



Efico favours rail for its daily traffic from Antwerp to Zeebrugge

The Antwerp-based company Efico, one of the ten largest coffee trade houses in Europe, has in September 2010 in the port of Zeebrugge, opened Seabridge: a new, 100% owned, sustainable and high-tech distribution centre for green coffee.



Marc Beernaert, CEO of Seabridge: *"Environment and top quality are of paramount importance at Efico. That is why we opted for the railway and signed a cooperation agreement with IFB for the daily transport of coffee beans from the Port of Antwerp to our storage centre in Zeebrugge. To be able to guarantee continuous high quality of our coffee beans, it is essential that these transports are carried out within a limited time span. We are very satisfied with the cooperation with IFB. All transport is carried out swiftly and according to plan."*

IFB-Seabridge: new cooperation

IFB, a multifunctional container operator and member of SNCB Logistics, provides five additional freight traffic services per week between Antwerp and Zeebrugge by order of Efico. A lack of space and insufficient railway connections in Antwerp, seat of its main office, made Efico decide to open a state-of-the-art distribution centre in the port of Zeebrugge, where railway provisions were already in place. Seabridge's railway connections on site offer space to more than 33 wagons that can carry a total of 100 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units).

Every day, green coffee beans originating from 36 different countries (South and Central America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia) arrive at the Port of Antwerp, transit port for seven million bales of coffee, packed in containers. The containers are offloaded from the ships at the various quays and loaded onto the existing Narcon trains of IFB. These trains then drive to the Main Hub (the IFB terminal in Antwerp North) where they undergo further assembly before assuming their direct route to Zeebrugge.

Time & quality



In addition to environmentally friendly transport, time and quality are of the essence to Efico. The quality of the coffee beans diminishes the moment they leave their original climate. The containers filled with coffee beans therefore quickly find their way from the quays in Antwerp to the air-conditioned warehouse in Zeebrugge that offers optimum air circumstances for perfect storage. In accordance with set deadlines, IFB ensures transportation to the high-tech distribution centre of about 500 containers per month. The arrival and departure punctuality figures speak for themselves: the train services involved achieve a 99% reliability level. Traction is in the hands of SNCB Logistics.

Green label

Efico takes great pride in trading 'green' coffee. The surrounding processes (storage, distribution, transport) must also fit within the company's ecologically sound strategy. In view of its lower energy consumption and minimised CO₂ emissions, rail transport is therefore an obvious choice. Green coffee, environmentally friendly storage (powered by alternative energy produced on site) and sustainable energy - the picture is complete.

A myth dispelled

IFB has successfully set aside the prejudice that transport by rail is feasible only for large volumes over long distances. The present traffic results prove the opposite: sufficient volumes together with high frequencies on a regular basis make rail a fully-fledged high quality transport option, also for shorter distances. In times of enhanced sustainable interest, this is obviously an enormous asset.