



Press release

Antwerp diamond industry announces first quarter figures

Antwerp, 16 April 2015 – According to the first quarter figures from the Antwerp diamond industry, it appears that fewer rough diamonds were traded this year in comparison with the first quarter of 2014. The trade figures for polished diamonds paint a more positive picture.

ROUGH TRADE DECLINES

First-quarter exports as well as imports of rough diamonds in 2015 declined in comparison to the first quarter of 2014. On the import side, we note a decline of 13% in carats and 19% in USD. The export side followed this trend, showing a decline of 14% in carats and 21% in value.

During the first three months of the year, Antwerp imported 24.6 million carats of rough diamonds with a value of 3.3 billion USD, and exported 25.7 million carats with a value of 3.2 billion USD.

The fact that fewer rough diamonds were traded on the Antwerp market is attributable to several causes. Prices for rough diamonds are currently very high, leading diamond traders to purchase less. One of the largest miners, De Beers, responded to this by allowing its sightholders to postpone 25% of their purchases for the first time ever. Some diamantaires took advantage of this opportunity. We have also noted that a switch has taken place in the way that diamond traders conduct their purchases. Whereas they previously acquired entire stocks of rough diamonds, traders are now increasingly aligning their purchases in function of demand. Only time will tell whether this trend will continue in future.

POLISHED TRADE STABLE

As opposed to the rough diamond trade, the polished trade remained relatively stable compared to the first three months of 2014. In terms of value, 7% more polished diamonds were imported and 3% fewer were exported. In terms of value, we note a 4% increase on the import side and a 0.1% increase on the export side.

During the first quarter of 2015, Antwerp imported 2.0 million carats of polished diamonds with a value of 3.9 billion USD and exported 1.7 million carats with a value of 3.8 billion USD.

While the figures remained rather stable, consumer demand for polished diamonds is currently lower than anticipated. The slight increases are mainly the result of the positive import and export figures for polished diamonds to and from the Hong Kong market. The reason for this is simple: 100 Antwerp diamond companies participated in the Hong Kong International Diamond, Gem and Pearl

Diamonds love Antwerp¹

Private Stichting – Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC) ☐ Hoveniersstraat 22, BE-2018 Antwerpen, Belgium
T +32 3 222 05 11 ☐ F+32 3 222 05 99 ☐ info@awdc.be ☐ www.awdc.be ☐ BTW – BE 0885 969 987



Show this year, as opposed to 60 companies in 2014. Given that this trade fair was held in March, the goods from all these companies were sent to Hong Kong, and many of these goods also returned to Antwerp after the show. Likewise, the trade fair in Basel also explains the notable, 362% increase in the volume of imports from Switzerland in March. The trade fair was held unusually early this year, so the goods returned in March rather than in April as they did last year.

Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC) is an industry-established foundation, whose mission is to serve and support the diamond business in Antwerp, the world's most important diamond trade hub. AWDC is the coordinating body and the official representative of the Antwerp diamond sector, and as such is recognized internationally as the host, spokesperson and intermediary for the Belgian diamond community. In this capacity, AWDC liaises on behalf of the Belgian diamond sector with governments and actively promotes support for the diamond sector at home and abroad.

84% of all rough diamonds and 50% of all polished diamonds pass through Antwerp. Diamonds represent 5% of the total Belgian exports and 15% of all Belgian exports outside the EU, making diamonds the most important export product outside the EU.

Press contact:

Margaux Donckier, Spokeswoman

Mado@awdc.be

0478/32.47.97

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