

Antwerp starts 2011 on a positive note with strong exports

The Antwerp diamond sector started 2011 where it ended last year with sharp rises in exports of rough and polished diamonds in January, according to figures published by the Antwerp World Diamond Centre Diamond Office. Following the strong Christmas sales season in the United States and further reports of economic expansion and a decline in unemployment levels, along with ongoing rises in demand in Asia, Antwerp again saw rising exports at the start of 2011.

The rises in January are all the more significant because although the increases in 2010 were against the background of a poor performance in 2009, a recovery was already underway a year ago.

Belgian polished diamond exports last month soared 14.7 percent in volume terms from January last year to 598,812 carats, while rising 26.0 percent to \$812.4 million.

In rough diamonds, Belgium exported 11.3 million carats in January, a rise of 8.7 percent, worth \$1.04 billion, a rise of 26.8 percent.

In polished diamond imports, Belgium bought 843,774 carats in January, a rise of 30.5 percent from January 2010, with a 33.1 percent increase in financial terms to \$980.3 million.

As for imports of rough diamonds, Belgium bought 10.6 million carats worth \$1.05 billion in January, a decline of 3.6 percent in volume terms, but an increase of 37.7 percent, in financial terms from January 2009.