

AntwerpXL 2019 - A Major Success

Thousands of breakbulk professionals head to the show

[AntwerpXL](#), the new event for the logistics of breakbulk, RoRo, and heavy lift industries, has been hailed a major success. The exhibition and conference, which had its debut on 7-9 May, attracted 3,189 top decisionmakers from 59 countries through the doors, including visitors from Caterpillar, Solvay, Shell, Tata Steel, Siemens, ArcelorMittal and Thyssenkrupp.

Jacques Vandermeiren, CEO, Port of Antwerp, set the tone at the opening ceremony when he said: "Breakbulk is back in Antwerp, it's come home". Attendees agreed, welcoming the opportunity to gather in the port city to see the latest technologies and developments, meet key suppliers, discuss the sector's major issues, network and do business.

Mark Rimmer, Portfolio Divisional Director at event organiser Easyfairs said: "We couldn't be more pleased with the way the launch event has gone. What's come across loud and clear is that everyone is thrilled to have a breakbulk event back in Antwerp."

The show featured over 100 exhibitors including major industry names such as Boeckmans, Wallenius Wilhelmsen, Conti7, NileDutch, Hartel and Grimaldi Group. They were joined by innovative newer players such as NxtPort, PortXL and Peripass, which were featured within the show's special Innovation Start-Up Zone, where they showcased new technologies with live demonstrations.

"From the Tuesday evening onwards the visitor numbers were very good", said Albert-Jan Ars, Commercial Manager, Katoen Natie. "But to be honest, it's not the number of people which matters, it's the quality of those people and the conversations you are able to have with them, and at this show both of these have been excellent. We've followed up with people and have already had 50% ask for a quotation, which is a great sign that the right people have been at the show, and that they're in the market to buy."

John Hawthorn, Director, Central Oceans added: "We've been impressed by the number of people at the show - a great mix of customers, prospects and suppliers. AntwerpXL has been big enough to be very productive without being impersonal – and we've met a lot of people. It's also great for us to have a breakbulk event close to a major port; that's what the industry wants and needs. It has been so easy for us to invite customers and easy for them to come."

Philippe Goossens, General Manager, s.a.M. Lamberigts & A. Van Daelen n.v. agreed: "Our customers in France have been particularly pleased that the show is in Antwerp, the location really works for them. By the end of the first day alone I'd seen the majority of my French customers which

means I won't need to visit them for the next six months. It's worked well with prospects too - I'm convinced being at the show has improved my company's visibility in the market."

Beyond the show floor, the organisers provided additional opportunities for visitors and exhibitors to network. AntwerpXL 2019 kicked-off with a tour of the Port of Antwerp, which included views of both Kieldrecht Lock, the largest lock in the world, Deurganckdok, the largest container terminal in Europe, plus a chance to see and learn about Zuidnatie, the Antwerp Railhouse and Churchill Dock. There was a breakfast seminar organised by Flows, where thought-leaders discussed the question, 'Breakbulk in Flanders: Crucial or Marginal?'. An official AntwerpXL Networking Party, hosted at the historic Felix Archive and later at Den Engel in the Square, provided further hospitality.

AntwerpXL's conference programme featured two content streams focused on both futureproofing and inspiring the future of the breakbulk, Ro-Ro and heavy lift industries. Over 40 experts covered topics such as adapting to The NextGen, blockchain for breakbulk, trade wars and Brexit.

Discussing smart technologies and new ways of collaborating Roy van Eijdsden, Service Line Director Advisory, WSP said: "We need to recognise that eventually no person will touch the product at any point. We need to be thinking about that overall picture rather than individual technologies such as blockchain – although these are important."

On the contentious topic of data sharing he added: "I predict 80-90% of data will be publicly available; even if people resist sharing, it will be available by other means. Data will become a commodity. The competitive edge will come from being able to process and do something with that data quicker. The mindset of holding onto your data will actually hold you back."

Nataliya Maiseyenko, Transportation Manager Project Cargo, EAME and Eurasia Operations, Caterpillar, sees technology as an opportunity: "Sharing data will help improve efficiency and save costs. At the moment the customer wants a red carpet service but doesn't want to pay a red carpet price. Technology is the answer to this. We should be embracing it."

Talking about how to adapt and innovate within a global business, Paul Birch, the former Head of Business Planning at British Airways said: "Effective disruption is often 1,000 small changes all pointing in the same direction."

When it came to attracting the next generation into the sector, Robert Vermetten, Managing Director at Transport & Project Logistics observed: "85% of world trade is shipped, we need talent."

There was an overwhelming sense of gratitude from visitors who were pleased that the show had returned to the home of breakbulk in Antwerp. David Van Ballaert, Managing Director, Sallaum Lines, made this clear when he said: "It feels like coming home". Jacques Vandermeiren, CEO, Port of

Antwerp added: “We have a passion for breakbulk and we’re very happy to have the conference back in Antwerp this year.”

Other visitors applauded the business potential afforded by the event. Roland de Thieulloy, Partner, Livo Logistics, celebrated how his organisation “closed deals, negotiated rates and moved forwards”. Likewise, Donna Watson, Proposals Coordinator, Tyne Gangway (Structures), added that she “took away new contacts and connected with others.”

Paul Birch, Visionjuice, summarised how revolutionary AntwerpXL was for shaping the future of breakbulk.: “It’s about creativity, it’s about changing minds and through changing minds, changing businesses.”

Easyfairs also offered visitors and exhibitors ‘AntwerpXL Connect’, an online one-to-one networking platform, through which they could set up meetings and manage their schedule during the event.

Mark Rimmer concluded: “While we wanted AntwerpXL to be the type of event the breakbulk industry has valued in the past, we were determined to go further than this and introduce some new added-value elements such as our meetings service; things which have made Easyfairs one of the most successful and fastest growing event organisers in the world. The feedback we’ve had from exhibitors and visitors alike suggests this mix of old and new has really worked. We’re thrilled with the way the show has gone. It’s been an amazing debut event and we can’t wait to welcome everyone back in 2020.”

Watch the show highlights at <https://youtu.be/fMe3BZok6kQ>

AntwerpXL 2020 takes place on 21-23 May at the Antwerp Expo, Belgium.

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About AntwerpXL

AntwerpXL is a three-day exhibition, conference and networking event for the breakbulk, maritime, and project cargo industry, hosted by the Port of Antwerp. Industry leaders from across the supply chain will meet to discover, innovate, and connect at Antwerp Expo, Belgium, from the 21-23 May 2020.

Freight forwarders, cargo owners, and equipment handlers, as well as terminal operators, EPCs, manufacturers, and project owners will attend to network and learn from the experts.

AntwerpXL - shaping the future of breakbulk. www.antwerpXL.com

About Easyfairs

Easyfairs enables communities to “visit the future” at must-attend events that anticipate their needs and present solutions in the ideal format.

The group currently organises over 218 events in 17 countries (Algeria, Belgium, China, Denmark, Emirates, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States). Easyfairs also manages 10 event venues in Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden (Antwerp, Ghent, Mechelen-Brussels North, Namur, Gorinchem, Hardenberg, Venray, Gothenburg, Malmö and Stockholm).

The group employs more than 750 people and generated revenues exceeding € 157 million for its financial year 2017-2018.

Easyfairs strives to be the most adaptable, agile and effective player in the events industry by employing committed individuals, deploying the best marketing and technology tools and developing strong brands. Visit the future with Easyfairs.

Find out more on www.easyfairs.com