



**Port of  
Antwerp**

**MAATSCHAPPIJ  
LINKERSCHELDEOEVER**



**VOKA**  
Kamer van  
Koophandel  
Antwerpen-Waasland  
**Alfaport**

## CASE SUSTAINABILITY

Antwerp is the first port to implement “Zero Pellet Loss”

18/07/2017

Plastics are found everywhere in modern life. The raw materials of which plastic products are made are polymers, usually delivered in the form of small pellets. Antwerp is the main polymer hub in Europe for production, handling and distribution of plastic pellets. Every year, millions of pellets find their way via Antwerp to other hubs in Europe. Preventing these small plastic pellets getting into the water or anywhere else where they are not wanted is a top priority in all these activities.

The companies in the port have long taken various initiatives to prevent the loss of pellets, but now the entire sector is taking the game to a whole new level. Manufacturing industry, logistics operators and the transport sector are putting their weight behind “Operation Clean Sweep.” Antwerp is the first port in Europe to sign up for this programme, an initiative of PlasticsEurope. In practical terms a “Zero Pellet Loss” consultative platform is being set up in Antwerp to organise measures for keeping the loss of pellets to an absolute minimum.

“Sustainable enterprise is now deep in the genes of our port companies,” says port alderman Marc Van Peel. “They work hard in all sectors to reconcile people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. The signing of this charter today is the best proof of the great importance attached to this subject in the world of plastics.”

### **Operation Clean Sweep ©**

Operation Clean Sweep© is an international programme supported by PlasticsEurope, with the aim of preventing plastic litter materials getting into the marine environment. Companies that join this programme undertake to help achieve zero pellet loss. Antwerp is the first port in Europe to sign up for the programme. Signing the charter on behalf of the port, alderman Marc Van Peel declared: “The fact that all players in the polymer logistics chain are prepared to take part in this programme is key to its success: collaboration gives the best guarantee of obtaining good results.”

### **Zero Pellet Loss**

As part of Operation Clean Sweep, the Zero Pellet Loss initiative is being organised by Antwerp Port Authority, essencia (federation of the chemical, plastics and life sciences industries), Voka Chamber of Commerce Antwerp-Waasland: Industry Platform and Alfaport, and PlasticsEurope. The main challenge of this project is to reduce the loss of pellets to the absolute minimum. However, the companies in the port are not starting



from scratch. Various initiatives have already been taken in the past to prevent the loss of pellets. Wide-scale clean-up operations were organised in the port area at the beginning of this year. But to make further progress it is necessary to adopt an approach that covers the whole port and the whole sector. Weekly monitoring will be done to discover the places where plastics can be found in the environment, so that the pollution can be traced to its source and action taken to prevent it. An incident manager will keep watch on pollution and take action to clear it up whenever necessary. The costs of all this will be shared among the various participants.

### **Antwerp as a sustainable polymer hub**

Reducing the number of plastic pellets that get lost is not the only subject on which the sector is concentrating. More sustainable production and processing of polymers is also high on the agenda. To achieve this, a consultative platform was recently set up at which the participants exchange best practices for making the plastics sector more sustainable. The participants in this platform are all members of the Zero Pellet Loss project.

### **Fourth Sustainability Report**

It is no coincidence that the Operation Clean Sweep© charter is being signed on the same day as the Antwerp port community presents its fourth Sustainability Report. The report was first published in 2011 and has been produced every two years since then. It gives an overview of the initiatives taken by companies in the port to operate as sustainably as possible and so to contribute towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations.

