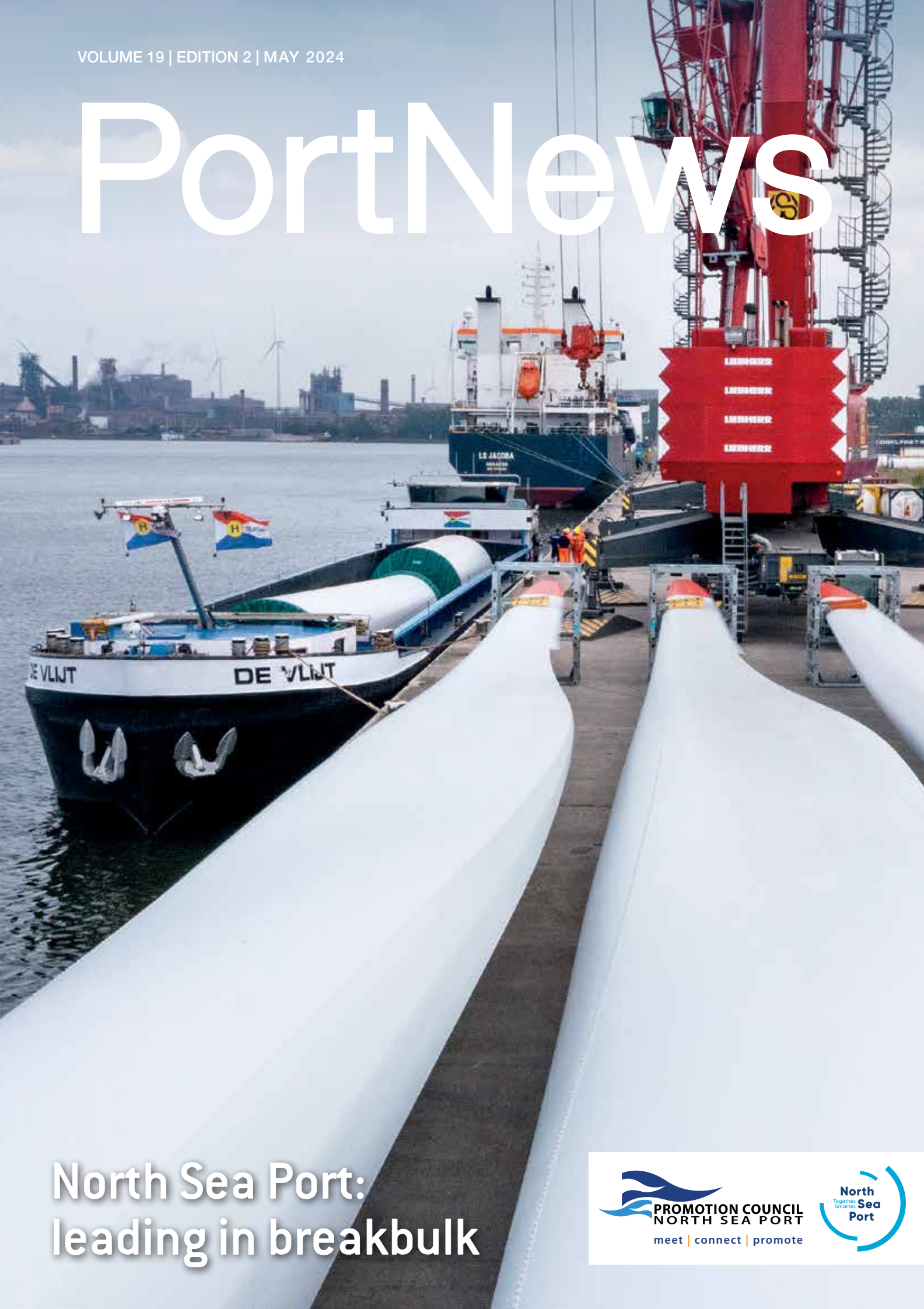


PortNews



North Sea Port:
leading in breakbulk



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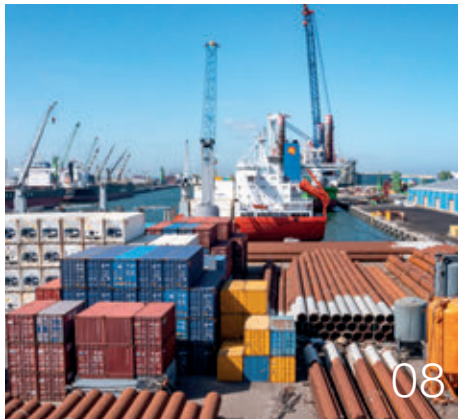
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ON THE COVER

North Sea Port is one of Europe's leading ports in breakbulk and project cargo. The port authority will this year once again host a broad range of companies and organisations at its stand at Breakbulk Europe. Read more on page 7.
Special cargo is loaded at the quay at Stukwerkers Havenbedrijf in Ghent.
Image courtesy of Tom D'haenens.

EVENTS

North Sea Port and Promotion Council North Sea Port will be in attendance at various events and trade shows.

Below you'll find a snapshot of the upcoming events that might be of interest to you.

21-23 MAY 2024	BreakBulk Europe Rotterdam	13-14 JUNE 2024	Wind Day Vlissingen	20 JUNE 2024	Maritieme Haringparty Vlissingen
					
12 SEPTEMBER 2024	Golf Event Goes	17-18 SEPTEMBER 2024	Transport & Logistics Ghent	7-10 OCTOBER 2024	European Petro-chemical Association Berlin
					
8-10 OCTOBER 2024	Fruit Attraction Madrid	16 OCTOBER 2024	Port Business Event Zwijnaarde (Ghent)	26-27 NOVEMBER 2024	Offshore Energy Amsterdam
					
3 DECEMBER 2024	Havenpalaver Terneuzen	5-6 DECEMBER 2024	European Commodities Exchange Paris	2-5 JUNE 2025	Transport & Logistic Munich
					



Port collaboration for a sustainable future

Welcome

This edition of PortNews contains information on many new developments taking place at companies in our port area. It shows that businesses continue to invest and confirms there are numerous economic opportunities. There is, however, also a degree of economic uncertainty.

As a result, the port companies of Antwerp-Bruges, North Sea Port, Duisburg and Rotterdam have joined forces. On the eve of the European Industry Summit on 17 and 18 April, we called on European government leaders to find a solution to the deteriorating position of our industry.

Historically, major seaports mainly competed with one another. This has fundamentally changed. We are now also talking to each other about how, together, we are able to secure a sustainable future for the industry in our ports. Our society rightly calls for a better balance between industry and the environment, and for drastically less industrial impact on the climate.

Many determining industries are multinationals who now decide where investments are made. The manufacturing industry in the triangle between the Flemish-Dutch ports and the German Ruhr region is responsible for a large part of European production. As seaports, we provide a location for large industrial complexes. We can, therefore, play an important role in this. What is also required is that our governments take an international perspective and show their willingness to stand alongside the business community. This is why we have jointly addressed the European government leaders.

The future of our ports and industrial clusters should not be placed at risk. Together, we as European seaports emphasise the importance of 'The Antwerp Declaration for a European Industrial Deal' formulated by the European business community. As ports, we also take the lead in improving the investment climate for industry



in Europe, so that companies here want to invest in sustainability. As landlords of large industrial complexes, we want to work towards a shared vision.

We hope that the industry will have the opportunity to make the transition in Europe; it forms a crucial part of our ports, in addition to logistics and the energy sector. This involves approximately EUR 63 billion in added value and more than half a million jobs. It is time to combine national and European climate policy with efforts to preserve industry in Europe. This is how we can secure for future generations the prosperity that comes from more sustainable ports and industry.

With kind regards,
Daan Schalck
CEO of North Sea Port



A joint, national interest

Currently, in the Netherlands, the formation of a new cabinet is in full swing, while in Belgium and Flanders, federal and Flemish elections are scheduled for 9 June to elect new Belgian and Flemish governments. This is a moment that should not be missed to draw attention to the ambitions of North Sea Port to the new administrators of both countries.

It is not often that Dutch, Belgian, and European elections are so close together, and when there is a possibility of shifting direction within a country, it is important for the port company to highlight the significant role the port plays for its own region, but also at the national and even European level.

Many opportunities

According to Stefaan De Weireld, public affairs advisor at North Sea Port, it is important for North Sea Port, as a cross-border port, to seek cooperation with the governments of both countries wherever possible. “North Sea Port is a cross-border

port with an annual added value of EUR 12.7 billion. It ranks as the third-largest port in Europe. Moreover, it is a port region that accounts for 106,000 jobs and an industry that belongs to the (innovative) world elite. We have the ambition to anchor our position as a European top port with spatial added value for our environment.” He continues, “As our environment, we see not only the immediate port region of Zeeland and Flanders but also the Netherlands and Belgium as a whole. Furthermore, it can be safely said that our port area, with its activities, also plays an important role at the European level.” His public affairs colleague, Edwin Evenhuis, adds, “North Sea Port and the



The Noordzee Sluizen (North Sea locks), including the Nieuwe Sluis Terneuzen (new lock Terneuzen), which will open in 2024, are a new benchmark for the port and region.

Image courtesy of VNSC.

entire port ecosystem are examples of how cross-border cooperation can offer enormous opportunities for the region, which also has a positive effect on the national economies of both countries. So, our ambitions revolve around both the interests of the companies in the port and the region, as well as the opportunities that have a much larger societal and economic scope. However, we need to be able to seize these opportunities, and to not miss the momentum, we are putting forward an ambitious implementation agenda in which national governments also play a role. This agenda has three perspectives: cooperation between the Netherlands and Flanders/Belgium, creating development space, and accelerating sustainability projects towards a climate-neutral port by 2050. We actively convey this message, also together with partners, towards The Hague and Brussels.”

Connector

“As far as we are concerned,” says Stefaan De Weireld, “the strengthening of broad prosperity in our region goes hand in hand with the realisation of strategic national challenges in a competitive European and international field. The Noordzee Sluizen (North Sea locks), including the Nieuwe Sluis Terneuzen (new lock Terneuzen), which will open in 2024, are therefore a new benchmark for the port and region. At the same time, as a port, we face various challenges. We are in dynamic times of geopolitical uncertainty, a nitrogen crisis, economic challenges, an energy crisis, and an extremely tight labour market. All of this comes together. North Sea Port is ambitiously working towards a transition of the seaport in the interest of achieving broad prosperity for our region and our national economies. This is necessary to further strengthen our position. To remain successful at the international level and thus ensure the contribution of the port area to prosperity, cooperation from our current and future governments is crucial. Therefore, North Sea Port actively conveys this message in intensive interaction with other stakeholders such as regional and local governments and representatives of the port business community. We cannot do this alone, however North Sea Port is the ideal party to act as a connector to bring together the various stakeholders.”

Cross-border port development

As indicated above, three perspectives are important for realising the ambitions of the port at the national level in terms of cooperation. Edwin Evenhuis elaborates on them successively. “Firstly, there should be an implementation agenda for further cross-border port development. Seaports are distinguishing factors in a country’s investment and its investment climate. The significance of North Sea Port as a production and distribution hub and as a transit port for, for example, new energy carriers, is indisputable. We therefore want to emphasise the importance of targeted policy for our port on bundled corridors for, among other things, energy, raw materials, and goods. In addition, North Sea Port has set modal shift ambitions for further sustainability to increase the share of rail from 10% to 15%. For this, it is necessary to strengthen the attractiveness of using rail to the hinterland. There is a strong focus on the realisation of pipelines, including those for the further growth of our hub function for green hydrogen. In addition, by means of a concrete cross-border approach to many port developments at North Sea Port, added value is created for the entire region on both sides of the border. This is therefore also a European story. Timing in prioritisation, decision-making, financing, and implementation



Regarding the development of rail freight transport, the port has achieved an important result in its joint approach with the region and the business community.

must seamlessly and effectively connect across borders. That always remains an important theme in our port area for which we ask attention.”

Adequate development space

Edwin Evenhuis continues, “As a second perspective, I mention the realisation of sufficient development space. The importance of our port and our hinterland connections are indispensable for the various transitions. They also affect the immediate environment and may conflict with other spatial claims. The (spatial) development task of our seaport is therefore becoming an increasingly urgent issue. The lack of sufficient space due to, for example, the nitrogen impasse and permit issuance harms investment and the investment climate. This also affects the societal and economic mandate for further port development. The realisation of the necessary infrastructure to support the large-scale transitions of the port and strengthening an economic ecosystem in and around the port is therefore under pressure. We therefore explicitly ask future policymakers to name the importance of (spatial) development opportunities for North Sea Port as a seaport for both the realisation of national interests and the strengthening of broad prosperity in the region in the spatial vision.”

Accelerating sustainability projects

Finally, Edwin Evenhuis mentions accelerating the implementation of sustainability projects in the port and region. “To achieve climate objectives and to further strengthen livability in our region, North Sea Port continues to focus on supporting the further greening of the industry. We do this collectively in cooperation with industry, local government, and collaborations such as Smart Delta Resources. This is essential for improving broad prosperity in our region. For this, it is important to expedite the necessary infrastructure with cross-border connections. It is crucial to ensure security of supply and reinforcement of the electricity infrastructure for the electrification of industry. There are great opportunities for cross-border collaborations, focusing on system integration and leveraging synergies by connecting Dutch and Belgian energy systems, and also with our neighbouring countries. With a view to strengthening and sustainably anchoring the industrial cluster and the added value for the region, we advocate a cross-border agenda for accelerated realisation of 380kV infrastructure in Zeeland, a connection to the Flemish/Belgian energy supply, for unabated ambition in realising the hydrogen infrastructure, and the connection with the national backbones, for large-scale integration of offshore wind and for space reservation for connecting infrastructure with industrial clusters and neighbouring countries.”

Already achieved a lot

“One of the major challenges we face,” explains Stefaan De Weireld, “is the difference in pace at which decision-making takes place. To truly make progress, it is important that decision-making in the Netherlands and Belgium ideally runs in parallel. This is important for the realisation of cross-border projects. So, there are still plenty of challenges, but a lot has also been achieved, not least through joint lobbying with other parties in the region. In recent years, the port, together with national, regional, local, and provincial governments and the business community, has actively worked on realising various projects. The construction of the North Sea Locks, which will be opened in October 2024, is the most important evidence of this. It is a project that was initiated even before the port merger and

thus shows that cooperation in the region was already taking place at that time, also by the two former port companies of Zeeland and Ghent. Recently, through joint efforts, funding has been secured for a study into the optimisation of the Ghent-Terneuzen Canal. The new lock complex is therefore also suitable for larger ships.”

Recognition

Stefaan De Weireld continues, “Regarding the development of rail freight transport, the port has achieved an important result in our joint approach with the region and the business community. Both the Belgian, Flemish, and Dutch governments have made funds available for improving rail freight transport in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen towards Ghent. In the Rail Ghent-Terneuzen project, we work closely with Belgian (Infrabel) and Dutch (ProRail) rail infrastructure managers. Another success in terms of infrastructure is the realisation of the necessary hydrogen infrastructure in the port area, with the Dutch pipeline network being connected to the Belgian network. This is a collaboration with the Belgian utility provider Fluxys and the Dutch Gasunie. Increasingly, recognition is also coming from Europe, as evidenced by the various projects that have received financial EU contributions. This also means that we have an ambitious European agenda, as outlined in the previous edition of Portnews by our colleague Louise De Tremerie.”

Cooperation at all levels

“As far as we are concerned, the development of our port area is a matter of joint national interest,” emphasises Edwin Evenhuis once again. “It has enormous potential in terms of economic and societal value, employment, and energy transition. The above examples show what good cooperation between all parties and at all levels can lead to. It is therefore important, not only for the port area but also for Belgium and the Netherlands, that the new governments are aware of the importance of working together to achieve the objectives of our port. As a connector, we are happy to bring together the right parties and help to continuously bring this importance to the attention of these parties.”

MORE INFORMATION

North Sea Port

Edwin Evenhuis,
public affairs advisor
E. edwin.evenhuis@northseaport.com



North Sea Port

Stefaan De Weireld,
public affairs advisor
E. stefaan.deweireld@northseaport.com
I. [NORTHSEAPORT.COM](https://www.northseaport.com)



North Sea Port present at Europe's largest project cargo and breakbulk gathering

From 21 to 23 May 2024, Breakbulk Europe will once again unite the project cargo and breakbulk industry at Ahoy Rotterdam. Over 4,000 companies will meet at the ultimate networking platform to generate new business, and to strengthen existing relationships.



Breakbulk Europe 2024 in details

Date: 21 - 23 May
Venue: Rotterdam Ahoy, Ahoyweg 10,
3084 BA Rotterdam
The Netherlands
Opening hours: Tuesday, 21 May: 17:00-20:00h
Wednesday, 22 May: 10:00-18:00h
Thursday, 23 May: 10:00-16:00h

Breakbulk Europe is the largest gathering of project cargo professionals covering the entire supply chain. An international audience of around 9,000 people, representing over 120 countries will come to Rotterdam. From the top industrial manufacturers, EPCs and project owners to all modes of transporters and related service providers, you will get the opportunity to meet them all.

Exhibitors include cargo owners, ocean carriers, freight forwarders, ports and terminals, heavy haulers, equipment companies, and more that are involved in breakbulk and project cargo.

Next to the many exhibitors that are showcasing, various networking and social activities are organised, such as the Breakbulk Boulevard Party, Women in Breakbulk Breakfast, and a Rotterdam Boat Tour.

The parallel conferences will take place at the Main Stage. Here, business opportunities, strategies and answers to the most pressing industry questions are showcased. Leading breakbulk and project executives will provide insights into the latest business and trade intelligence, as well as delve deeper into key markets, sectors and issues affecting the whole supply chain. For two days, industry trends will be analysed, and a global project market outlook presented.

North Sea Port, host to many companies

North Sea Port is one of Europe's leading ports in breakbulk and project cargo and has been a Breakbulk Europe exhibitor from the very beginning. This year North Sea Port again will be host to a broad range of international companies and organisations. **Visit them at booth 2K30-L31 in Hall 2.**

Companies present at the North Sea Port booth are
(as known on 4 April 2024):

- Cordeel Nederland;
- DFDS;
- Interlashing;
- Promotion Council North Sea Port;
- Stukwerkers Havenbedrijf;
- Supermaritime Nederland.

Other exhibiting companies from the North Sea Port area
(as known on 4 April 2024):

- Customs Support – booth 2B10;
- Mammoet – booth 1D20-E21;
- TOS Ports & Logistics – booth 2B10;
- Verbrugge Terminals – booth 2A41.

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The breakbulk sector continues to evolve, and North Sea Port moves along with it

For years, North Sea Port has played a significant role in the handling of conventional breakbulk cargo. Although containers also play a crucial role in this port, breakbulk remains relevant for many terminals, not least because of the role of project cargo.



Marcel Pater is one of the commercial managers at North Sea Port with, among other things, breakbulk and project cargo in his portfolio. Looking at recent years, he observes that despite the growth in containers, there is still great potential in conventional general cargo.

Everyone has their own speciality

“Of course, it’s a discussion worth having,” he says. “Yes, generally speaking, there is a transition area between breakbulk and containers, where the choice is mainly determined by price. Essentially, conventional breakbulk involves products that are packaged and transported as a unit itself or on pallets. Despite containerisation, a significant amount of cargo is still conventionally transported and stored today, and various terminals in our port continue to play an important role in the breakbulk services. Traditionally, this includes items such as cellulose, paper, fruit, fruit juice, potatoes, onions, as well as steel coils, slabs and beams and building materials such as MDF panels and insulation material. Each terminal in our port dealing with general cargo has its own specialisation.”

Not just offshore wind

In recent years, within the breakbulk package, the share of project cargo has grown significantly. “When we consider the growth of project cargo, the immediate tendency is to attribute it to the emergence of offshore wind farm installation projects,” explains Marcel Pater, “and indeed, our port plays a crucial, if not the most significant, role in Europe in the handling of all related equipment such as foundations, transition pieces, pillars, turbines, blades and electricity cables. Already over 70 offshore wind farms have been installed from Vlissingen since 2009. However, we must be careful not to undersell ourselves and the companies in the port area. Even before offshore wind became prominent, project cargo was already a significant type of cargo in our port. For those not familiar, project cargo essentially encompasses all breakbulk cargo too large to handle with general transport means and mostly showing specific features. This type of cargo is also diverse, ranging from engines, construction components, and complete factory modular installations to vehicles that do not drive on board themselves like on a RoRo ship, but are instead individually lifted on board.”

Breakbulk Europe

According to Marcel Pater, the Breakbulk Europe exhibition is an important gauge of market developments. “We have been attending the Breakbulk Europe exhibition for years, and ten to fifteen years ago, this exhibition mainly focused on everything related to conventional palletised goods. Over the years, the focus has shifted more towards project cargo. This was evident in the topics of the conference programme, as well as the participating exhibitors and visitors. At present, the exhibition officially positions itself as ‘Europe’s premier event for project cargo and general cargo’. The order in this sentence indicates how important project cargo has become. This development

Thanks to its central location on the North Sea and good accessibility for both deep-sea, shortsea and inland shipping, Vlissingen is the perfect location to offer an optimal logistics concept to the offshore industry.



Despite containerisation, a significant amount of cargo is still conventionally transported and stored today.

has also taken place in our port, with parties increasingly profiling themselves in this part of the market.”

Global events

According to Marcel Pater, the development of cargo flows heavily depends on global events. “Of course, we immediately think of the consequences of the war in Ukraine and its effect on the handling of liquid and dry bulk, but the same applies to breakbulk and project cargo. During the time of COVID-19, for example, there were issues with container availability. At that time, you saw the market quickly respond and switch to conventional loading. However, this situation eventually resolved, and then there was another influence: a significant shortage of labour capacity. Due to this shortage of labour, many terminals showed a decline in attention towards breakbulk which is labour intensive compared to containers and bulk. Fortunately, things are improving now, and its role is increasing again.”

Energy transition

Marcel Pater further explains, “The same applies to project cargo. The energy transition is a global development with Europe as a frontrunner. Offshore wind plays a significant role for many countries. The nine North Seas Energy Cooperation (NSEC) countries and the United Kingdom agreed in a joint statement to realise an installed capacity of offshore wind energy of at least 120GW in 2030 and 300GW by 2050. In 2023 these countries have a combined installed capacity of about 33GW in the North Sea. This implies an increase to four times of the current capacity before 2030 and ten times



Due to this shortage of labour, many terminals showed a decline in attention towards breakbulk which is labour intensive compared to containers and bulk.

before 2050. Thanks to its central location on the North Sea and good accessibility for both deep-sea, shortsea and inland shipping, Vlissingen is the perfect location to offer an optimal logistics concept to the offshore industry. The main parts such as monopiles, towers, nacelles and blades are currently produced at a variety of locations in and around Europe and are transported to the marshalling yard in Vlissingen from where the installation at sea takes place. For this purpose, Vlissingen offers a lot of space and heavy duty quay facilities. Fortunately, several terminals in our port have responded early to this demand, allowing us to play a leading role in this area. After the current booming newbuilding market there will be a continuous need for maintenance, replacement and decommissioning. In other words: project cargo it is!”

Strategic asset

Another consequence of the energy transition is the rise of green hydrogen, in which North Sea Port also plays a role. “The future will reveal to what extent green hydrogen will actually become a significant fuel in competition with other energy

forms,” says Marcel Pater, “or if it’s just an interim solution, but in any case, the construction of hydrogen electrolyser plants in our port offers ample opportunities, also for terminals that can handle project cargo. Nuclear energy is expected to be one of the most robust solutions for the energy transition and project terminals are available to play a significant role in the installation of the new plants. The intention is to build two new nuclear power plants next to the current one in Borssele. This is right next to our port area. It goes without saying that a significant portion of the components for these plants will be transported through our port.”

Marcel Pater continues, “It’s a fact that many basic industries in Europe are struggling with high energy prices and increased legislation. In case they lose competition to other parts of the world, Europe will show an increase in imports of the same semi-finished products. This will show a positive effect on the breakbulk tonnage figure of course, but that’s nothing to be proud of because on the other hand it means a big loss in employment and strategic values. In my opinion, basic industries should never disappear from Europe as this will not solve any environmental problem on a global level. And, for example the steel making industry, has historically been a strategic asset of European countries with respect to the supply of steel to the defence industry. Today’s geopolitical tensions are endorsing the importance of this.”

Question marks

Aside from these developments for breakbulk and project cargo, Marcel Pater acknowledges that, due to current events on the world stage, there are considerable uncertainties about what the future holds for breakbulk. “The big question mark is,” he says, “will Europe continue to experience globalisation of production, or will we move towards more local production? Europe aims to become less dependent on other regions. Not

only concerning energy supply but also for the production of strategic products. It’s therefore uncertain what this will mean for the handling of breakbulk and project cargo. Becoming more self-sufficient will mean an increase in import of raw materials in bulk, which we do not have that much by nature. It will also mean less import of semi-finished goods as we produce them ourselves. As a port we do not have an answer to the big question. We just remain flexible and prepare ourselves for changes.” Marcel Pater concludes, “In any case, the breakbulk market will continue to evolve, and it’s essential to keep track of developments. We must keep our port aligned with market demands. Just look at what’s happening right now in the offshore wind industry. Wind turbines and the vessels transporting their components are becoming larger and heavier. We must adapt with future-oriented investments in terminal space and quays to ensure the heavy duty bearing capacity. Also the manoeuvrability of offshore installation vessels must remain guaranteed as they are transversely loaded with the ever growing wind turbine blades. Only then can we maintain our position as one of the most important general cargo ports.”

MORE INFORMATION

North Sea Port

Marcel Pater

commercial manager

T. +31 6 3034 6342

E. marcel.pater@northseaport.com

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Traditionally, conventional breakbulk cargo includes items such as cellulose, paper, fruit, fruit juice, potatoes, onions, as well as steel coils, slabs and beams and building materials such as MDF panels and insulation material.



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An early birthday present

Upon entering the terminal of Bulk Terminal Zeeland, it is quiet, much quieter than the average visitor is used to. This quietness is only superficial because the transshipment company's operation is currently relocated a few metres away.



The new quay has room to load or unload two large bulk carriers of 70,000t at a time.



Part of the reason for this is the long-awaited construction of a new quay at Quarleshaven in the Vlissingen port area of North Sea Port. In a good conversation with the three managers of the terminal, we are informed about the progress. En passant, the approaching tenth anniversary is also discussed.

Willingness to invest

Since March 2022, construction consortium Hakkers - de Klerk has been working on the completely new 800m long Quarleskade. The agreement for construction of the new quay was signed for this purpose in December 2020. Work has started on the side of Shipyard Reimerswaal. This first phase, consisting of a length of 400m, was delivered and handed over to North Sea Port a year later, on 22 March, 2023. Then the construction of the last 400m could begin. Approximately 440m will eventually be used by Bulk Terminal Zeeland (BTZ)

and the moment when the first ship can dock is eagerly awaited. According to Jacco Geleijnse, CEO of BTZ, North Sea Port's willingness to invest has played an important role and shows the courage of the port authority. "North Sea Port has taken opportunity with the construction of the quay and we are very grateful to them for that. Part of the quay was built without finding a customer beforehand. In the end, BTZ is doing so well that during the construction process we decided to take a lease on part of the land behind the public quay, thus partially covering the risk for North Sea Port."

Good cooperation

"It seems a bit quiet here," says René Geleijnse, CCO of BTZ, as he looks outside. "The moment construction started on the part of the new quay adjacent to our terminal, we moved our operation there to the first phase. It was quite an operation



From left to right, René Geleijnse (CCO), Ko de Kraker (COO), and Jacco Geleijnse (CEO).



Image courtesy of Bulk Terminal Zeeland.

Just three years ago, BTZ bought a new Sennebogen 895 with hybrid drive. Because of its size, enormous power and green colour, this crane is also known as the 'Hulk in Bulk'. Now, a new 'Hulk' is on order that will be completely electric.

because the land behind our current quay had to be completely cleared. All bulk materials such as stone and scrap that were stored behind our quay had to be transported by truck a few hundred metres away, as well as our cranes and shovels. But everything went smoothly and we were able to get back to work quickly. "The move illustrates how helpful North Sea Port

has been in coming up with a good solution that allowed us to continue our work despite the construction of our new quay," Jacco Geleijnse adds. He continues: "This is a good example of how the whole process, from preparation to final execution, went in good cooperation with all parties involved. It must be said that North Sea Port played an important and positive role here."

Two ships at once

"Before we could begin construction of the new quay, the old quay first had to be demolished. Right now, the quay itself is almost finished," says Ko de Kraker, COO of BTZ. "Soon we will be able to use 440m of the total 800m long quay. The draft is 12.5m along its entire length, but longer sheet pile walls have been used along one quay segment, so we can quickly achieve a draught of 14m there if the market demands it. Soon we will start raising the land behind the quay ourselves, after which it can be paved. Then we will be able to receive two ships at the same time, which is a significant improvement because until now we have often had the problem of ships having to wait their turn. We currently unload one ship a day and, since January of this year, we have implemented a two-shift system, working seven days a week, eight hours a day to do this. This way we manage to unload the ships we receive on time. Our biggest customers now are contractors for the offshore wind sector, such as Deme, Jan De Nul and Van Oord. They come to our terminal to pick up rocks for various projects. Time is precious in their offshore work, which continues 24 hours a day. That's why our customers want their vessels back at sea as soon as possible. Of course, we are happy to contribute to that. However, it is now increasingly common that while we are loading one ship, a second one is on its way. Since we don't want to keep these ships waiting, we are jumping in by expanding our services to a 24-hour schedule.

Fortunately, our team is flexible enough that everyone does their part, but of course it would be better for everyone if things were a little less busy. The new quay has room to load or unload two large bulk carriers of 70,000t at a time, which will make our work a lot more pleasant and flexible.”

Tenfold

“Besides making our work more pleasant, the quay is also a nice unique selling proposition (USP) for the market,” explains René Geleijnse. “Right now we have a well-stocked portfolio. Our premises and warehouses are quite full, but we take into account that the boom in work for the offshore wind sector in the North Sea will continue for about another ten years. After that, the demand for rock in that market will decrease. Therefore, it is good to keep an eye on the situation, and our new quay, which will be a top quay not only because of its length but also because of its depth and carrying capacity, offers us a great opportunity to attract the attention of parties in other sectors.” He continues: “When we started, exactly ten years ago next year on 1 January, we looked at each other and said, ‘How will this ever fill up?’ And although this moment still feels like yesterday, history has proven that in the end this was not a problem at all. In ten years, our storage capacity has increased tenfold. Something we don’t often think about, but which our entire team, which now consists of some forty people, can be really proud of, and with the new quay we are ready for a healthy future.” “The first ship we unloaded was a grain ship,” Ko de Kraker also looks back. “A lot has changed since then. Although we still have a lot of knowledge, expertise and the right storage facilities for grain, for example we are GMP+ certified, we decided to switch to other dry bulk for our covered storage. Among other things, we are currently storing wood pellets for our customers. In our outdoor areas, it is mostly stone, but also, for example, gypsum and scrap metal. We now have a total storage area of 22ha, with a total of about 35,000m² of covered storage. Who would have thought that when we started here with about 2ha! Right now we still have enough space available, although the warehouses are so full that we have to rent space elsewhere. With each expansion we have to make the choice: open storage or covered? The advantage of covered storage is that you can also store materials that can be kept outside, whereas you cannot store materials such as grain and pellets outside.”

Looking ahead

Whatever the future holds, the men of BTZ are looking ahead positively. “We consider ourselves lucky to have our location,” states René Geleijnse. “No party saw it as feasible to start a bulk terminal here, but fortunately our intuition did not let us down and it turned out to be a unique waterfront location, with the important advantage that there was plenty of room for expansion next to our premises.” “Over the years,” adds Ko de Kraker, “we have continued to work hard and have not only expanded our premises, but also made necessary investments in our equipment and our people, which we will continue to do. When looking at sustainability and our ecological footprint, for example, a windmill and solar panels will also be installed to provide us with part of our own power needs. This example represents new challenges and professionalisation which will not only benefit us but our customers and stakeholders as well. Sometimes progress occurs unexpectedly fast. Just three years ago, we bought a new Sennebogen 895 with hybrid drive. Because of its size, enormous power and green colour, this crane is also known as the ‘Hulk in Bulk’. However, we already have ordered a new ‘Hulk’, one that, in view of the energy transition, will be completely electric, equipped only with a diesel generator for emergencies. In addition, the design for new sheds is currently on the drawing board because we want to expand the existing covered storage we were able to take over from North Sea Port and Prodelta over the years. And, something we’re also excited about because we haven’t given it much thought before, a completely new office is coming soon.”

After the summer

As it stands, work around the new wharf is expected to be completed sometime this summer. “Hopefully we will be able to move our operations back to our terminal after the summer,” Jacco Gelijns concludes. “We could then be fully operational here in September. By the end of this year and the beginning of our anniversary year of 2025, the new quay will feel like an early birthday present and I’m sure we’ll be eager to unwrap it by then!”

I. BTZEELAND.NL



Soon BTZ will be able to use 440m of the total 800m long quay.

At the heart of the port

New Port Police Regulation updates port rules for North Sea Port in Ghent



All images courtesy of North Sea Port.



The port is a unique mix of multimodal traffic and large, diverse commodity flows.

Any port area is, due to its very nature, a complex web of operations, logistics, international and national laws, multimodal traffic, and safety issues. The spider in this web – the Harbour Master – is responsible for the practical organisation of the port – in the Flemish part of our port – as well as maintaining public order and safety for everyone in the port area. Together with his team, the Harbour Master lays down the rules in the Port Police Regulation, which has now been updated to ensure safety and transparency for all port users.

Necessity for new guidelines

“The Harbour Master’s responsibilities in the Flemish part are now determined by Flemish Decree since 2019,” says Saskia Walters, advisor prevention, supervision, and enforcement at North Sea Port. “This matter was previously handled by the Federal Government, but the task was handed to the Flemish Government due to state reforms. This is already one of the major reasons for the update, as the Port Police Regulation needed to match the guidelines set out in the Flemish decree. Another reason was the references in the old Regulation to outdated international laws. Furthermore, we took an in-depth look at the goals and policies of North Sea Port, as we wanted them to be properly reflected in the new Port Police Regulation.”

“The Port Police Regulation is no substitute for the already existing international and national laws,” Ms Walters adds, “but is supplemental to it. International, national, and local laws remain fully binding, but the Port Police Regulation provides a more specific set of rules for the port, almost as a manual for all port users. It is issued and enforced by The Harbour Master’s Office.”

Responsibilities of the Harbour Master’s Office

“The port is, in its essence, a very unique area,” says Wim Van Bogaert, Harbour Master for North Sea Port in Ghent. “It is a spot where a huge amount of economic activity takes place in a relatively small area. There are more than 500 companies in North Sea Port, which provide over 106,000 jobs. Furthermore, the economic activity in a port is so unique, dynamic, and diverse – with multimodal transport, specific machinery, and large commodity flows – that it requires a great deal of flexibility combined with a great deal of possible safety hazards. This is where the Harbour Master and the Harbour Master’s Office come in. It is our duty to make sure that all this activity is kept on the right track, and that all these people can work in a safe environment.”

“The responsibilities of The Harbour Master’s Office, by decree, are therefore summed up as follows: order and safety, traffic



North Sea Port employs more than 106,000 people at over 500 companies.

management, environment, goods and cargo management, and passenger management. This means that in practice, The Harbour Master's Office organises a great many things in the port. We control all shipping traffic, we control the dangerous goods flow in our port, keep track of all port activity, and act on any discrepancies or safety hazards. For this reason, my team at the Harbour Master's Office is indispensable. They are my eyes and ears in the port. The office works 24/7, every day of the year. They plan – in cooperation with several partners – all shipping traffic in the port, which includes planning of the locks, tugboats, and so on. They monitor all activities that are going on in the port, through surveillance, administration, the processing of notifications, and most importantly, communication. Communication with the businesses at North Sea Port is key for they are, in essence, our customers.”

Duality

“There is indeed a great duality in the role of the Harbour Master,” Mr Van Bogaert explains. “I work for North Sea Port, and we think of our businesses as our partners and customers. On the other hand, I also police them. I have a mandate from the prosecutor's office to safeguard port order and safety and am authorised to take any measure necessary to do so. I am an officer of the Judicial Police as well as assistant officer of the Crown Prosecutor. I can issue and collect fines and I can draw up an official incident report which is then sent to the prosecutor's office. When you think of the concept of separation of power in government, it becomes clear just how far the responsibilities of the Harbour Master reach, as The



Our policy is to educate. When we notice discrepancies, our first order of business is to explain the rules to the business partners, help them understand what is expected from them...

Harbour Master's Office is authorised to do all three: we issue regulations, we carry out and supervise, and we enforce the law. We can even perform a criminal investigation if the subject falls under our jurisdiction. There is of course a thin jurisdictional line, and we are in constant interaction with the maritime police.”

“The reason for this extensive authorisation is very simple: we need to be able to act very quickly or the ship will have quite literally sailed. Then there is also the matter of organised crime, which is unfortunately also an issue for ports. We need certain authorisations to ensure good cooperation between the police force, Customs, and the Harbours Master's Office. However, it is very important to remember these are all last-resort measures, a big stick to wield against criminal behaviour, and the ability to enforce the rules which are ultimately meant to protect the activities, people, and businesses in our port.”

Ms Walters confirms: “Our policy is to educate. When we notice discrepancies, our first order of business is to explain the



Saskia Walters, advisor prevention, supervision, and enforcement at North Sea Port.



Wim Van Bogaert, Harbour Master for North Sea Port in Ghent.

rules to the business partners, help them understand what is expected from them, and assist them wherever possible should they encounter difficulties in complying. Only when we notice real stubbornness or unwillingness to comply do we rely on other measures. These measures – fines and other sanctions – are now also included in the new Port Police Regulation, as they are determined by the Flemish government. It does, however, remain the responsibility of the Harbour Master's Office to determine the severity of the transgression and the subsequent sanction that's applicable."

The Netherlands and ISPS

"This major role of the Harbour Master is different from the job description in the Netherlands. Even in its name: whereas in Belgium the name of the job is literally 'Harbour Captain', it is 'Port Master' in the Netherlands. The Harbour Master in Ghent gets his mandate from the Flemish Government, whereas the Dutch Harbour Masters are mandated by the mayor. And where the authority of the Harbour Master in Ghent extends across the entire port area, in the Netherlands it is focused on nautical activities, where the jurisdiction is divided between the Harbour Master and Rijkswaterstaat. It is just an entirely different approach," Mr Van Bogaert explains.

"Moreover, in Belgium, the Harbour Master is also chair of the Federal Committee for ISPS, the International Ship and Port facility Security code," Ms Walters adds. "This is an additional responsibility imposed by the Federal Government which accounts for nearly 30% of the Harbour Master's job. However, as this legislation is separate from the duties regarding prevention, supervision, and enforcement decreed by the Flemish government, this is not included in the Port Police Regulation."

New Regulation

The new Port Police Regulation has been issued mainly to match the new Flemish decree of 2019 and the updated international and national laws. But the new Regulation is also

much clearer and more transparent than the previous one, says Ms Walters. "The previous Port Police Regulation included a lot of information and explanation, which was a bit redundant. The new text is slimmed down to the laws, with an additional text with explanatory notes for the port users. As stated earlier, communication is key for North Sea Port. We are partners of the businesses in our port and are always available to answer any questions they might have. We are also more than happy to educate and clarify the regulations where necessary. We strive to be approachable."

"Another new element in the Port Police Regulation is the permission for companies wishing to perform harbour services," adds Ms Walters. "Any company that wants to deliver harbour services in our port, such as tug services or bunkering, needs to be screened and can only operate with permission from the Harbour Master's Office. This again is to ensure the safety of all port users as these activities have a huge impact on shipping traffic."

"The new Regulation also includes more recent technologies and the conditions to use them," Mr Van Bogaert states. "For example, the criteria for LNG bunkering, which is a relatively recent phenomenon. It is, amongst others, the job of Ms Walters and her colleagues to keep the rules up to date with new technologies and legislation and define their content." Ms Walters confirms: "Another example of this is the use of drones. The new Regulation calls for a separate regulation regarding drone flights and drone surveillance in the port. We keep these regulations up to date and adapt them when necessary. The port is a dynamic environment, so our policies and content of the Regulations should be dynamic as well."

The new Port Police Regulation, as well as the Regulation with explanatory notes, can be found at the link below.

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A company on the move

Schelde Exotech, with the support of Cordeel, is working on a large-scale expansion



All images courtesy of Schelde Exotech, unless mentioned otherwise.

Schelde Exotech, part of the Pressure Thermal Dynamics (PTD) group of companies, has a long history in the North Sea Port area. The company has its origins as part of the Royal Schelde – a hub of industry and shipbuilding in the city of Vlissingen founded almost 150 years ago.

Today, as a privately owned company, Schelde Exotech continues to support its clients in the chemical, nuclear, fertilizers and energy sectors with a range of specialist products. These include heat exchangers, reactors and columns made of special stainless steels alloys, titanium, aluminum and other metal alloys.

On the move

In January 2022, the company left its location in the centre of Vlissingen and moved into new premises in Ritthem, in the harbour of Vlissingen-Oost.

The new extensions provided Schelde Exotech with a 1,000m² storage building, 1,500m² climate controlled cleanroom for nuclear work, and a 3,000m² fully equipped machine shop with 20 and 40t overhead cranes.

Additionally, with 300t capacity drive-thru access to the quayide, the company had improved access to the facilities of North Sea Port and the large vessels calling in its harbours. Schelde Exotech was able to increase its production substantially.

Growing pains

There was just one problem, explains Schelde Exotech CEO Jos Mols.

“Before we’d moved into the new premises, they were already too small for our purposes.”



Schelde Extotech's new location in the heart of North Sea Port.

It was a situation that could not have been foreseen. Jos explains how events conspired to stimulate a dramatic increase in demand for the company's products. "Our move coincided with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. At that point, there was a significant – and sudden – increase in interest in energy independence amongst Western countries and companies."

Supporting the energy transition

The conflict came on top of already rising demand, he states.

"The energy transition is also increasing demand for our products. As companies seek to boost their efficiency and reduce their carbon footprint, they are investing in new, high quality equipment.

"Plus, we supply materials to the solar panel sector, which is booming. It's a busy time for our industry," Jos Mols says.



Jos Mols, CEO of Schelde Extotech.



Schelde Extoech's latest expansion will see the company double its production capacity.

Family business with North Sea Port connections

Supporting Schelde Exotech with its move to Ritthem was Cordeel. This family-owned company, founded in 1934 in Belgium has become something of a specialist in logistics and other industries.

Due to its years of work for the (petro)chemical, logistics and other industries, Cordeel's HSE and QA/QC is at a very high level.

Cordeel is not only a construction company but also has its own engineering department for architecture and construction, that can work out the customer's wishes. To realise these projects, the company is always on the lookout for new professionals

The company has roots in the North Sea Port area. Commercial manager Zeeland Adri de Rijke says, "North Sea Port is very important for us. We work with a lot of companies in the area. In fact, the first job I ever did with Cordeel was in the port 41 years ago."



Jos Mols and the project team from Cordeel Nederland at the commencement of Schelde Exotech's expansion project.



Adri de Rijke, commercial manager Zeeland at Cordeel.

“ The site expansion also includes a new clean room of 930m² for the company’s work with special nuclear products.

Complete construction capabilities

Upon realising that it would need additional capacity, Schelde Exotech turned once again to Cordeel for support.

“As well as having the keen focus on safety and quality that is so necessary in sectors such as this, we offer a comprehensive construction service, including the engineering. We call this a key on the door project. What this offers our clients is the convenience of having the entire project process handled with one partner,” states Adri de Rijke.

“Cordeel had been in discussions with Exotech for some time and we looked at various options with them. Ultimately, this resulted in the new facilities, including the extension of its workshop space.

“Schelde Exotech also had the possibility to create another workshop location directly behind the existing building, increasing their shop space with an additional 42m. With this, they have access to a new dedicated storage area.”

The site expansion also includes a new clean room of 930m² for the company’s work with special nuclear products.

Previously this work was carried out in a small room in the existing building. The new plans provide for a dedicated, clean environment necessary for the fabrication of special vacuum equipment.

Having received the required permits from the authorities, Cordeel is now busily implementing Schelde Exotech’s latest expansion.

“We hope to have everything up and running by the end of summer,” says Jos Mols. “At that point we will have doubled our production capacity. With that we should be able to continue to support our clients from our current location for the foreseeable future.”

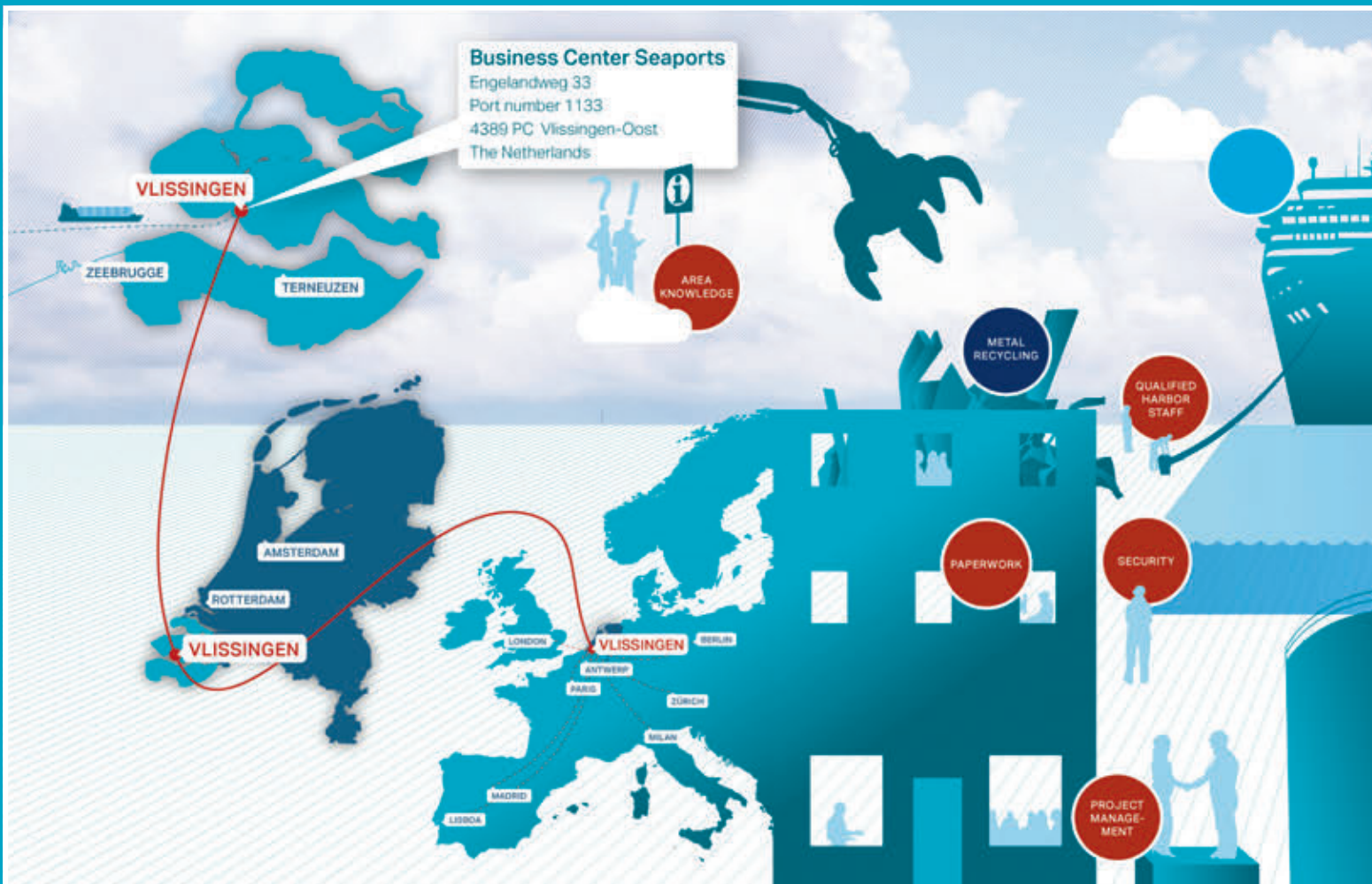


Image courtesy of Cordeel.

On 15 February, the first pile was installed for the expansion of the production building and a new clean room for Schelde Exotech.

[I. PTDCOMPANIES.COM/SCHELDE-EXOTECH/](https://PTDCOMPANIES.COM/SCHELDE-EXOTECH/)

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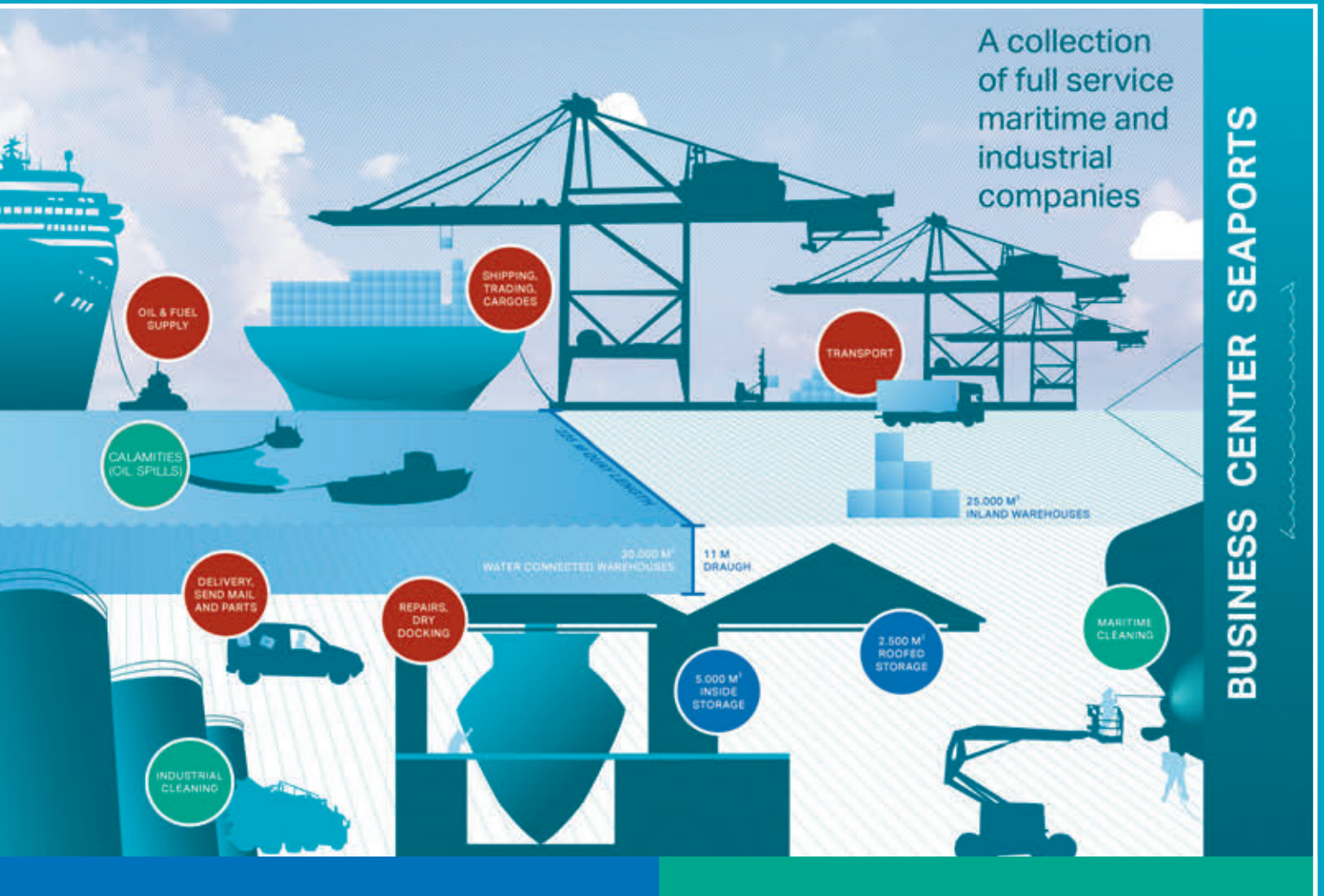
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A haven for SMEs

Hexagon develops VIEF business park in Evergem



Image courtesy of Hexagon.

Real estate developer Hexagon is busy transforming a former brownfield site in the immediate proximity of North Sea Port into a business park for small and medium-sized enterprises. In autumn, the new tenants will be able to move in a two buildings complex that will house thirty-six companies and independent entrepreneurs.

In North Sea Port, big industry – the likes of ArcelorMittal, Volvo, Dow – draws a lot of attention. But its presence and activities are very much dependent on the existence of a multiform economic ecosystem in which a multitude of suppliers and service providers, more often than not small and medium-sized companies, play an essential role. To cater to the needs of these kinds of economic players, Hexagon, a real estate developer with headquarters in Roeselare, is building a new business park at the Durmakker in Evergem.

In 2022 Hexagon bought the former Northfreeze Group site next to the Ringvaart, the ring canal for inland navigation that connects the sea canal to Terneuzen to the rivers and waterways serving the southern hinterland of North Sea Port. The brownfield site, which required no pollution remediation, is



An artist's impression of the VIEF business park. When finished, it will offer thirty-six units divided over two separate buildings.



Redeveloping brownfields into futureproof locations for economic activity is at the core of Hexagon's philosophy.

presently undergoing a total make-over. After tearing down the existing warehouse and preparatory works, construction is now progressing at full speed.

In high demand

When completed, the new business park will be composed of two buildings. Building A, covering 4,640m², will have an L-shape and house 20 modular units that can serve as workshops and/or warehouses for SMEs. Building B will have a ground surface of 3,400m² and offer an additional sixteen units that can be tailored to the occupants' needs. The units will range from 145 to 463m² in size. Free height inside is 6m. "This kind of capacity remains in high demand in the North Sea Port area, even if the slowdown of the economy makes itself felt and if buyers are confronted with a more hesitant attitude at the banks when it comes to granting the financial backing they require", says Jelle Vandendriessche, managing partner of Hexagon. "The business park is almost completely sold and the first tenants will settle down in less than six months' time. Bringing together a mix of SMEs, start-ups and seasoned craftsmen will create a hotspot for regional economic activity, local job creation and innovation." The strategically located compound will go by the name of VIEF, which can be freely translated into 'vivid' and is meant to express the dynamism and energy of the activity that will be deployed on site.

Futureproof real estate

Reviving brownfields into futureproof locations for new economic activity is at the core of Hexagon's philosophy, Jelle Vandendriessche underlines. Sustainability is taking first rank in the building projects, he adds. VIEF will come with heat pumps to warm up the installations, solar panels on the roofs to provide renewable electricity, charging stations to load battery vehicles, rain water collection, green zones, and even an 'insect hotel' as icing on the cake.

Since it started off in 2017, the company already redeveloped some 350,000m² of industrial estates, first in its home province of West Flanders before extending its reach to East Flanders and the Ghent region. It does not keep the redeveloped properties in its portfolio to rent out, but sells them after completion. To finance its capital-intensive projects, Hexagon relies on equity funds to which both private and institutional investors contribute. One of these parties is the public Flemish holding PMV (Participatiemaatschappij Vlaanderen), which fully subscribes to the goal of reactivating underutilised, abandoned or polluted industrial estates. Total investment in the VIEF-project amounts to about EUR 9 million.

Hexagon already participated in one major project within North Sea Port itself for the redevelopment of an existing building on a five hectares compound by a major local contractor. To follow up its projects in East Flanders, the company now plans to set up a satellite office on a location close to the Ghent port area.



Image courtesy of Jean-Louis Vandevoorde.

Jelle Vandendriessche, CEO of Hexagon Vastgoedontwikkeling, on the building site of the new business park.

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Inland waterway cooperative PTC is celebrating its 30th anniversary.

All images courtesy of PTC.

PTC b.a. sets its sights on tomorrow

Inland waterway cooperative celebrates 30 years with a strong vision on the future.

Patriculiere Transport Cooperatie b.a. (PTC) was founded in 1994 as a cooperative for inland waterway entrepreneurs. The organisation provides a way for vessel operators to pool their resources and get the best possible contracts. PTC currently represents around 40 vessel operators. The aim, says treasurer Henri van Sandijk, is simple – “To make sure the shippers get a fair price and the vessel operators get a reasonable return.” The benefits of the collaboration go further than this, however, as manager PR & sustainability Ella Hofs explains. “As well as ensuring a fair price to our members, we also generate the revenue needed to invest in innovation. Done collectively, this allows us to do so much more than members could achieve individually, to the benefit of all.”

In addition to PTC itself, the cooperative also runs Den Breejen, serving the animal feed transportation sector and HVC (Handel & Vervoerders Coöperatie), covering the spot market. It has

also recently acquired Genco, a freight broker organisation with a large network in Germany.

Mutual benefit

As may be expected of an organisation rooted in the inland waterway sector, PTC has strong connections to North Sea Port, which forms the logical conclusion to many of its members' voyages.

“As well as our members having a big presence in North Sea Port, we also attend the same exhibitions together to promote our activities. Plus, with our expertise in inland shipping and their experience with seagoing transportation, we are often able to support each other with important information and advice. It's a mutually beneficial relationship,” says Ella Hofs.

A growing challenge

At the present time, the colleagues explain, their sector is experiencing a number of challenges. As a cooperative representing its membership, PTC is at the heart of seeking a solution.



We have a good vision – when we are 40 years old, I hope we are twice the size we are today.

One such challenge is the increasing predominance of large vessels. This trend looks set to continue, given the preference of banks and other investors for larger vessels perceived as having more economic potential.

“As a result, smaller vessels are starting to disappear,” explains Henri van Sandijk. “It’s becoming difficult for them to survive, the business model often does not make sense any more. The problem is, when everyone moves to bigger ships, you’ve lost diversity.”

And, he says, with diversity, goes versatility.

“There are factories located along smaller waterways that cannot be accessed by big ships. If there are no smaller ships left to serve these waterways, then the cargo is going to find itself on roads that are already under significant pressure from too high volumes of traffic.”

Maintaining trade

A further challenge is the condition of the infrastructure on the Dutch waterways. In many cases, maintenance work has been deferred. The result of this is frequently that, when maintenance finally does take place, it requires a large-scale undertaking. An example is the Juliana Canal in the south of the Netherlands, the renovation of which is going to involve the closure of the canal for the several months.

“This is like closing a major highway for an extended period of time. It’s leaving shippers with limited options for moving cargoes and the potential for incurring significant costs. We’re doing all that we can, working with industry bodies and the sector to present a united front. We’ve had some success; as a result of our activities, there has been an economic impact



The cooperative is looking ahead, aiming for a sustainable inland shipping sector.

assessment commissioned. We’re not giving up.

“Ultimately, the worry, once again, is that clients will look to other modes of transportation to move their goods. We fear that, once it’s gone from the waterways, it won’t come back.”

Sustainability – a hot topic

There’s a further risk to this scenario – an increase in emissions, with road transport generating more CO₂ than the waterborne sector. As with all industries at the present time, sustainability is a hot topic in the inland shipping sector.

PTC is taking an active role in this, says Ella Hofs.

“We try to encourage our members to embrace increased



Henri van Sandijk, treasurer and Ella Hofs, manager PR & sustainability at PTC are looking forwards.



PTC sees strength in numbers. Working together its members are able to overcome the challenges faced by the sector.

“ As well as ensuring a fair price, we generate the revenue to invest in innovation. This allows us to do much more than members could achieve individually, to the benefit of all.

efficiency. For example, to install a small battery system that can take care of the hotel load during overnight stays. We're also looking into a pilot project to assess the potential of a fully electric inland vessel. Every little helps.”

No 'one size fits all' solution

Another sustainability initiative that PTC is working on at present is a dashboard to provide shippers with information on their scope 3 emissions, as required by the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive.

“We've had an iBarge application for some time now,” explains Ella Hofs. “We're connecting this to a BigMile dashboard to give shippers the information they need.

“It's early days for a lot of the technology required for sustainability, however, and there is no 'one size fits all' solution. We see, though, that the cooperative really gives a boost to such initiatives. We can share the knowledge and learn from one another. It's like the saying goes – alone you are faster, but together you go further.”

On the move

In the coming months, PTC will be relocating to new offices in Zwijndrecht.

“We've been located in Capelle aan den IJssel for the past

20 years. This relocation will take us into the heart of the Drechtsteden – an important region for our sector. The new location offers a beautiful view over the water and we're looking forward to seeing our members sailing by,” Henri van Sandijk says.

Milestone moment

This year looks set to be a milestone one for PTC. As well as the relocation, the cooperative marked its 30th anniversary this January.

“We'll be celebrating with our members with a party on the coast in Scheveningen in the summer,” states Henri van Sandijk.

The way ahead

While pausing to look back on the last three decades, however, PTC is very much looking forward to the future.

“The last 30 years we've really grown as an organisation. We want to continue to grow. The more clients we have, the more members, the better contracts we can secure and the better the ships can sail. We have a good vision – when we are 40 years old, I hope we are twice the size we are today.”



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The largest battery storage system in the Netherlands

In the North Sea Port area, various initiatives are being developed that will contribute to the energy transition, aligning seamlessly with the sustainability ambitions of the port company and the Dutch government.

Recently, Lion Storage announced plans to realise one of the largest projects in the Netherlands in energy storage in the Vlissingen port area of North Sea Port.

TU Delft friends

Lion Storage was founded in 2021 by two TU Delft friends, Arno Hendriks and Jeroen Althoff. “During our studies, we both specialised in energy technology, and we agreed to start a company together someday,” explains Arno Hendriks, CEO of Lion Storage. “When I returned to the Netherlands after a period of thirteen years in Southeast Asia, and saw the growing demand for energy storage, Jeroen and I sat down together and agreed the business plan for Lion Storage within fifteen minutes on the back of an envelope. Both Jeroen and I had been active in the energy sector for over 25 years when we decided to embark on this business together. We realised that the tremendous acceleration of the energy transition, particularly the rollout of energy generation from wind and solar, along with the phase-out of coal and gas, would have a huge impact on

supply security, particularly in terms of grid congestion. The first news I saw broadcast on TV in 2021 after thirteen years working overseas, was about grid congestion. What we had long anticipated was now happening in practice. To prevent issues with supply security and to contribute to the energy transition, we decided to enter this market. The idea of Lion Storage was born. The company name Lion was chosen because it refers to Li-Ion, the main component of the batteries used for energy storage.”

TenneT

Lion Storage develops large-scale battery projects in the Netherlands connected to TenneT's high-voltage grid. Arno Hendriks further explains, “We will be active in TenneT's balancing and future congestion markets, thus helping to keep the Dutch electricity grid balanced, available, and reliable. Our systems help expand the available capacity on the grid, allowing business, households and renewables to connect. Additionally, we operate in wholesale markets, where we purchase electricity



during surplus and when prices are low and offer it again when there is a shortage resulting in higher prices. By arbitrating between these markets, we lower energy prices for end-users and ensure that prices are less volatile. In the initial years of operation, our focus will be aimed towards the balancing markets where demand is highest. In the long run, we expect to deliver additional value by being active in wholesale markets. We will remain flexible in operations on different markets whilst following demand, therefore we do not have contracts with third parties for off-take. By developing these projects, we ensure that the energy supply in the Netherlands remains affordable and reliable while fully accelerating the roll out of renewable intermittent power.”

Lion Storage leases a significant portion of obsolete land in the Vlissingen part of the port. It is a long and narrow plot that Lion Storage calls 'The Strip'.



In the North Sea Port area, various initiatives are being developed that will contribute to the energy transition. The marked area indicates Lion Storage's The Strip.

Image courtesy of North Sea Port/Tom D'Haenens.



Arno Hendriks, CEO of Lion Storage.

“ Vlissingen-Oost is one of the key locations for the energy transition, where all current and future forms of energy converge.

Mufasa

Lion's first project, named Mufasa (the King of the Pride Lands in the Lion King), is now being developed in the port area of Vlissingen. “Since 2000, I have been familiar with the Vlissingen port area, and I have always had good cooperation with the port authority and all other stakeholders. Vlissingen-Oost is one of the key locations for the energy transition, where all current and future forms of energy converge. Vlissingen-Oost is located next to the 150kV and 380kV stations of Borssele, where electricity generated by offshore wind comes ashore. The port has a zoning plan for heavy industry, where energy storage with batteries fits perfectly. Furthermore, Tennet supports battery projects near high-voltage stations connected to a lot of wind power. These are good conditions for us to choose Vlissingen-Oost as location for this project. Upon my return from Indonesia, one of the first business meetings I had was with Peter Geertse, commercial manager of North Sea Port, whom I have known since 2004. At that time, North Sea Port had already concluded a lease agreement with another battery



With a capacity of 1,500MWh, the project will be one of the largest projects in the Netherlands in energy storage.

project developer (Semper Power). Moreover, AES had already realised a battery storage facility in Vlissingen years ago. Initially, discussions were needed regarding the necessity of another battery project. North Sea Port also sought advice from Tennet. Ultimately, we reached a lease agreement involving a significant portion of obsolete land in the Vlissingen part of the port. It is a long and narrow plot that we call 'The Strip.' After the NSP board approved we started immediately with the development of this flag ship project. A good example of excellent constructive and collaborative cooperation! There is currently a huge demand for battery deployment, so the sooner we become operational, the better. Currently, we are working with Banco Santander as financial advisor for international fund raising. Project Mufasa will set the bench mark for the Dutch HV connected battery projects. We expect to start construction in Q4 of this year and aim to be operational by Q4 2026."

Storage cluster

In the meantime, a battery storage cluster is emerging within North Sea Port, where Lion Storage, according to Arno Hendriks, distinguishes itself prominently. "AES was the first battery project in the Netherlands. It involves a small battery (10MWh) suitable only for a specific market application (FCR). SemperPower recently built 120MWh of batteries, connected to the medium-voltage grid of Stedin. We distinguish ourselves by being fifteen times larger than the SemperPower installations, with a capacity of 1,500MWh. Furthermore, our project is connected to Tennet's high-voltage station, and unlike other

projects, we operate fully on a 'merchant' basis. Every minute, every hour, every day, we assess which markets are best suited for utilising the battery without being dependent on offtake contracts."

Storage is essential

In addition to Vlissingen, Lion Storage and its partners have broader ambitions. "Vlissingen will be our first operational project," says Arno Hendriks. "We aim to become one of the leading players in energy storage. Sister company SemperPower already has three operational projects, of which two are in Vlissingen-Oost and one in Terneuzen. Lion Storage's goal is to develop 1.5GW of battery projects in the coming years. For this, we will also look abroad for suitable locations. To guarantee a stable system in the coming years, the need for flexible deployable capacity in the electricity grid is increasing significantly across Europe. Batteries will play a major role in this. Near term grid volatility (in terms of frequency, inertia and voltage), rises due to wind and solar dependence, which will progressively require more effort to stabilise the system. Storage is essential for this. They can respond very quickly to the dynamic nature of renewable energy. In the Netherlands alone, the demand for batteries by 2030 is 9GW connected to the high-voltage grid. This offers us ample opportunities."

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Witte-Boussen

“There is no one-size-fits-all solution in employee benefits”

In today’s job market companies are fighting an uphill battle to find and keep the right people they need to conduct their business. One essential pillar in their HR policy are employee benefits. “The war on talent is getting fiercer by the day. The job market is increasingly forcing companies to integrate job conditions and employee well-being in all its aspects into the recruitment equation,” says Rick van de Gronden, consultant at Witte-Boussen.

Q: Who is Witte-Boussen?

A: Witte-Boussen is a company with a solid local footprint and regional signature in the province of Zeeland and a very strong customer focus. It was founded 45 years ago by Nico Boussen, Dik de Bruin and Rinus Witte, is headquartered in Terneuzen and today employs about 55 people. Nico still stands at the helm, with Joyce Witte as vice-director at his side.

Q: And what do you do?

A: What we do is unburden private and corporate clients in insurance, financial advice, real estate, and also pensions and employee benefits, where we support the HR department of our customers. We are able to bring our clients our know-how in each of these fields and also all our combined expertise in integrated one-stop-shop solutions, if they so wish. We are active in the Dutch provinces of Zeeland and Zuid-



Employee benefits must be part of a wider HR policy, which itself should be a reflection of the strategy of the company.

Image courtesy of TSA Safety Services.

Holland. Employers represent a large part of our client portfolio and our main target group in that market are small and medium-sized enterprises with 25 to 250 employees on their payroll, though we will also cater to smaller companies like start-ups or scale-ups with smaller workforces.

Q: Employers are confronted with difficult times when it comes to hiring new people.

A: The war on talent is getting fiercer by the day. Our population is aging fast. Many people are reaching retirement, generating an important outflow on the job market which is not compensated by the inflow, especially since migration is slowing down. They leave the job market taking with them knowledge and know-how that is very hard to replace or to renew. These structural trends are still gaining momentum. The situation is not going to get better any time soon, adding to the pressure on people on the job.

Q: How specific is the situation in Zeeland?

A: Each region of course has its own challenges and culture, but the basic trends and the fundamental challenge for employers – how to attract and to keep the right people in a tightening job market – are the same everywhere.

Q: What can employers do?

A: If the challenge is to do more with less people, automation and digitalisation, the use of artificial intelligence, streamlining processes and organisations, lifelong learning and training are options you cannot disregard. But job conditions and employee benefits companies offer matter a lot. On the one hand, they have to be in accordance with the evolutions on the job market. That market is undergoing an in-depth transformation: the way of doing things,

“ Hiring a millennial coming out of university demands a totally different approach than keeping a high-level professional with twenty years of experience.

the functions people perform, the competences they need to have... are changing.

On the other hand, they also have to be in tune with the employee's expectations and career. Hiring a millennial coming out of university demands a totally different approach than keeping a high-level professional with twenty years of experience. A millennial will for instance be much more sensitive about the way a potential employer takes up his societal responsibility, how the company deals with ecology, etc.

Q: The leverage job conditions offer can easily be underestimated.

A: The market is increasingly forcing companies to integrate job conditions and employee well-being in all its aspects into the job equation. Taking good care of your employees is gaining in importance. Employers need to be – and are becoming – much more attentive to the needs and wishes of their personnel than in the past.

Witte-Boussen consultants have the appropriate solutions to keep employees fit, in financial well-being, and to allow them to retire with a good feeling. It is even possible to hire these pensioners back without any risks.

But employee benefits must be part of a wider HR policy, which

itself should be a reflection of the strategy of the company on the short, medium and long term. Not every company has a clear strategy, however. When it does, that strategy does not always come with the appropriate HR policy. And a HR policy does not always include the right employee benefits. That is one of the roles Witte-Boussen takes up as a consultant: to make sure that HR is not regarded as a stand-alone issue, but is fully integrated in the strategy of our clients. We help them formulate that policy and define the goals they need to achieve in HR, as well as the means they can deploy to reach them, using our very diversified in-house expertise. Regarding employee benefits, we also have the broader market view allowing us to benchmark what companies offer.

Q: Will each situation require a different answer?

A: There is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to employee benefits. It is another illustration of the added value we can provide as consultants: allowing our clients to strike the right balance between all the elements that come into play, combining the 'hard' legally prescribed items with 'soft' values like health awareness, financial wellbeing, and the personal development of the employee. Both go hand in hand. Dealing with only one element will seldom deliver the expected result. To deliver on that, knowing your client is absolutely essential. We always start by asking questions. You can only find the right answer if you take into consideration the whole picture. And that, in turn, requires asking the right questions. We are eager to help our customers to see and understand all the ins and outs and to share our knowledge and skills with them. They want us to present them with clear options based on a thorough analysis of their situation.

Q: Does size matter?

A: Especially for SMEs, it is often hard to keep pace with all the new legislation and regulations that come their way with regard to employee benefits and retirement. In legal and fiscal terms, they are a hard nut to crack. It's a subject matter that is often difficult to understand for non-specialists. Translating that very technical matter into clear and understandable language for employers and employees alike is something we do daily. But there are small companies that are in full control of their human resources and bigger companies that do not have a strong HR culture. Of course, if a company passes the 50-people bar, it is required to put into place a council with representatives of the workforce. That can change the internal dynamics, even if employers are still steering the process. We work for employers, of course, but employees are central to what we do.

Q: How do you deal with the border between Belgium and the Netherlands that still runs across North Sea Port?

A: North Sea Port is the largest cross-border port in Europe. The border between Belgium and the Netherlands is still a reality due to, among other things, different social and fiscal regimes. Our immediate work area is limited to that boundary, but our solutions are not. In collaboration with our Belgian connections, we can offer a helping hand on both sides of the border.

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Promotion Council North Sea Port offers the parties concerned with the port area a platform to meet, do business and exchange information. It is a business networking organisation that wants to bring everyone involved in North Sea Port together and facilitate stronger connections.

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The Competence Development Center, based in Terneuzen, offers North Sea Port businesses a wide variety of courses for employees. With over 200 different courses offered and 7,000 employees trained in 2023, the Competence Development Center is the organisation to turn to for specialised technical and compliance training, health and safety courses, or personal development training.

Technical training

“The Competence Development Center is a cooperative of eight companies, each of them a major player in North Sea Port,” Jean-Paul Leenknecht, managing director, explains.

“The cooperative was created because its founders needed high-quality technical training for their staff on a joint, nearby, and regular basis. We therefore started with a primary focus on compliance, technical, and safety training so that employees in the North Sea Port would have the ability to obtain the necessary qualifications and certificates close to home. However, over the past years, we have extended our range, and we now offer all sorts of courses: not only technical training and compliance but also language education, leadership courses, soft skill and office-related courses, and first aid. We basically organise any training our members need.”

Members of the cooperative

“The cooperative currently consists of eight North Sea Port companies, mainly active in the process and food industry,” Mr Leenknecht says. “These are Yara, Cargill, Dow, Trinseo, ICL, Century, Zeeland Refinery, and McCain. They ultimately determine the courses we offer and set out the lines for the



We now offer all sorts of courses: not only technical training and compliance but also language education, leadership courses, soft skill and office-related courses, and first aid.

technical and safety training. However, our training portfolio is available to all companies. Any company wishing to enlist their employees in one of our courses can do so through our web-based learning management system where companies can easily plan and select courses for their employees. It is an intelligent system that, for example, can automatically warn companies when obtained certificates are due to expire.”

“Of course, being a member of the cooperative – rather than a user – has some advantages. Not only do members get discounts on training courses, but they help set the course for our future portfolio. This is accomplished not only by meetings of the board but also through working groups with delegates of the member companies. These working groups focus on all sorts of practical matters such as course content, portfolio, quality, regularity, or even course sequence. The cooperative continues to grow, and we welcome businesses that want to be a part of our innovative future.”

Location

The Competence Development Center is based in the CO3 Campus in Terneuzen, centrally located in the North Sea Port area. “The CO3 Campus, an energy-passive building – meaning it was built sustainably and energy efficient – is, with its multifunctional conference rooms, the ideal location for all sorts of courses,” says Mr Leenknecht. “Most of the courses are given here at the CO3 Campus, except for certain practical courses such as forklift driving. If there are sufficient participants, training can also be given at the company’s premises, and in some cases, for example for language training, the course is given online. In the meantime, we are also looking for facilities in the Vlissingen area.”

“The Competence Development Center has a long-term contract with CO3 Campus, not only for its convenient location in the North Sea Port Terneuzen area but also because we believe it is our mission to contribute to sustainable infrastructure in North Sea Port. In fact, we are currently participating in a project to create at the CO3 Campus an Innovation Centre for Technology and Safety. This innovation hub – which will focus on maintenance and safety for the industry – will also include new training courses such as contractor safety, as we continue to adapt our portfolio to suit the technologies of today and tomorrow.”

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Jean-Paul Leenknecht, managing director of the Competence Development Center.



EHBO-course given at the CO3 Campus.



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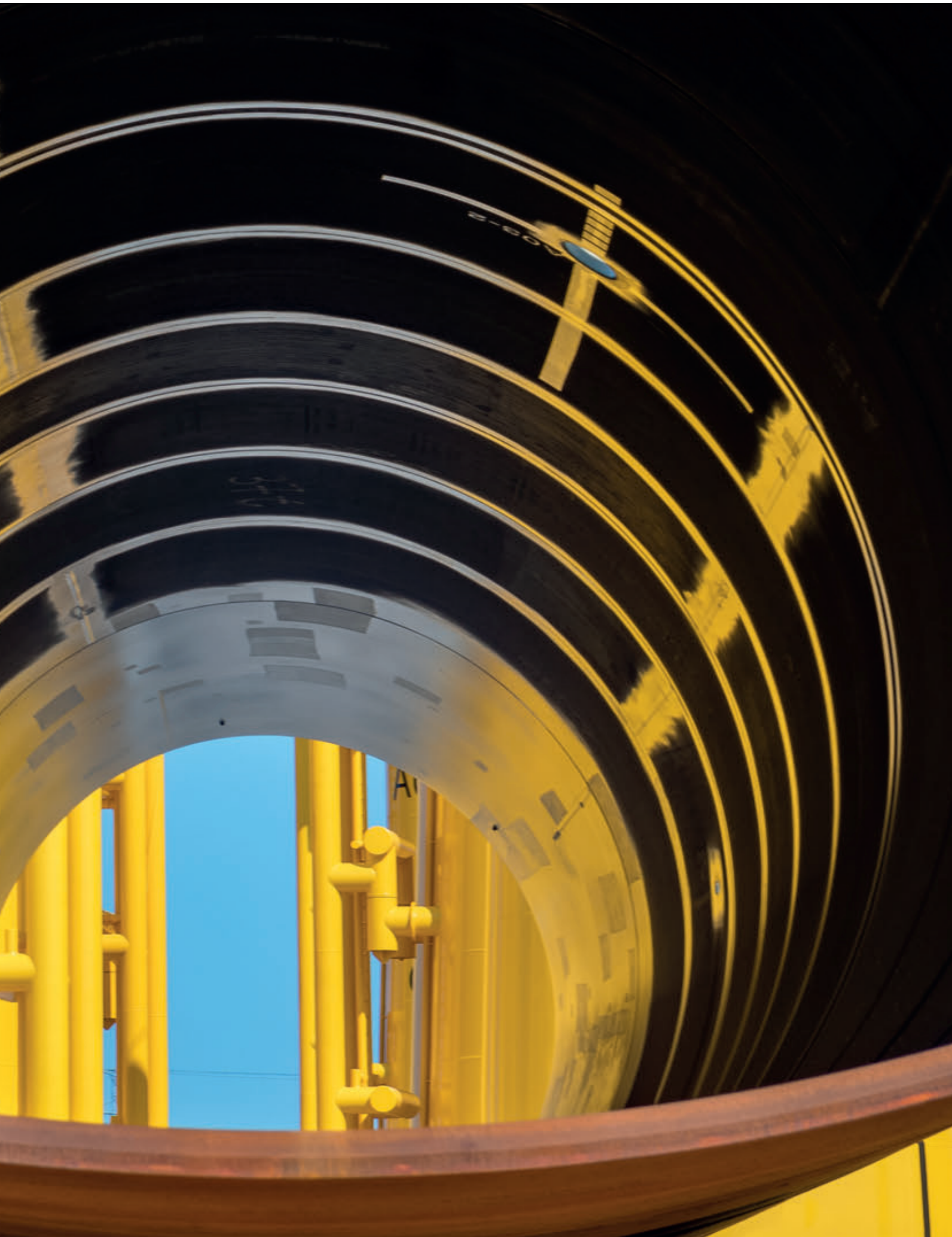
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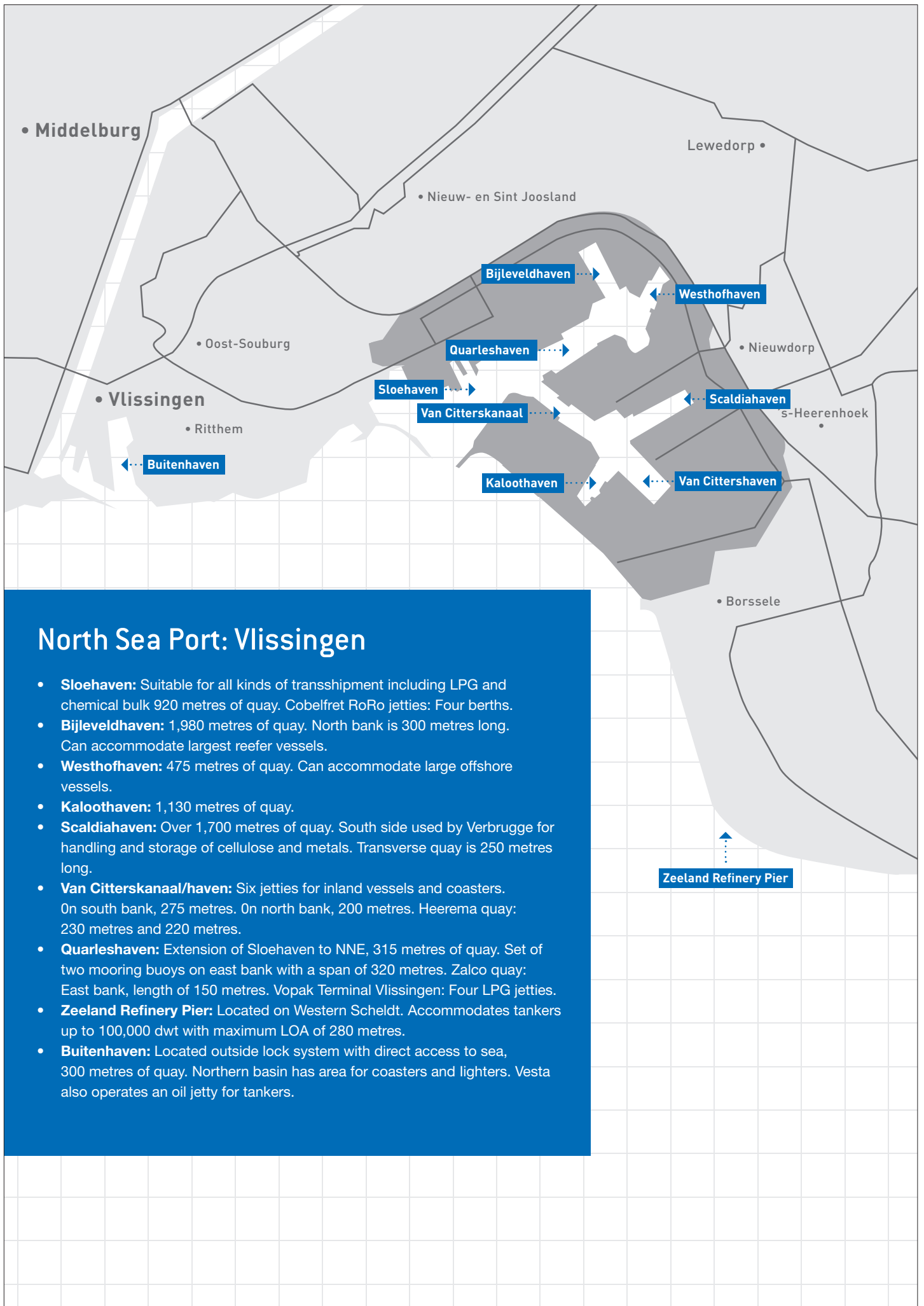
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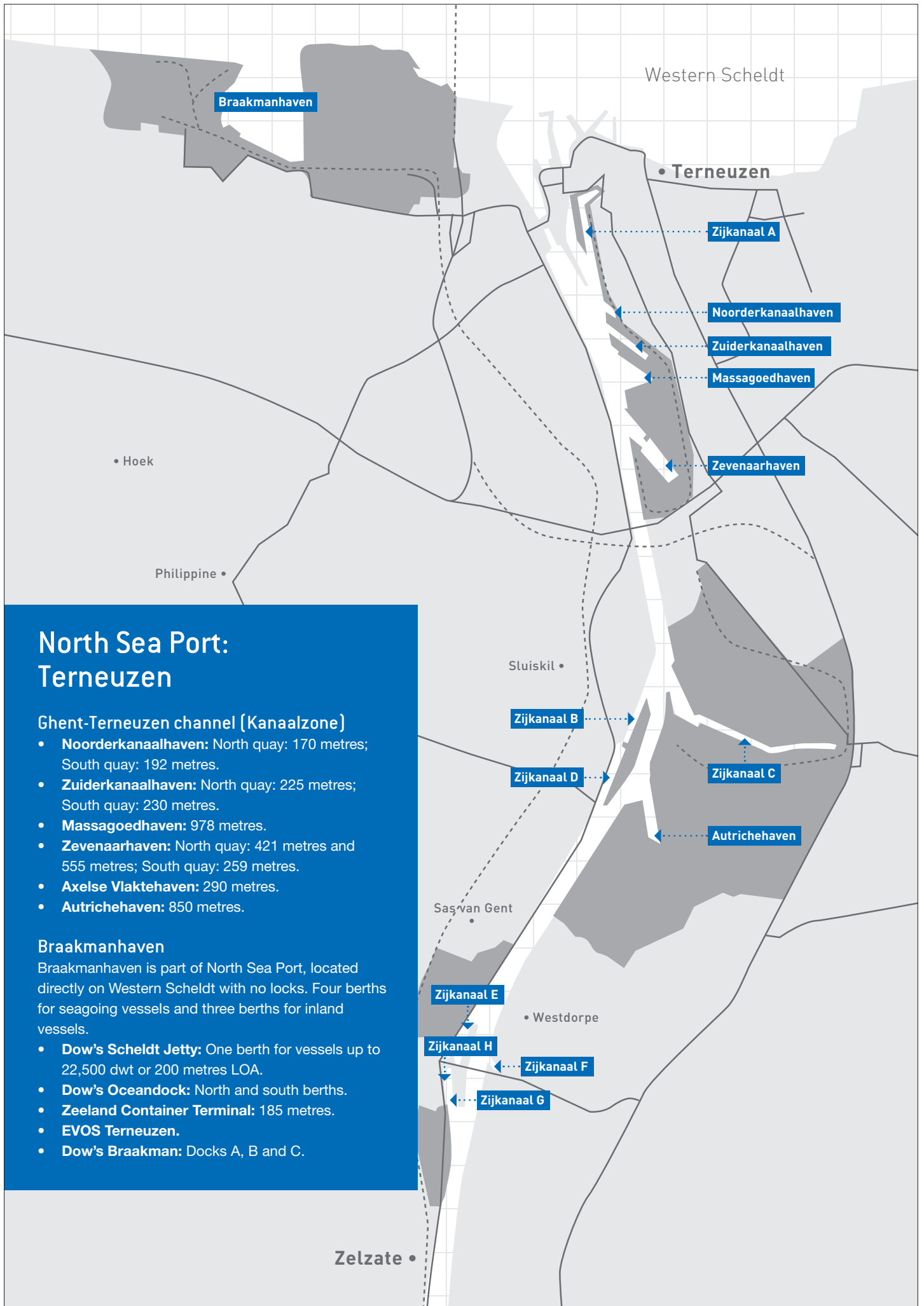
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North Sea Port: Vlissingen

- **Sloehaven:** Suitable for all kinds of transshipment including LPG and chemical bulk 920 metres of quay. Cobelfret RoRo jetties: Four berths.
- **Bijleveldhaven:** 1,980 metres of quay. North bank is 300 metres long. Can accommodate largest reefer vessels.
- **Westhofhaven:** 475 metres of quay. Can accommodate large offshore vessels.
- **Kaloothaven:** 1,130 metres of quay.
- **Scaldiahaven:** Over 1,700 metres of quay. South side used by Verbrugge for handling and storage of cellulose and metals. Transverse quay is 250 metres long.
- **Van Citterskanaal/haven:** Six jetties for inland vessels and coasters. On south bank, 275 metres. On north bank, 200 metres. Heerema quay: 230 metres and 220 metres.
- **Quarleshaven:** Extension of Sloehaven to NNE, 315 metres of quay. Set of two mooring buoys on east bank with a span of 320 metres. Zalco quay: East bank, length of 150 metres. Vopak Terminal Vlissingen: Four LPG jetties.
- **Zeeland Refinery Pier:** Located on Western Scheldt. Accommodates tankers up to 100,000 dwt with maximum LOA of 280 metres.
- **Buitenhaven:** Located outside lock system with direct access to sea, 300 metres of quay. Northern basin has area for coasters and lighters. Vesta also operates an oil jetty for tankers.



North Sea Port: Terneuzen

Ghent-Terneuzen channel (Kanaalzone)

- **Noorderkanaalhaven:** North quay: 170 metres; South quay: 192 metres.
- **Zuiderkanaalhaven:** North quay: 225 metres; South quay: 230 metres.
- **Massagoedhaven:** 978 metres.
- **Zevenaarhaven:** North quay: 421 metres and 555 metres; South quay: 259 metres.
- **Axelse Vlakthaven:** 290 metres.
- **Autrichehaven:** 850 metres.

Braakmanhaven

Braakmanhaven is part of North Sea Port, located directly on Western Scheldt with no locks. Four berths for seagoing vessels and three berths for inland vessels.

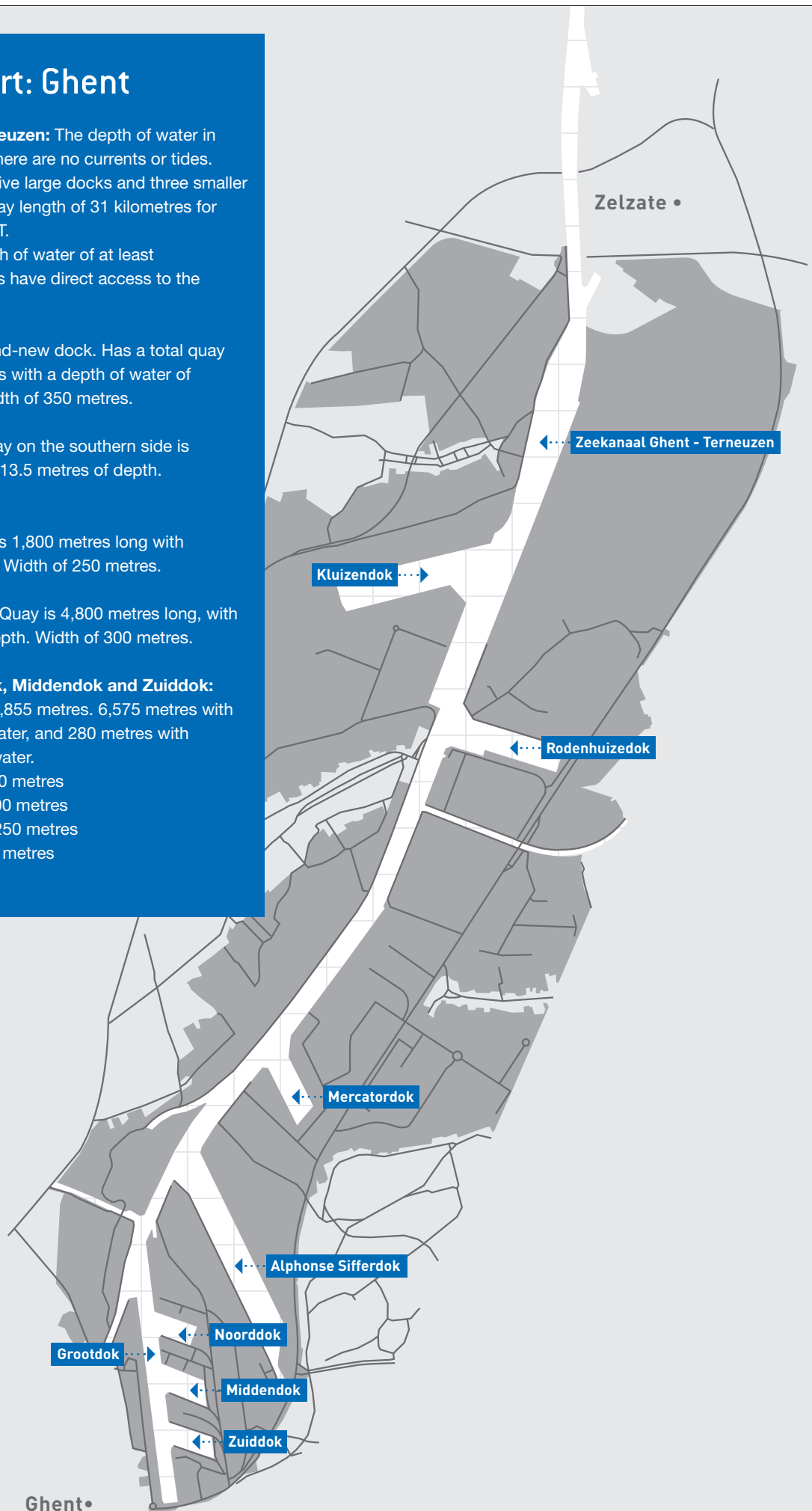
- **Dow's Scheldt Jetty:** One berth for vessels up to 22,500 dwt or 200 metres LOA.
- **Dow's Oceandock:** North and south berths.
- **Zeeland Container Terminal:** 185 metres.
- **EVOS Terneuzen.**
- **Dow's Braakman:** Docks A, B and C.

North Sea Port: Ghent

Zeekanaal Ghent - Terneuzen: The depth of water in the canal is 13.5 m and there are no currents or tides. Inside the port there are five large docks and three smaller docks, offering a total quay length of 31 kilometres for vessels up to 92,000 DWT.

22 kilometers with a depth of water of at least 12.5 metres. All the docks have direct access to the canal.

- **Kluizendok:** Is a brand-new dock. Has a total quay length of 4,300 metres with a depth of water of 13.5 metres and a width of 350 metres.
- **Rodenhuizedok:** Quay on the southern side is 790 metres long with 13.5 metres of depth. Width of 270 metres.
- **Mercatordok:** Quay is 1,800 metres long with 13.5 metres of depth. Width of 250 metres.
- **Alphonse Sifferdok:** Quay is 4,800 metres long, with 12.5 – 13.5 metres depth. Width of 300 metres.
- **Grootdok, Noorddok, Middendok and Zuiddok:** Total quay length of 6,855 metres. 6,575 metres with 13 metres depth of water, and 280 metres with 8.5 metres depth of water.
Width: Grootdok: 150 metres
Noorddok: 200 metres
Middendok: 250 metres
Zuiddok: 220 metres



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	5G Multimodal		■		■	■		
	A.C. Rijnberg transportservice B.V.				■			
A	Aannemingsmaatschappij Van Gelder B.V.	■	■					
	ABAB Accountants en Adviseurs						■	
	ABN AMRO						■	
	Access World Terminals B.V.				■		■	
	Adriaanse & van der Weel Advocaten						■	
	Aerssens & Partners						■	
	Agro Minne		■		■			
	AmSpec PMI B.V.				■		■	
	ASD Group / Vervaeke	■						
	Atlas Professionals						■	
	AXXAZ						■	
B	Baker Tilly N.V.						■	
	BMD Advies						■	
	Boels Rental B.V.						■	
	Boluda Towage Europe		■					
	Bouwgroep Peters B.V.						■	
	BOW Terminal			■	■			
	Brandtie						■	
	Brandwacht Huren België						■	
	Brandwacht Huren Nederland						■	
	Bulk Terminal Zeeland Services B.V.		■	■	■			
C	Cemminerals N.V.	■						
	CLdN				■			
	COMCAM International					■	■	
	Competence Development Center						■	■
	Control Union Belgium N.V.	■	■	■	■	■	■	
	Cordeel Nederland B.V.	■			■			
	C.T.O.B. Transport & Logistics				■			
	Customs Support Terneuzen				■		■	
D	Damen Shiprepair Vlissingen	■	■	■				
	Danser Group		■		■			
	DB Cargo Belgium B.V.				■		■	
	DB Cargo Nederland N.V.				■			
	De Baerdemaecker N.V.				■			
	De Pooter Personeelsdiensten						■	
	De Ruyter Training & Consultancy							■
	De Zeeuwse Alliantie Notarissen						■	
	Delta Safe Security Services B.V.						■	
	DEME Environmental N.V.					■		
	DFDS Seaways Belgium				■			
	DHG						■	
	dNM						■	
	DOC Logistics B.V.		■	■	■			
	DOW Benelux B.V.	■						
	Draftec B.V.	■		■			■	
	DRV Accountants & Adviseurs						■	
	Dutch Marine B.V.		■				■	
E	E.I.B. Insulation N.V.	■				■		
	Elloro						■	
	Elopak B.V.	■						
	ELTEN Benelux B.V.	■						
	Embedded Coaching & Consultancy						■	
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	Equans	■						
	Euro-Mit Staal B.V.	■						
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	Evolution Terminals B.V.					■		
	Evos Ghent N.V.				■			
	Evos Terneuzen B.V.	■						

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F	Fertilfe Benelux B.V.	■						
	Feyter Group	■					■	
	FincoEnergies Marine		■			■		
	Firma Klouwers Terneuzen				■			
	Flushing Shipping Agencies				■		■	
G	FMJ E & I Zeeland B.V.						■	
	Ghent Transport & Storage N.V.		■		■	■		
	Global Port Training B.V.		■				■	■
	Gould services		■	■	■			
	Green Blue Offshore Terminal		■	■				
H	H4A	■			■	■		
	Havenwerk B.V.						■	
	Hendrik Veder Group Vlissingen	■	■	■		■	■	
	Henk Kramer Communicatie						■	
	Heros Sluiskil B.V.	■						
I	Heylen Warehouses	■					■	
	Holland Shipyards		■	■				
	Hoondert 's-Heerenhoek	■	■	■	■	■	■	
	Hoondert Services & Decommissioning	■	■	■	■	■	■	
	HR Expat Services						■	
	Hudig & Veder Chartering B.V.		■		■			
	IBS Staalbouw B.V.	■					■	
	ICL-IP Terneuzen B.V.	■						
	IGL B.V.		■	■			■	
	Impuls Zeeland						■	
	ING Business Banking						■	
	Ingenieurbureau Walhout Civil B.V.	■	■	■			■	
	Interface Terminal Gent (ITG)				■		■	
	Interlashing B.V.				■		■	
	J	IPC Services België B.V.	■					■
Istimewa Electrotechniek B.V.		■		■		■	■	
Jonkman Opleidingen B.V.								■
Justion Advocaten							■	
Juust B.V.							■	
K	Kamps Straal- en Industriële Spuitwerken	■	■	■	■	■	■	
	Katoen Natie Westerschelde B.V.				■		■	
	Koch adviesgroep Ingenieurs & Architecten						■	
	Koolwijk Shipstores B.V.				■		■	
	KWS Infra/Aquavia						■	
L	Labojuce B.V.	■					■	
	Lalemant N.V., Lalemant Trucking N.V.		■	■	■		■	
	Legrant Freight Management B.V.				■			
	LGH BVBA	■	■	■			■	
	Liftal Hijstechniek						■	
	Lineage Logistics Vlissingen				■			
	Lion Storage Netherlands B.V.					■		
	Loodswezen Regio Scheldemonden		■		■		■	
	Luctor Belting Nederland B.V.	■					■	
	M	Maaskade Bevrachters Belgium		■		■		■
Maaskade Group			■	■	■			
Mammoet Nederland B.V.		■	■	■	■		■	
Maritiem & Logistiek College de Ruyter							■	
Maritiem Muzeum Zeeland			■				■	
Martens Renewables		■	■					
MasChem B.V.		■						
Media58 B.V.							■	
Mervielde N.V.					■			
Meyland N.V.		■						
MMPS			■	■	■			
Montis Mooring- and Boatervice B.V.			■					
Multraship Towage & Salvage		■	■	■				

Members of Promotion Council North Sea Port

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	Municipality of Borsele	www.borsele.nl						■
	Municipality of Middelburg	www.middelburg.nl						■
	Municipality of Terneuzen	www.terneuzen.nl						■
	Municipality of Vlissingen	www.vlissingen.nl						■
N	Navonus N.V.	www.navonus.be	■					
	North Sea Port	www.northseaport.com	■	■	■		■	
	Northfreeze N.V.	www.northfreeze-group.com			■			
	N.V. Westerscheldetunnel	www.westerscheldetunnel.nl			■		■	
O	Oceanwide Personnel Services B.V.	www.oceanwidecrew.com					■	
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The content of PortNews is the responsibility of the Editorial Committee.
Contact: • Henk de Haas, Chairman, Promotion Council North Sea Port
• Michael Moreau, Communication Manager, North Sea Port
• Charles van den Oosterkamp, Director, OMC Services BV

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P.O. Box 132
4530 AC Terneuzen, The Netherlands
T +31 (0)115 647 400

John Kennedylaan 32,
Harbour 3000A, 9042 Ghent, Belgium
T +32 (0)9 251 0550
E contacteer@northseaport.com
I www.northseaport.com

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P.O. Box 5130
4380 KC Vlissingen, The Netherlands
T +31 (0)118 491 320
E info@pc-nsp.com
I www.pc-nsp.com

Follow us on: [in](https://www.linkedin.com/company/northseaport)

PRODUCTION

OMC SERVICES BV

Management
Charles van den Oosterkamp

Contributing editors
Arno Dirkzwager
Ben Littler
Tamara De Maesschalck
Jean-Louis Vandevoorde

Contributing photographers
Foto-atelier De Rammelaere BV
Limit Fotografie
Mark Neelemans Fotografie

Contact E info@omc-services.com
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Meester F.J. Haarmanweg 52, 4538 AS Terneuzen (NL)
Kruisakkers 14, 4613 BV Bergen op Zoom (NL)

t +31(0) 115 649 749

e info@jonkmanopleidingen.nl





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