

Port of Antwerp-Bruges: a future-ready hub for chemical industry and energy transition

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Port of Antwerp-Bruges has reinforced its position as a key hub for Europe's chemical industry through significant recent investments, of A.P. Moller Holding (Vioneo) and Indaver (P2C), aimed at maintaining its competitive edge in the context of global market shifts and the energy transition. Ahead of this year's European Petrochemical Association (EPCA) meeting, Port of Antwerp-Bruges highlights its critical role, emphasizing investments in sustainable innovations.

Recent developments further strengthen this position, including the investment by A.P. Moller Holding in Vioneo, a large-scale fossil-free plastics production plant, and the Plastics-to-Chemicals (P2C) project by Indaver. These initiatives align with Port of Antwerp-Bruges' focus on sustainability, as Vioneo will boost fossil-free production capacity, while the P2C project converts captured CO₂ into valuable chemicals, driving both innovation and environmental responsibility.

Jacques Vandermeiren, CEO of Port of Antwerp-Bruges: *"The Vioneo investment confirms that our chemical cluster is still among the world's best, and is a great example of transition to a sustainable way of growing. We are pleased that, with A.P. Moller Holding, a European company is making such a major investment in our port. This project shows once again how the combination of maritime transport, logistics and industry make Port of Antwerp-Bruges a unique place to invest."*

Key role in Europe's chemical supply chain

As one of Europe's largest integrated ports, Port of Antwerp-Bruges is essential to the European chemical industry, with strong trade ties, particularly with Germany. Approximately 40% of the port's throughput involves German trade, reflecting its strategic importance to the region's industrial supply chain. Global corporations such as BASF, Covestro, and ExxonMobil utilize Port of Antwerp-Bruges' infrastructure for both production and logistics, benefiting from the port's efficient multimodal transport connections and service offerings.

Strategic investments to secure long-term competitiveness

In response to evolving industry demands, private companies at the Antwerp platform have invested over €10 billion in recent years to upgrade and expand its industrial capabilities. Key projects include the construction of a new ethane cracker for Ineos to significantly increase ethylene production capacity—vital to the chemical sector and one of the most efficient and environmentally friendly plants of its kind. Additionally, Port of Antwerp-Bruges is developing one of Europe's largest platforms for green hydrogen import and distribution, a critical resource for reducing industrial emissions. And Borealis is advancing the construction of a propane dehydrogenation (PDH) plant to bolster propylene production, supporting the plastics manufacturing industry.

Leading the energy transition

Port of Antwerp-Bruges is actively supporting the chemical industry's transition to more sustainable operations through various initiatives, including electrification of port infrastructure, CO₂ capture and storage, and hydrogen import facilities. The Antwerp@C project, which will capture and store up to 10 million tons of CO₂ annually, is central to reducing emissions in energy-intensive sectors. Furthermore, the port is integrating digitalization and automation into its operations, optimizing resource efficiency and reducing CO₂ output, which is crucial for maintaining industrial competitiveness while meeting sustainability targets.

Enhanced logistics and infrastructure for chemicals

Port of Antwerp-Bruges continues to provide advanced logistics solutions tailored to the specific needs of the chemical industry, including specialized storage for hazardous and temperature-sensitive materials. The port offers comprehensive packaging and handling services for a wide range of chemical products and raw materials. Its multimodal transport network—featuring rail, inland shipping, and road—ensures reliable and environmentally sustainable connections to key markets, particularly Germany.

Commitment to industry growth and sustainability

Port of Antwerp-Bruges' participation in EPCA 2024 underscores its ongoing commitment to supporting the chemical sector. In the face of rising energy prices and increasing global competition, Port of Antwerp-Bruges remains focused on expanding its infrastructure and providing sustainable logistics solutions to support the industry's decarbonization and digitalization efforts.

Despite current market challenges, Port of Antwerp-Bruges is optimistic about the future, recognizing the need for a balanced approach that addresses both environmental and economic priorities. The Antwerp Declaration, a declaration adopted last year by close to 1300 companies calling upon policy makers to complement the sustainability agenda with an industrial agenda, demonstrates that it is not only possible but essential to align the ambitions of a sustainable future with the reality of a strong industrial economy.

Through continued investment in infrastructure and sustainability, Port of Antwerp-Bruges is well-positioned to support the future growth of Europe's chemical industry and play a key role in driving the energy transition.

In summary, the Port of Antwerp-Bruges is not merely a logistics hub but a strategic partner for the chemical industry, facilitating innovation, growth, and sustainability across Europe.