2013-10-14

PRESS RELEASE

The economic importance of the Belgian ports - Flash estimate 2012

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 2012 are estimates produced by means of statistical techniques. Consequently, the final figures, which will be published in spring 2014, might be slightly different.

TABLE 1 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**	
	2011 *	*2012 e*	2011 *	*2012 e*	**2011 ***	***2012 e***
Antwerp	2,953.6	*3,079.7*	6,704.8	*6,685.5*	**9,658.4**	***9,765.3***
Ghent	279.7	*280.6*	3,115.4	*2,922.2*	**3,395.2**	***3,202.8***
Ostend	167.5	*172.8*	304.0	*308.2*	**471.5**	***480.9***
Zeebrugge	495.3	*505.2*	473.2	*431.0*	**968.6**	***936.1***
Liège port complex	32.9	*28.9*	1,419.2	*1,193.9*	**1,452.1**	***1,222.8***
Brussels	49.2	*27.7*	482.1	*499.4*	**531.3**	***527.0***
DIRECT VALUE ADDED	3,978.2	*4,094.8*	12,498.8	*12,040.1*	**16,477.1**	***16,135.0***

Source: NBB.

TABLE 2 DIRECT EMPLOYMENT AT FLEMISH PORTS, THE LIEGE PORT COMPLEX AND THE PORT OF BRUSSELS

(full-time equivalents)

	Maritime cluster		Non-maritime cluster		**Total**	
	2011 *	*2012 e*	2011 *	*2012 e*	**2011 ***	***2012 e***
Antwerp	27,753	*27,754*	32,258	*33,061*	**60,010**	***60,815***
Ghent	2,860	*2,928*	23,697	*24,023*	**26,557**	***26,951***
Ostend	1,960	*2,078*	2,864	*3,050*	**4,824**	***5,128***
Zeebrugge	6,053	*6,032*	3,947	*3,976*	**10,000**	***10,008***
Liège port complex	356	*327*	9,449	*9,281*	**9,804**	***9,607***
Brussels	576	*499*	3,767	*3,951*	**4,343**	***4,450***
DIRECT EMPLOYMENT	39,558	*39,618*	75,981	*77,342*	**115,539**	***116,960***

Source: NBB.

e = estimates

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

[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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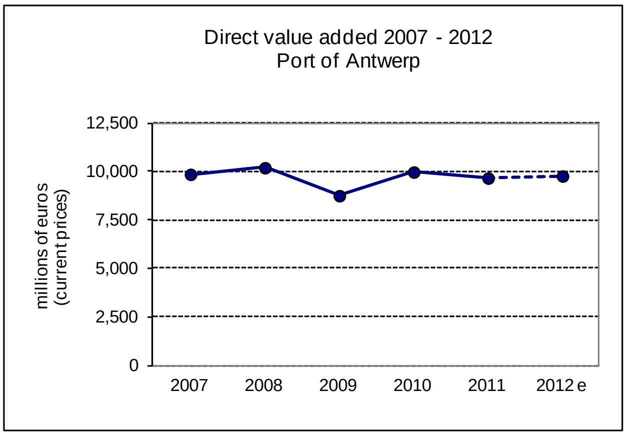
Comment

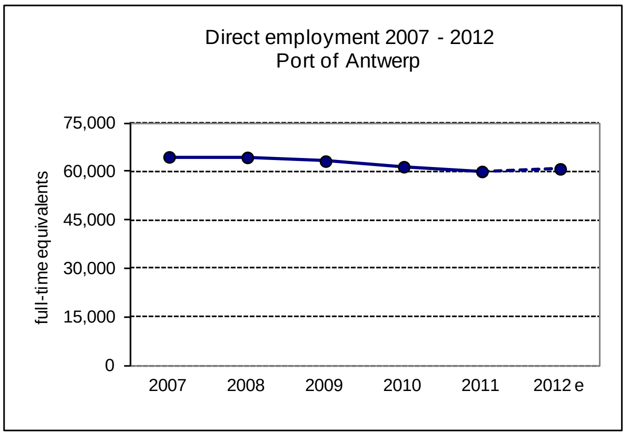
This initial flash estimate shows that the value added generated in the ports slightly declined in 2012, whereas employment rose. However, these trends do not apply to every port.

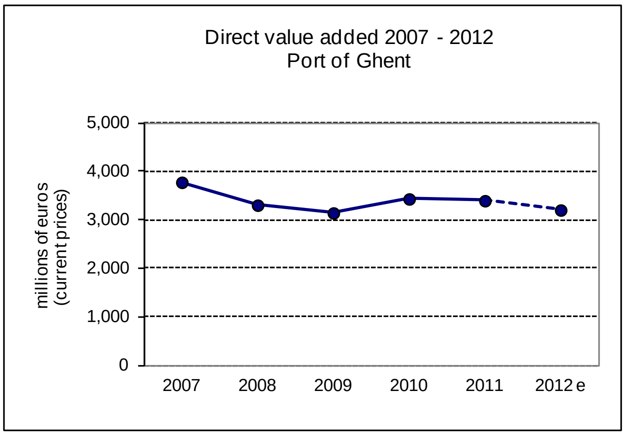
According to this flash estimate, value added for all Belgian maritime ports as a whole was down by 2 % in 2012. As value added held up in the maritime cluster, the decline can mainly be attributed to a fall in value added in the non-maritime clusters in Liège and Ghent. Following an outstanding year, value added in the energy sector showed less spectacular results in 2012, while the metalworking industry's value added continued to fall. These two sectors are partly to blame for the sharper value added drop in the non-maritime clusters in these ports. But the slowdown in this cluster in Antwerp was very limited. In the maritime cluster value added produced by shipowners once again proved to be quite low, whereas the dredging sector reported a sharp upturn and the growth of value added in cargo handling continued.

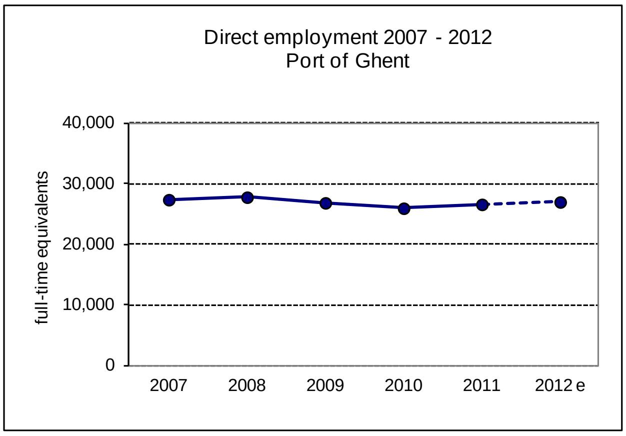
As to employment, the initial estimates point to a decline in the maritime clusters in Liège and Brussels, though the increase in Ghent and Ostend prevented the overall employment in the maritime cluster from decreasing. Conversely, regarding the non-maritime cluster, only the Liège port complex reported lower employment inter alia as a result of a staff reduction in the ArcelorMittal group. Accordingly, this port recorded an unfavourable development of direct employment, unlike the Port of Ostend, which showed the strongest rate of growth. As for Ghent, it particularly benefited from recruitment in the car manufacturing sector. In 2012 some reorganisations took place in a number of groups of enterprises, which sometimes resulted in personnel shifts between entities or even to new companies. Overall, employment in the Belgian maritime ports rose by 1 %.

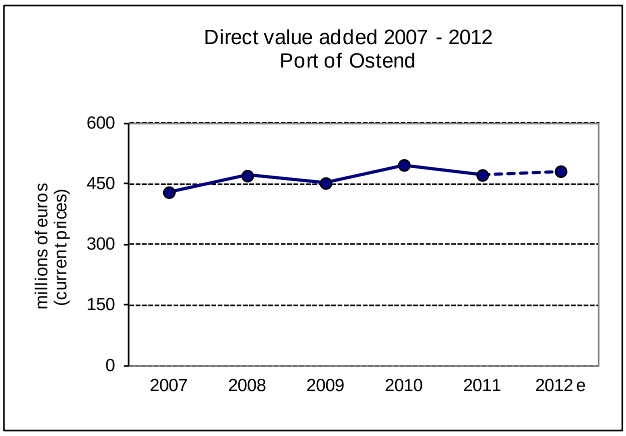
As a result of the gloomy economic climate, cargo traffic in every Belgian maritime port diminished in 2012. The sharpest decline was recorded in Ostend and Liège and the slightest drop in Antwerp. The steep fall of waterway traffic in Liège can mainly be attributed to the ArcelorMittal group's decision to shut down its blast furnaces. In the port of Ostend, the ro-ro traffic continued to pick down. Zeebrugge recorded falls in several categories of goods, container traffic alone suffering a reduction of 2 million tonnes. In Ghent, transshipped volumes in bulk and conventional general cargo were down. Traffic in the port of Antwerp held steady only in ro-ro and dry bulk while the decreases in the most important categories remained limited. The resilience of agricultural and containerized products in the Port of Brussels did not offset the reductions in other categories. All in all, traffic in the Belgian maritime ports dropped by 3.9 %.

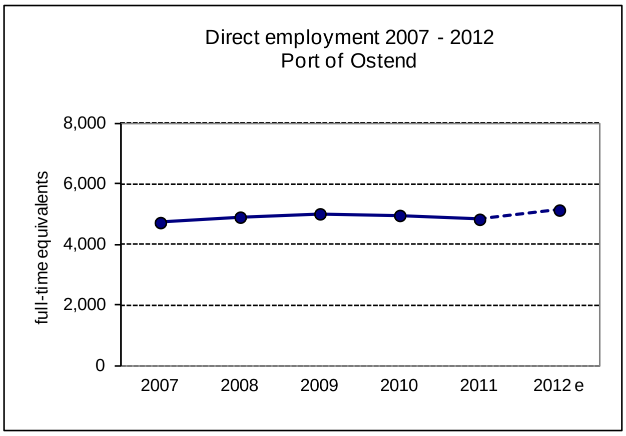


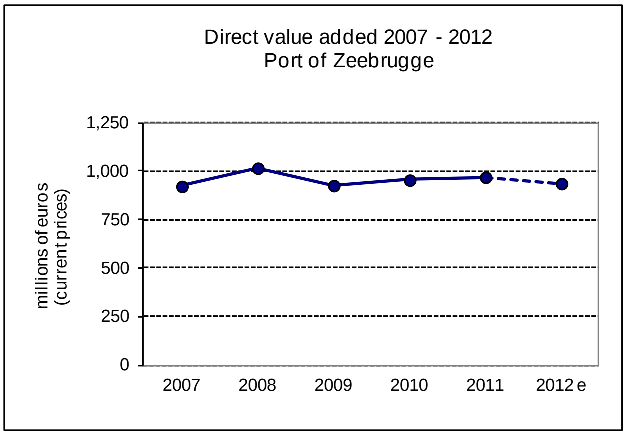


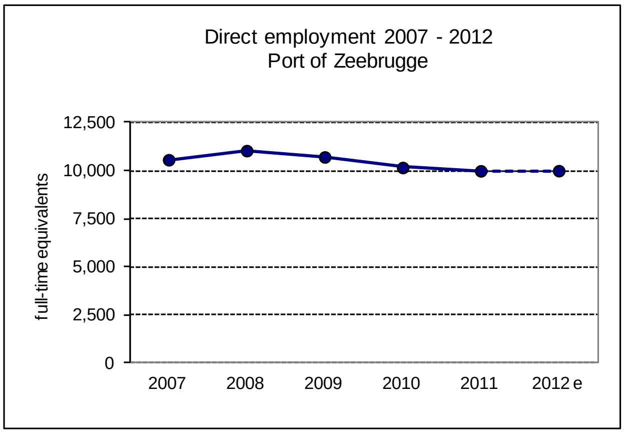












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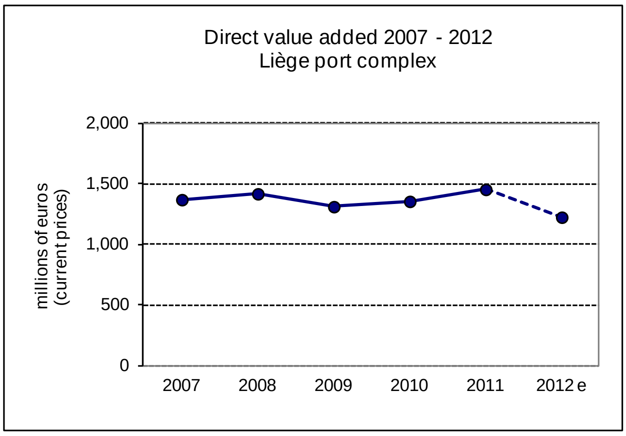
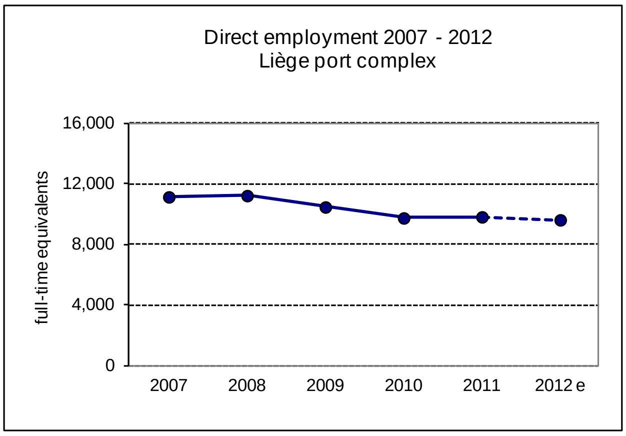
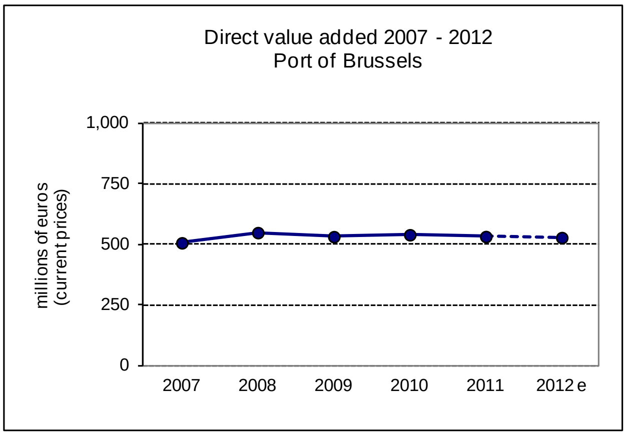
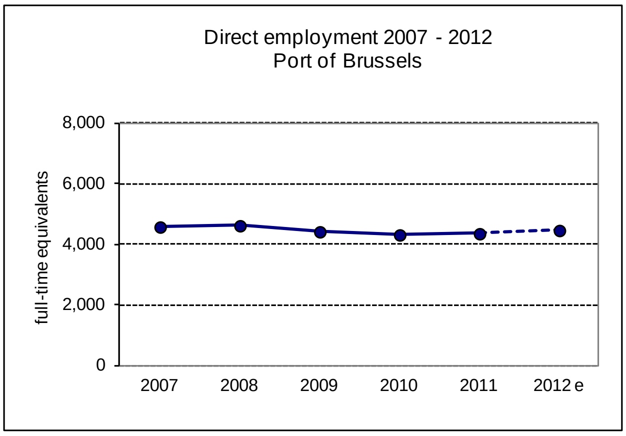
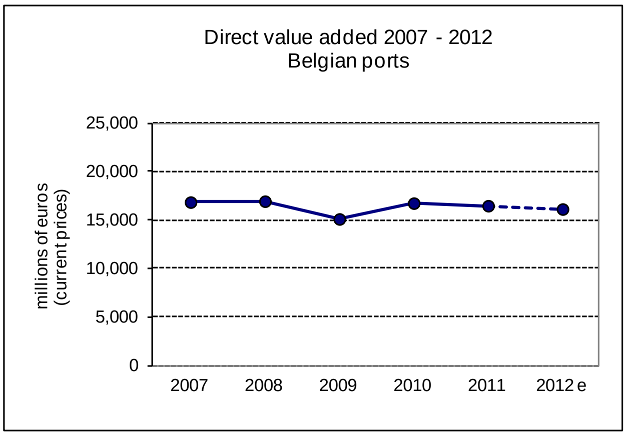

Direct value added 2007 - 2012
Liège port complex
millions of euros
(current prices)
2,000
1,500
1,000
500
0
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012 e


Direct employment 2007 - 2012
Liège port complex
full-time equivalents
16,000
12,000
8,000
4,000
0
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012 e


Direct value added 2007 - 2012
Port of Brussels
millions of euros
(current prices)
1,000
750
500
250
0
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012 e


Direct employment 2007 - 2012
Port of Brussels
full-time equivalents
8,000
6,000
4,000
2,000
0
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012 e


Direct value added 2007 - 2012
Belgian ports
millions of euros
(current prices)
25,000
20,000
15,000
10,000
5,000
0
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012 e

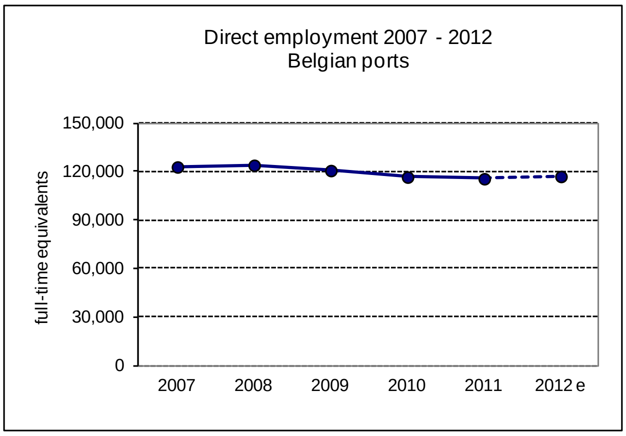

Direct employment 2007 - 2012
Belgian ports
full-time equivalents
150,000
120,000
90,000
60,000
30,000
0
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012 e

TABLE 3 CARGO TRAFIC IN THE BELGIAN PORTS

(in thousands of tonnes; change is expressed as a percentage)

	Antwerp		Ghent		Ostend		Zeebrugge		**Flemish ports**		**Change from**
	2011	2012	2011	2011	2011	2012	2011	2012	**2011**	**2012**	**2011 to 2012**
Containers	105,109	104,060	545	619	0	0	22,743	20,317	**128,397**	**124,996**	-2.6
Roll-on/roll-off	4,192	4,797	1,637	1,700	2,256	1,792	13,131	12,549	**21,216**	**20,837**	-1.8
Conventional general cargo	12,748	10,895	3,431	3,187	39	0	1,151	1,360	**17,369**	**15,441**	-11.1
Liquid bulk	46,016	45,276	4,450	3,977	5	0	8,281	7,695	**58,752**	**56,948**	-3.1
Dry bulk	19,086	19,106	17,124	16,821	1,543	1,405	1,653	1,623	**39,406**	**38,955**	-1.1
CARGO TRAFIC	187,152	184,135	27,188	26,303	3,844	3,197	46,957	43,544	**265,140**	**257,178**	**-3.0**
Change from 2011 to 2012		-1.6		-3.3		-16.8		-7.3		**-3.0**	

Liège	19,455	16,477	-15.3
Brussels	4,855	4,606	-5.1
Belgian ports	**289,450**	**278,261**	**-3.9**

Source: Port authorities.