

News report

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Resource efficiency in progress

Samsom (PvdA), Merkies (PvdA) and De Groot (D66) visit the port of Amsterdam

At the invitation of the Dutch Waste Management Association, Dutch Labour Party members Judith Merkies of the European Parliament and Diederik Samson of the Dutch House of Representatives, and Flip de Groot, leader of the Democrats 66 Group in Noord-Holland Provincial Council, visited the port of Amsterdam. Many of the industrial activities emerging in the port are instrumental in bringing about a sustainable economy, an ambition which is shared by politicians, the Port of Amsterdam and the waste sector alike.

The parliamentarians were accompanied by officials from Europe and the Netherlands. They visited the Greenmills industrial complex, followed by a tour of the industrial port areas. The Port of Amsterdam offers an attractive business environment for companies wishing to invest in a biobased economy, an economic model based on the use of renewable raw materials or biomass in the chemicals, energy and other sectors. A good example of this model is the close collaboration between Orgaworld and Rotie in the Greenmills complex.

At the Greenmills, which integrates process technologies and industrial processes, various wastes are processed into new raw materials and products, such as biodiesel and electricity. The companies make use of each other's residual wastes and products to meet their own raw materials needs. Heat generated by the anaerobic digestion of vegetable, fruit and garden waste is used to render fats and oils in the production of biodiesel, to heat the tank park and to dry wastewater treatment sludge. It will also be used by a new bioethanol plant still to be built. The glycerine released in the production of biodiesel is fed back into the anaerobic digester. In addition, Orgaworld, a subsidiary of Shanks Nederland, uses the sludge from the wastewater treatment plant to produce organic fertiliser pellets.



The Greenmills concept is a perfect illustration of the European Commission's intentions in its 'Roadmap to Resource Efficiency' presented on 20 September. The Roadmap sets out an agenda for achieving a sustainable economy by 2050. The Commission believes the economy can only grow if highly efficient use is made of natural resources and raw materials and wants to decouple economic growth from the use of natural resources. This will require collaboration between industry and the environmental sector.



'Europe must become less dependent on raw materials imports. Too much is now lost in incinerators or in landfills. And recycling too often involves a loss of value. It is time Europe changed its consumption and production practices. Our economy and consumption patterns have to go on a diet,' according to Judith Merkies, MEP for the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA). *'The innovative processes operated by the Greenmills companies demonstrate their intention of leading the way towards a cradle-to-cradle society.'*

Flip de Groot, leader of the Democrats 66 (D66) Group in Noord-Holland Provincial Council: *'Greenmills is an exceptional cluster of companies that produce sustainable fuels from biowaste. It is a striking example of how waste can be turned into raw materials and how the materials roundabout can work.'*

The politicians and the waste sector agree that Europe should press the member states more vigorously to implement the waste legislation. Only then can the next step be taken towards the biobased and resource efficient economy. Sustainable growth in Europe depends on secure access to raw materials. Ports can facilitate the transition from the current economic model based on fossil resources to a greener



economic model. *'As a modern European logistical and industrial hub, the port of Amsterdam offers clear opportunities for the development of a biobased and resource efficient economy,'* says Dick Hoogendoorn, director of the Dutch Waste Management Association. *'The European Commission should make it an integral part of its roadmap. The companies collaborating in Greenmills demonstrate in a most impressive way how to maximise the recovery and reuse of raw materials from biowaste and other waste materials. The waste sector is a fundamental and essential part of Dutch industry. Political interest in biowaste within the framework of the biobased economy programme could provide a further impetus to the positive developments already taking place in the sector.'*

Sigrid Johannisse of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation: *'The top sectors see the biobased economy as an important cross-sectoral driver for stimulating innovation and economic growth in the Netherlands. The Dutch Government also recognises the potential of these technologies in its response to the Social and Economic Council's advisory report on the biobased economy. Our ambition is to become one of the top three countries in the world in the biobased economy and for the Netherlands to become the gateway to Europe for green raw materials.'*

Henk Kaskens, chief executive of Orgaworld: *'The working visit to Greenmills clearly shows that green raw materials can make a contribution to the agenda for Europe. Household and industrial biowastes are given a second life: they are reprocessed into raw materials and energy. The Greenmills concept also makes a unique contribution to industrial resource efficiency. The facilities on the site are all connected to each other and the complex also supplies energy to surrounding companies (Nissan, Cargill and the Amsterdam district heating main). Other companies in the*



port of Amsterdam are also actively working to shape the transition from fossil raw materials to green raw materials.' Kaskens points to the consequences of the government's sustainable energy incentive scheme, which is restricted to energy from biomass. *'This is detrimental to the processing of biomass into higher grade products. Without this subsidy there would be more room for investments in the biobased economy.'*

Dertje Meijer, president and CEO of the Port of Amsterdam: *'The Port of Amsterdam sees an important role for the Dutch seaports in the transition to a biobased economy. The port of Amsterdam is the fourth largest port in Europe and is an international logistical hub that efficiently combines cargo flows, residual waste streams, raw materials needs and energy. In the Amsterdam port area we are already working successfully on this transition with companies like Greenmills, Vesta Biofuels, Waternet and Afval Energie Bedrijf (AEB), which convert residual waste streams into sustainable energy and raw materials. In addition, the Port of Amsterdam actively facilitates imports of large volumes of biomass from overseas, which are mixed with traditional energy sources. Through our Waste = Raw Material project and the Sustainability plus Innovation Fund we also stimulate and support local initiatives for sustainable energy and recycling of residual waste streams. An interesting example of such local initiatives is the Port of Amsterdam Phosphate Cycle in which ICL recovers phosphate-rich residual wastes from the port area for use in the production of artificial fertiliser. The Port of Amsterdam also makes an important contribution to the supply of sustainable energy to Amsterdam by producing enough wind energy to supply about 40,000 homes. This is set to double in the coming years.'*

source: www.wastematters.eu