2012-10-22

PRESS RELEASE

The economic importance of the Belgian ports - Flash estimate 2011

To meet the demand for rapidly available indicators signalling developments in value added and employment at Belgian ports, the National Bank of Belgium has since 2006 published a flash estimate based on the annual accounts filed up to the end of August. It is issued just over six months prior to the publication of the annual study containing exhaustive statistics on the ports' results.

Note: The figures for 2011 are estimates produced by means of statistical techniques. Consequently, the final figures, which will be published in spring 2013, might be slightly different.

DIRECT VALUE ADDED AT FLEMISH PORTS, THE LIEGE PORT COMPLEX AND THE PORT OF BRUSSELS

(millions of euros - current prices)

	Maritime cluster[1]		Non-maritime cluster		**Total**	
	2010 *	*2011 e*	2010 *	*2011 e*	**2010 ***	***2011 e***
Antwerp	3,230.2	*2,920.4*	6,685.3	*6,642.5*	**9,915.6**	***9,563.0***
Ghent	281.0	*289.3*	3,162.3	*3,107.4*	**3,443.3**	***3,396.7***
Ostend	158.8	*171.4*	339.6	*333.5*	**498.4**	***504.9***
Zeebrugge	479.2	*487.5*	470.1	*478.7*	**949.3**	***966.2***
Liège port complex	31.8	*32.9*	1,315.8	*1,432.1*	**1,347.6**	***1,465.1***
Brussels	47.3	*50.9*	496.9	*500.1*	**544.2**	***551.0***
DIRECT VALUE ADDED	4,228.3	*3,952.6*	12,470.1	*12,494.3*	**16,698.5**	***16,446.8***

Source: NBB.

[1] Two clusters are considered: the maritime cluster and the non-maritime cluster. The maritime cluster, which includes branches of the ports themselves, and whose existence is essential to them (management and maintenance, shipping, transhipment, affreightment, storage, dredging, fishing, maritime services, etc.). The segments that do not have an immediate economic link with port activity which exhibit a close interdependence with it are known as "non-maritime" and include the segments of industry, wholesale trade, transport and logistic services.

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DIRECT EMPLOYMENT AT FLEMISH PORTS, THE LIEGE PORT COMPLEX AND THE PORT OF BRUSSELS

(full-time equivalents)

	Maritime cluster		Non-maritime cluster		**Total**	
	2010 *	*2011 e*	2010 *	*2011 e*	**2010 ***	***2011 e***
Antwerp	27,516	*27,147*	33,324	*31,884*	**60,840**	***59,030***
Ghent	2,829	*2,991*	23,258	*23,584*	**26,087**	***26,575***
Ostend	2,078	*2,013*	2,936	*2,867*	**5,014**	***4,881***
Zeebrugge	6,099	*5,948*	3,999	*3,919*	**10,098**	***9,867***
Liège port complex	355	*364*	9,297	*9,500*	**9,652**	***9,864***
Brussels	548	*588*	3,782	*3,868*	**4,330**	***4,456***
DIRECT EMPLOYMENT	39,424	*39,049*	76,595	*75,623*	**116,020**	***114,672***

Source: NBB.

e = estimates

* the minor differences compared with the figures previously published are due to additional improvements.

Comment

This initial flash estimate reveals that overall value added and employment in the Belgian maritime ports declined in 2011, trends that should nevertheless be put into perspective.

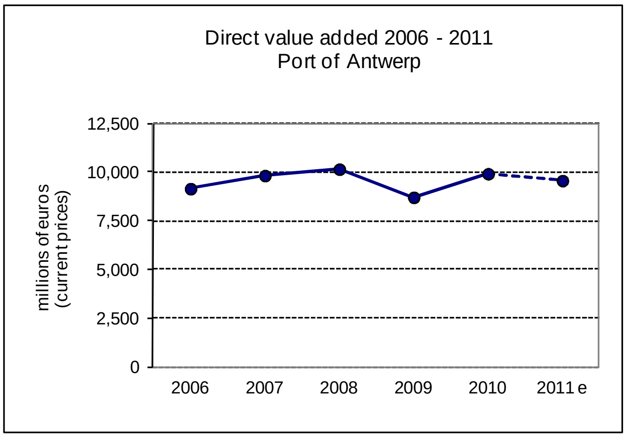
Although value added generated in the Belgian maritime ports declined in 2011, value added produced by the non-maritime cluster nevertheless remained stable. Yet there were major differences between ports in this cluster: value added was down in Ostend, Ghent and Antwerp but rising in Liège, Zeebrugge and Brussels. For instance, the port of Antwerp had to cope with a collapse in value added generated in car manufacturing, while the Liège port complex posted a big increase in the sectors of fuel production and energy. In the maritime cluster, it was only in the port of Antwerp, where business is strongly influenced by the shipping companies sector, where value added declined. This branch of activity saw a sharp deterioration in its profitability in 2011, and some major shipping companies were particularly badly affected.

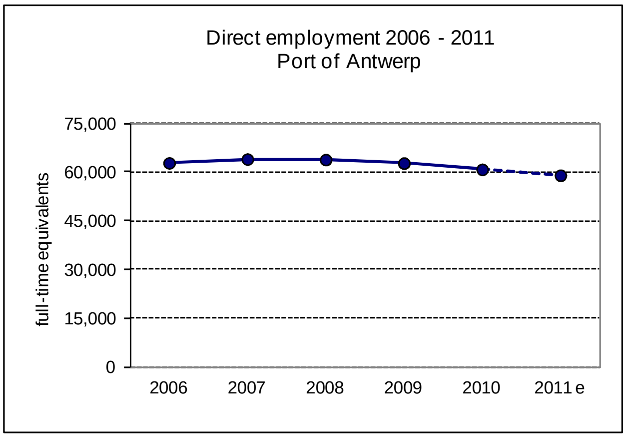
On the whole, **employment** in the Belgian maritime ports fell in 2011, both in the maritime and non-maritime cluster. The ports of Liège, Ghent and Brussels saw increases in each cluster, unlike the ports of Antwerp, Zeebrugge and Ostend, where employment was down across the board. In the ports of Liège and Antwerp, the trend in the non-maritime cluster, upward in the former and negative in the latter, is mainly attributable to industry. The port of Brussels benefited from the reorganisation of a major group based in the port zone. Conversely, employment generated in the port of Ostend was hit by the reduction of shipping traffic and by a business closure of an industrial company. Lastly, in Ghent, employment expanded considerably in cargo handling, while in Zeebrugge it shrank in several sectors of the maritime cluster.

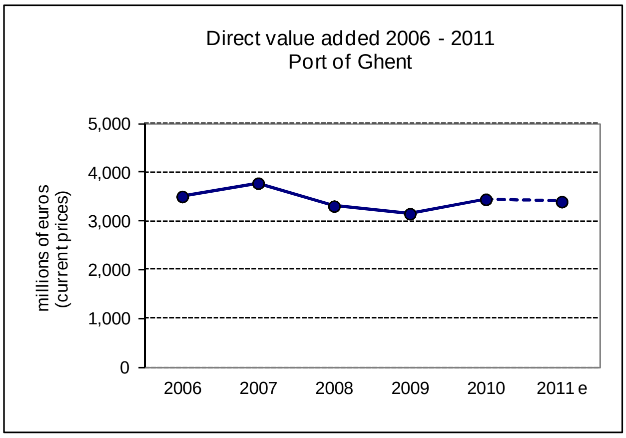
These reductions in value added and employment do not seem to be consistent with the overall increase in **traffic** observed in the Belgian maritime ports in 2011. There was nevertheless some divergence in developments from one port to another. Volumes transshipped stagnated in the port of Ghent and dropped back at both Zeebrugge and Ostend. Even though its ro-ro traffic[2] exceeded the 13 million tonne mark in 2011, the port of Zeebrugge suffered a decline in its containerised trafic and the volumes recorded by the port of Ostend were largely due to the contraction of its ro-ro traffic. In the port of Antwerp, there was an increase in transshipments in all merchandise categories with the exception of solid bulk[3].

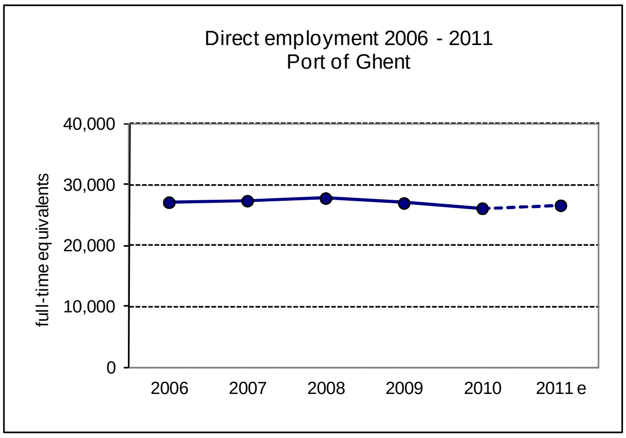
[2] Roll-on/roll-roff. Loading/unloading by driving on and off via the ship's doors/ramps using wheeled transport.

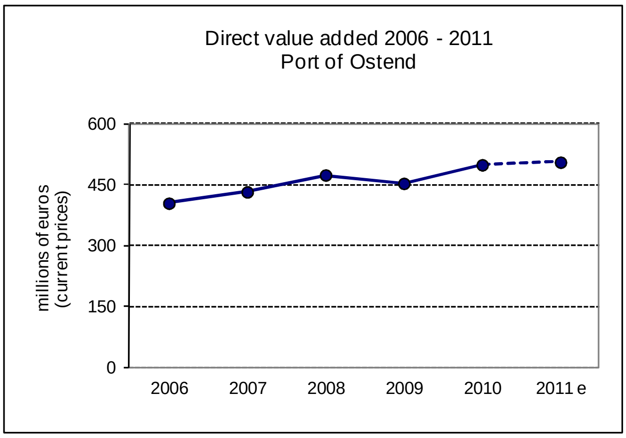
[3] Solid fuels, iron ore, cereals, fertilisers, sand and gravel, for example.

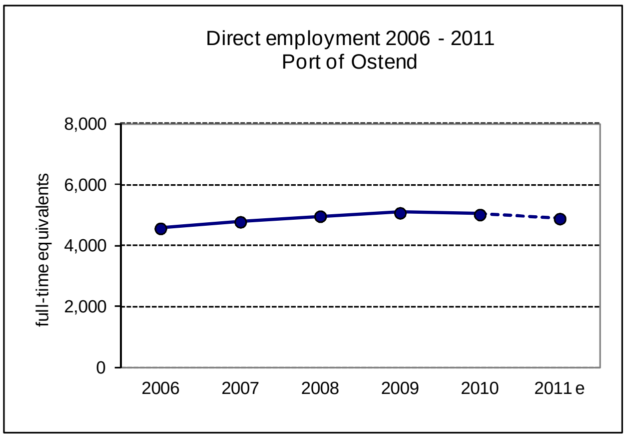

Direct value added 2006 - 2011
Port of Antwerp
millions of euros (current prices)
12,500
10,000
7,500
5,000
2,500
0
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011 e

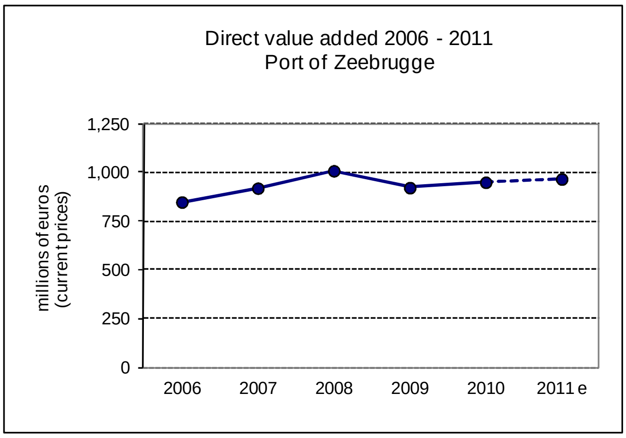

Direct employment 2006 - 2011
Port of Antwerp
full-time equivalents
75,000
60,000
45,000
30,000
15,000
0
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011 e

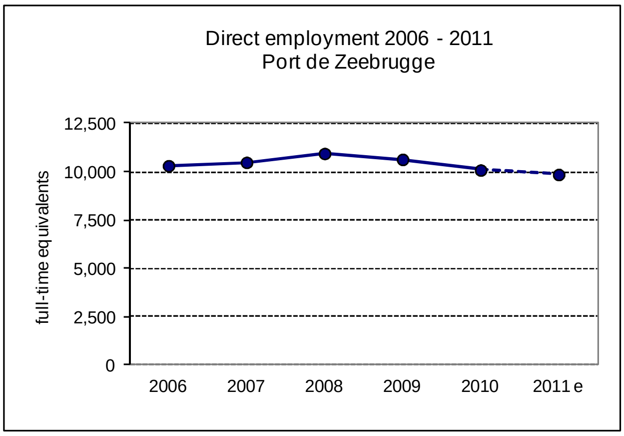

Direct value added 2006 - 2011
Port of Ghent
millions of euros (current prices)
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
0
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011 e

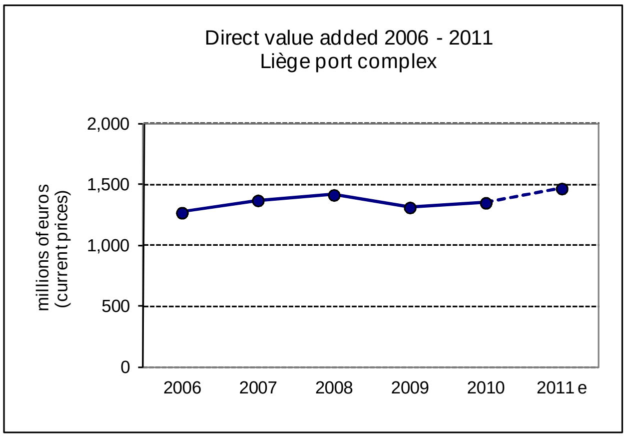

Direct employment 2006 - 2011
Port of Ghent
full-time equivalents
40,000
30,000
20,000
10,000
0
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011 e

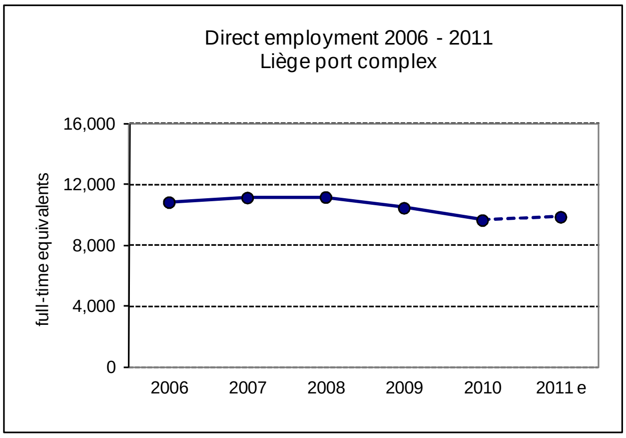

Direct value added 2006 - 2011
Port of Ostend
millions of euros (current prices)
600
450
300
150
0
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011 e

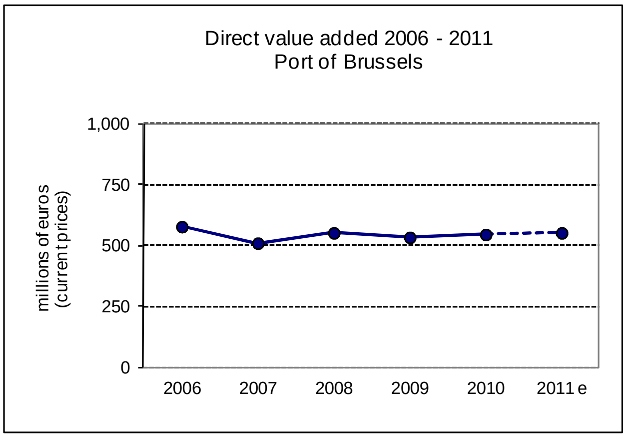

Direct employment 2006 - 2011
Port of Ostend
full-time equivalents
8,000
6,000
4,000
2,000
0
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011 e

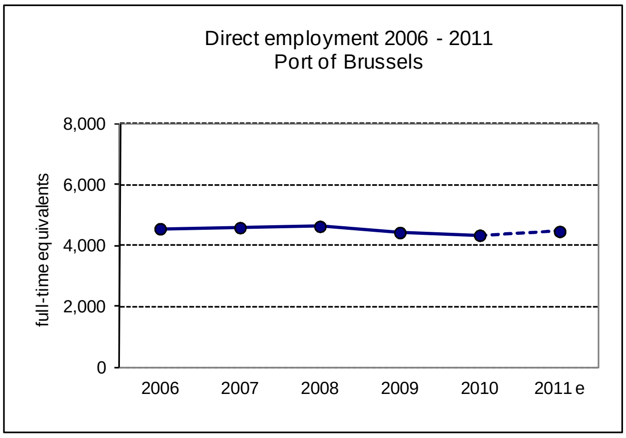

Direct value added 2006 - 2011
Port of Zeebrugge
millions of euros (current prices)
1,250
1,000
750
500
250
0
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011 e

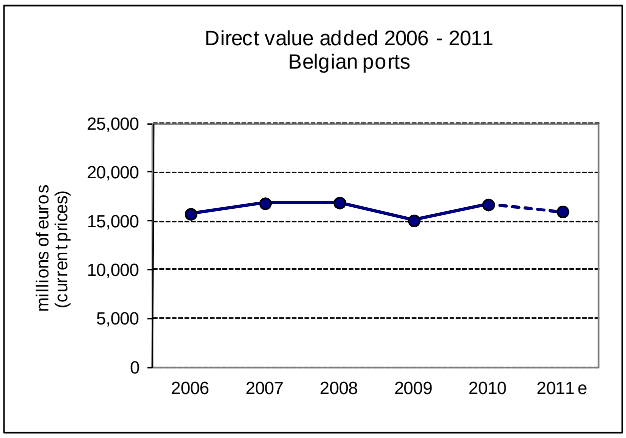

Direct employment 2006 - 2011
Port de Zeebrugge
full-time equivalents
12,500
10,000
7,500
5,000
2,500
0
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011 e

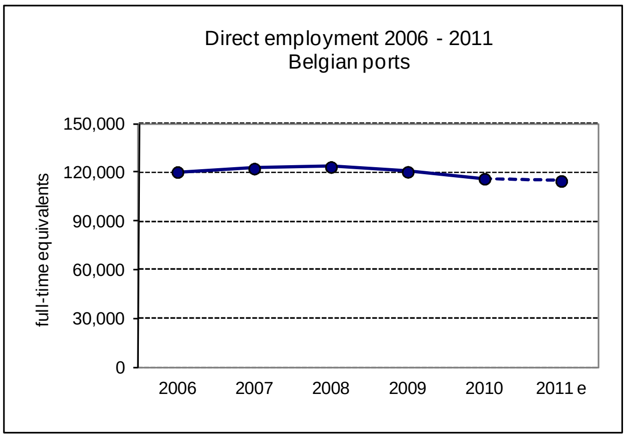

Direct value added 2006 - 2011
Liège port complex
millions of euros (current prices)
2,000
1,500
1,000
500
0
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011 e


Direct employment 2006 - 2011
Liège port complex
full-time equivalents
16,000
12,000
8,000
4,000
0
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011 e


Direct value added 2006 - 2011
Port of Brussels
millions of euros (current prices)
1,000
750
500
250
0
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011 e


Direct employment 2006 - 2011
Port of Brussels
full-time equivalents
8,000
6,000
4,000
2,000
0
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011 e


Direct value added 2006 - 2011
Belgian ports
millions of euros (current prices)
25,000
20,000
15,000
10,000
5,000
0
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011 e


Direct employment 2006 - 2011
Belgian ports
full-time equivalents
150,000
120,000
90,000
60,000
30,000
0
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011 e