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Antwerp 'limits' Covid-19 impact

Total goods throughput falls by 4.9 per cent in the first half of the year, with the 'first signs of recovery visible'



The port of Antwerp has revealed its results for the first half of 2020, with throughput dropping but container traffic holding firm as Covid-19 affected global trade.

Total throughput dropped 4.9 per cent on a year-on-year basis, as after a strong first quarter, the port experienced a decline in the transshipment of all flows of goods, with the exception of the container sector.

Despite the impact of the coronavirus crisis on global production and logistics chains and a pandemic-driven drop in demand, the port remained 100 per cent operational, and container traffic actually climbed slightly in TEUs by 0.4 per cent.

The port acknowledged that the total number of calls

made by vessels decreased, but this was compensated by a higher average volume per vessel and by additional calls on top of the normal sailing schedules.

For the third quarter, while the port is still expecting blank sailings, it said that it is also seeing the first signs of recovery and an upturn in the European economy.

"Port of Antwerp is a world port that follows the pace of the European and world economy," said Jacques Vandermeiren, chief executive at the port of Antwerp. "The impact of the shutdown of the global supply chain due to the coronavirus crisis has been felt from the second quarter onwards and will affect the total throughput of goods this year.

"The Port of Antwerp is holding up well in the Hamburg-Le Havre range

because it is active in many sectors, it is not dependent on a single continent and because of its role as Europe's largest integrated chemical cluster."

Annick De Ridder, port alderman, added: "As the port of Antwerp, we are an important link in the chain between producers and consumers, and as such a perfect barometer for the global economy. Much will depend on how quickly industry is able to start up again and consumer confidence to return. As Antwerp port community, we remained 100 per cent operational during this global crisis and our knowledge and experience are well documented as a valued trademark all over the world."