

As holiday season approaches, Antwerp rough volumes lower but prices higher

The summer vacations at the world's diamond centres are over, and the global diamond industry is gearing up for the critical final quarter of the year when Christmas holiday season sales provide a vital boost to companies' performances. The Antwerp World Diamond Centre's Diamond Office has published Belgium's import-export figures for August and for the first seven months of the year. And despite continuing reports of a slowdown in the relentless price rises seen in the first half of the year, the Belgian figures show that prices are continuing to increase.

The AWDC figures show polished diamond exports in August rose by 22.0 percent in volume terms from August last year to 325,506 carats, but soared by 49.3 percent to \$527.9 million.

For the first seven months of 2011, polished diamond exports jumped 25.6 percent in volume terms on the same period of 2010 to 5.92 million carats, while surging by 38.3 percent to \$9.43 billion.

In the rough diamond category, Belgium saw a 41.5 percent drop in exports to 3.61 million carats in July, while in financial terms there was a rise of 18.1 percent to \$655.6 million.

In the January-August period, Belgium exported 79.9 million carats of rough diamonds, which was 8.5 percent down on the year before, but in financial terms there was a rise of 41.6 percent to \$10.3 billion.

In polished diamond imports, Belgium bought 673,021 carats in August, a rise of 7.2 percent from August 2010, with a 45.8 percent rise in dollar terms to \$987.7 million.

For the first seven months of 2011, Belgium imported 6.27 million carats of polished diamonds, a rise of 23.3 percent on August 2010, and 39.0 percent more in financial terms to \$9.06 billion.

In the rough diamond imports category, Belgium bought 7.26 million carats worth \$1.21 billion in August, a decline of 5.8 percent in volume terms, but in financial terms there was a 54.3 percent rise on August 2010.

In the January-August period, Belgium imported 72.6 million carats of rough diamonds, a decline of 4.5 percent on last year, but in financial terms there was a jump of 52.2 percent to \$9.68 billion.