

## “H.Essers Valley strengthens Genk logistics hub with its own rail terminal and additional investments”

Logistics service provider H.Essers has ambitious plans for the further development of its sites in Genk. In addition, it is establishing a private secured rail terminal near its headquarters: H.Essers Railport Genk. The sites will jointly form a European hub for freight transport by road, water and rail: H.Essers Valley. All of this will be facilitated by an investment of 26.2 million euros. This investment is in line with the strong international growth of H.Essers in its chemical, pharmaceutical and high-value segments. At the same time, they are a confirmation that the company will remain firmly anchored in Limburg for the future.

H.Essers aims to make the most of Genk’s location and logistics assets within Europe. In its new master plan, the company is announcing plans for **development of an ambitious H.Essers Valley**. This will happen in different phases. At the Transportlaan, pharma activities are optimized with new temperature controlled warehouses. On top of this, there is the development of a European cross-dock at the old Hörmann site at the Woudstraat and the expansion of the IT infrastructure in Winterslag. H.Essers Valley also includes the chemical site Dry Port Genk, which was announced last year and is now operational. Finally, work has also started on the construction of a parking tower for the new head office.

“The roots of H.Essers lay in Genk, and we are proud to be contributing to Genk as an important European hub for the entire logistics sector. Which is why we are developing the multimodal H.Essers Valley in different phases and across multiple sites. From here, we offer our customers synchromodal solutions in Belgium and abroad through smart combinations of road, rail and water. Today, already 41% of our current fleet can be used in a synchromodal way,” explains CEO Gert Bervoets.

### **ETG terminal will become H.Essers Railport Genk**

With the first direct connection between Genk and Trieste, earlier this month H.Essers took an important step in expanding its synchromodal network, where goods are transported from their warehouses not only by truck but also by rail. And the plans do not end there. **H.Essers is taking over the ETG rail terminal near its head office** from Lineas and LRM. H.Essers has been working with Lineas on the Belgium-Romania train connection for years, and will now market H.Essers Railport Genk together with Lineas. The rail terminal will be secured and equipped according to the strictest standards that apply within the three strategic markets of H.Essers: chemicals, pharmaceuticals and high-value goods. “H.Essers is no longer exclusively a transporting company. Over the years, our company transformed into a full-fledged logistics player with all-round solutions within the supply chain. “With the acquisition of Euro Terminal Genk, our solutions will also include trains in the familiar H.Essers red,” says Gert Bervoets.

In Belgium, H.Essers and Lineas will continue to focus on the development of the Genk-Antwerp and Antwerp-Ghent-Zeebrugge railway lines, so that **transport to and from the port cities is smooth and sustainable**. This makes Genk more than ever a sustainable link between the intercontinental flows via the seaports and the European hinterland.

**In 2020 the European cross-dock will move from Transportlaan to the former Hörmann site** along the Woudstraat. In response to market demand, H.Essers is optimising its cross-dock activities and expanding H.Essers' pharma activities. An application was made in 2015 to carry out expansions at the Transportlaan site, but the Council of State did not retain this. H.Essers now has a plan B involving the previous Hörmann sites. These were put on sale afterwards and will now be renovated by H.Essers.

“As CEO of H.Essers, I know and understand the sensitivity of expanding at a location where trees are present. Which is why I want to communicate this expansion at the Hörmann site **very transparently**,” says Gert Bervoets. “The site is intended for industry, which means that we can use it for industrial activities. Moreover, it has already been partly developed. The trees will be removed to prepare the sites for use. We will compensate this by creating a larger and valuable nature area in the vicinity. In consultation with the Belgian Nature and Forest Agency, this area will be in Oudsbergen.”

### **Centralisation pharma-logistics**

The freed up space at the Transportlaan site will be used for **the development of pharma warehousing activities**. The current cross-dock building will be renovated and converted into a temperature-controlled warehouse that meets even the strictest standards and legislation for the pharma industry.

### **IT specialists wanted**

To support its growth strategy, H.Essers is also investing in the construction of new IT infrastructure and technologies. This is necessary to continue the in-house development of advanced systems for solutions tailored to the customer. “In order to give our team of IT staff and engineers sufficient clout, we are continuously looking for additional highly educated specialists and we will also be doubling the surface area of our IT office building,” says Gert Bervoets.

### **Further expansion increases H.Essers' foundations for growth**

Last year H.Essers took another important step with **the construction of H.Essers Dry Port Genk at the former Ford site** alongside the Albertkanaal. The first 32,000 m<sup>2</sup> of storage space for chemical goods are now operational.

In addition, the logistics service provider announced that it will build a new head office at the current site along the Transportlaan, which will become operational in 2020. The new head office is more than ever the decision centre from which the international expansion will be further developed.

H.Essers Valley comprises a total investment of 121.2 million euros. The new investments of 26.2 million euros are in addition to the previously announced 80 million euros from Dry Port Genk and 15 million euros from the new head office.

“In order to respond to the market, it is crucial to continue to grow, innovate and invest,” concludes Gert Bervoets. “We are far past the point of being just a road haulier, but our master plan **will only increase our leadership position as a synchromodal logistics service provider**. With this plan, H.Essers also gives new impulses to the Flemish logistics sector.”

### **About H.Essers**

The H.Essers company was founded in 1928 by Henri Essers and has since become one of the leading companies in Europe in the transportation and logistics industry for sectors such as chemicals, pharmaceuticals/healthcare and high-quality goods. In recent years, the company has experienced solid expansion thanks to organic growth and a number of strategic acquisitions. In 2018, H.Essers booked an annual turnover of EUR 679 million. The company currently has 1,060,000 m<sup>2</sup> of warehouse space, a fleet of 1,320 artic lorries, 3,120 trailers, 430 Safeboxes and 950 ISO tanks. 41% of this fleet is multimodal deployable. More than 6,340 people work at H.Essers, in 71 locations and 17 countries.

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