipping agents and forwarders. In the port of Ghent, car manufacturing, metalworking and to a lesser extent chemicals had a very negative impact on employment. In the port of Ostend, the expansion of employment in the non-maritime cluster made up for the decline in the maritime cluster. In the port of Zeebrugge, cargo handling, other industries and road transport were the sectors with the biggest job losses, though many activities were affected. In the Liège port complex, the slump in metalworking depressed total employment. In the port of Brussels, employment declined in 2009. Job losses were most significant in cargo handling and chemicals.

TABLE 5 EMPLOYMENT IN THE BELGIAN PORTS
(FTE)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Relative share in 2009 (in p.c.)	Change from 2008 to 2009 (in p.c.)	Annual average change from 2004 to 2009 (in p.c.)
1. DIRECT EFFECTS	119,970	120,670	121,034	122,805	123,853	120,097	100.0	- 3.0	+ 0.0
Antwerp	61,931	62,550	63,275	64,156	64,054	62,577	52.1	- 2.3	+ 0.2
Ghent	27,038	27,203	27,109	27,385	27,643	26,733	22.3	- 3.3	- 0.2
Ostend	4,441	4,445	4,634	4,839	5,025	5,079	4.2	+ 1.1	+ 2.7
Zeebrugge	10,390	10,162	10,492	10,483	10,889	10,480	8.7	- 3.8	+ 0.2
Liège	11,729	11,568	11,016	11,375	11,581	10,670	8.9	- 7.9	- 1.9
Brussels	4,442	4,743	4,509	4,567	4,662	4,559	3.8	- 2.2	+ 0.5
Outside the ports (p.m.) ²⁸ ..	1,860	1,979	2,605	2,617	2,752	2,787	-	+ 1.3	+ 8.4
2. INDIRECT EFFECTS	142,013	141,263	144,722	150,879	156,893	146,572	-	- 6.6	+ 0.6
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT	261,982	261,932	265,756	273,684	280,747	266,669	-	- 5.0	+ 0.4

¹ Source: NBB (calculations based on the Belgian accounts filed with the Central Balance Sheet Office, and the Belgian IOTs).

In 2009, the workers employed in the Belgian ports represented 3.1 % of Belgian domestic employment²⁹. That is the same as the 2008 figure. Altogether (including indirect employment), the Flemish ports accounted for 10.4 % of employment in Flanders, and the Belgian ports represented 6.8 % of employment in Belgium. These last two figures are down against 2008.

In companies outside the ports, employment declined again in the fishing segment, but also in shipping companies. It expanded in shipbuilding and repair, and shipping agents and forwarders. Finally, it remained stable in cargo handling.

²⁸ These figures stand for the activity of the maritime enterprises located outside the port limits and are divided among the Flemish ports according to the breakdown of value added.

²⁹ Source: National Accounts Institute (2010), *National accounts. Detailed accounts and tables 2000-2009*.