



THE LOGISTICS SECTOR

Transportation and logistics – an important sector in the Wallonia Region – is an absolute priority of the regional government, which has defined it as a Competitiveness Cluster for regional restructuring.

The figures speak for themselves. Over 4,032 (1) businesses are currently operating in this sector, with over 26,242 (2) employees, generating an annual turnover of approximately €3 billion and added value of over €1 billion.

A strategic sector for this region, logistics involves airports and the distribution centers of many sectors, such as commerce, chemicals and publishing. Evolving at a headlong pace under the impact of globalization, the sector is a hive of innovative activity. Change is essential, and the Wallonia Region is embracing it whole-heartedly.

The profession of logistician has diversified, enriched with functions like picking, stock management, bulking, quality control, warehousing, labeling, invoicing, customs document management, order preparation and management, delivery of orders received through different channels (fax, telephone, internet), repackaging, transport and/or distribution. In parallel the sector has spread over several different areas – purchasing, procurement, production management, scheduling, intermediate storage and transportation prominent among them.

Logistics has acquired a strategic value for businesses, particularly the big international groups where the talk is increasingly of the global management of asset and information flows. Many companies operating in the

transport and logistic sectors at regional or international levels were formed in the Wallonia Region, and many more are based here. Most of them have considerable experience, which enables them to offer high added-value services in the market.

A considerable number of these businesses operate throughout Europe, reinforcing the Wallonia Region's image as a European logistics center and its attractiveness for investment in developing further activities in this sector.

A major road and rail hub in Europe, the Wallonia Region has established itself as a primary logistical platform on the map of Europe by virtue of its excellent road, rail, river and air infrastructures, thus favoring the development of many pan-European distribution centers. Intermodality gives it a strategic position on the global chessboard, superior even to any possible Eastern competitors.

But in addition to its strategic position, the Wallonia Region provides clear evidence of its capacity to manage what is now a highly sophisticated sector. With its long experience in the occupations related to transportation, handling and storage, the Wallonia Region has brought 460 million European consumers the benefits of high-tech solutions in the distribution of goods. Continuous training, focusing on modern logistical occupations, ensures the availability of a productive, flexible labor force, highly skilled in the sector's state-of-the-art technologies.

(1), (2) Sources Belfirst

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Mobility is utterly crucial to sustainable economic development. People and goods are increasingly mobile, and moving about in all directions. The transportation of goods is evidently a key issue for the management of responsible mobility.

• The road network

Road transport is a real economic driving force, accounting for over 72% of goods handled. The transportation and goods-handling sector counts 9,000 companies, with a total workforce in Belgium of at least 60,000. Although the Wallonia Region has a particularly dense road network, further developments are planned to improve its links to the great European corridors. The twin objectives are to eliminate missing links, and to give more towns the benefits of bypasses and ring roads.

www.febetra.be - www.uptr.be - <http://routes.wallonie.be>

• The rail network

The Belgian rail network is developed and managed by SNCB. 314 km of high-speed track, 200 km of it totally new, was constructed between 1993 and 2006. With four axes, centering on Brussels and heading towards France, the United Kingdom, Germany (via Liège) and the Netherlands (via Antwerp), Belgium has become a central element in the European high-speed network. In addition, the RER project – already under way – will meet the increasing needs generated by the significant growth in traffic in and around the capital, Brussels. Between 2004 and 2007 SNCB will invest €612 million in this project, which will come into operation in 2012.

www.b-rail.be

• The river network

Reliable, safe, punctual, ecological and economical, waterways are increasingly being seen as the future of goods transportation. The Wallonia Region is making great efforts to manage and promote its waterways, whose potential is far from being fully realized. The Albert Canal, the Sambre and even the Meuse could accommodate at least twice their current traffic levels without creating bottlenecks or increasing waiting times at locks.

As a direct extension of German, French and Dutch river networks, the Wallonia Region is also concentrating on developing its independent ports, which already have the infrastructure to offer commercial and industrial handling facilities.

Did you know that Liège is Europe's second-largest inland port, behind Duisburg and ahead of Paris?

www.opvn.be - <http://voies-hydrauliques.wallonie.be>

• The air network

The Wallonia Region has two fast-growing regional airports: Liège and Brussels South Charleroi.

– **Liège Airport**, open 24 hours a day, is situated at the center of the European airfreight triangle (Paris, Amsterdam, Frankfurt). It is the first airport to focus its development strategy on freight, supported by passenger charters and regular low-cost flights.

It is the eighth-largest European airport in terms of freight, handling some 400,000 tonnes annually. Liège Airport recently acquired a new passenger terminal. This investment, estimated at €25 million, enabled the airport to double its capacity to 1 million passengers per year.

www.liegeairport.com/

– **Brussels South Charleroi Airport** is a daytime-only regional airport (open from 7 am to 11 pm), specializing in low-cost flights to European destinations. It plays an important role in the Wallonia Regional transport network. In 2006 it handled 2 million passengers with destinations throughout Europe. Growing at an ever-increasing pace, BSCA will shortly open a brand-new facility with the capacity to handle 5 million passengers.

www.charleroi-airport.com

Useful websites:

www.febetra.be

www.liege4logistics.com

www.logisticsinwallonia.be

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