



PRESS RELEASE

Antwerp confirms position as a global diamond hub with 20% growth in the first quarter of 2026

Stable trading climate and sustainable measures revive diamond trade

Antwerp, 24 April 2026 – According to figures from the Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC), the total volume of diamonds traded in Antwerp increased by nearly 20% in the first quarter of 2026 compared to the same period last year. The import of rough diamonds in particular saw strong growth, with a 35.7% increase in volume. In terms of total trade value, the trading hub recorded growth of 3.7%. A stable political and economic climate, combined with targeted structural measures that strengthen entrepreneurship in Antwerp’s diamond sector and keep the trading hub attractive for international players, form the basis of this positive evolution.

Sustainable measures create an attractive business climate in Antwerp

The first signs of a cautious turnaround in Antwerp’s diamond sector had already been visible since the summer of 2025. The decline slowed noticeably in the second half of the year, and growth was recorded again for the first time in December 2025. This positive trend clearly continues and strengthens in the first quarter of 2026.

“This evolution is the result of structural measures that we implemented in 2025,” says Karen Rentmeesters, CEO of AWDC. “These are sustainable interventions that make Antwerp more attractive as a business hub for both Belgian and international diamond companies. In general, there is the strategic and fruitful cooperation with the Flemish, Belgian and European authorities, whose commitment reflects a clear recognition of the sector’s strategic importance. In addition, there is the introduction of a clear and more efficient visa policy, which facilitates access for foreign traders to temporary

residence visas, and the recognition of diamond cutters and sorters as shortage occupations, together with the simplified procedure for hiring specialized foreign workers, which has been in force since 1 January.”

Geopolitical tensions, such as unrest in the Middle East, also play a role. They reinforce an existing trend whereby companies seek greater flexibility and, in some cases, choose a stable base such as Antwerp—a choice made possible by these structural measures.

Diamond prices under pressure

Figures from AWDC show that international prices, particularly for rough diamonds, remain under pressure. In the first quarter of 2026, the price of rough diamonds fell by 27%, from USD 99 per carat in the same period in 2025 to USD 72 per carat.

This decline is the result of a combination of factors. The main cause is the sharply reduced demand for polished diamonds in recent years, partly due to the growing popularity of synthetic diamonds (especially in the United States) and the significant inventories that remained with traders after the peak in 2022.

At the same time, prices for polished diamonds appear to be gradually recovering: compared to the first quarter of 2025, they increased by 11.6%. As the price of rough diamonds is largely determined by the expected yield of the polished diamonds produced from them, this is a positive signal. Whether this will also translate into a sustainable stabilization of rough diamond prices remains to be seen in the coming period.

For more information – not for publication:

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