

Takeover of VLS sees Broekman Logistics entering new dimensions

Expanding its range of services

The presence of the firm Broekman Logistics, which set out on its path with its entry in the Rotterdam commercial registry in 1960, is now moving into a larger scale.

The logistician has expanded its international activities into India and Poland, and also opened a new chapter in its logbook last year by taking over the warehousing solutions offered by VLS in Belgium and the Netherlands. Ron Kuijpers, Broekman's business development director for warehousing and distribution, answers Christian Doepgen's questions.

Mr Kuijpers, storage is a rather hotly-contested field, isn't it? What are Broekman's strengths in this segment?

Our unique selling point is that we can store both chemical cargo as well as consumer goods at a single site, partially even under one roof.

What advantages does this offer?

Let's take e-bikes for example. The bicycles themselves are not hazardous goods, of course, but the batteries and the accumulators are. We can store them both in separate units, and assemble them for our customers for on-forwarding.

Our customers require end-to-end solutions from one hand. So we provide handling from the plant in China, for example, shipping to Rotterdam and interim storage in our warehouse. We then charge the batteries and put them in the bike for the final distribution of the now-complete product.

Which of your 43 locations worldwide is currently developing most dynamically?

Demand is coming on well in Venlo (Netherlands), where we have quite something on offer. Our warehouse there operates to all of the latest

standards. Every one of our employees there has been trained. We've installed a combination of CO₂ fire control and water sprinklers, and the doors provide no less than 120 minutes of fire resistance.

What about international markets?

Poland is very interesting. Our clients wanted us to set up stocking and distribution services there, with a facility in Poznan. In India, where we recently opened our 15th branch office, we're receiving more and more requests from export shippers to Europe. The consignments include machinery or chemical products, amongst other things. One thing we've noticed is that open-border agreements facilitated domestic trade in India in 2018.

"Broekman Logistics and the VLS Group share the same philosophy."

What are your plans after your takeover of VLS's warehousing activities?

This acquisition really represents a big leap forward for us! With the filling and bagging lines in Rotterdam-Pernis and Antwerp that we've obtained, as well as 230 experts, we can now offer many new services. On top of this we've obtained a largely new clientele, who we'll now work for as a full-service provider.

One focus will be on polymer imports from the USA, for example. Both firms' philosophies are similar, with a focus on customer-centric solutions, so that the integration of our activities will be able to proceed rapidly.

What is your focus for the expansion of your intermodal activities?

This is one of our main business activities in Broekman. Intermodal



Photos: Broekman Logistics

R. Kuijpers focuses on total supply chain solutions.

solutions are popular these days, for such options, for example on the Maasvlakte, allow us to reduce container dwell times.

Two days before a maritime vessel sails into the port the on-forwarding plans for the boxes are completed. We handle 95% of our goods in Rotterdam and Antwerp by train and by/or barge, with a mere 5% trucked. The rapid availability of the goods is the key issue for us. If there is any congestion due to systemic force majeure, then it's most important to inform the clients concerned as quickly as possible.

What's the secret of your success?

It's all about the personal touch. We're primarily client and solution-focused, and consistently work according to the principle of 'one face to the customer'.

What are your strategic goals?

We want to offer our customers total supply chain solutions, internationally too. We provide the same quality standards as well as client-centred solutions in every country, with a focus on Poland and India. The full integration of VLS is another important element of our plans, with investment in Antwerp. Further acquisitions are also possible, if the target's culture, customer base and strategy fit with our approach.

