

Increasing Efficiency and Reducing Risk for Europe's Second Largest Port

About Port of Antwerp-Bruges

As Europe's second largest seaport, Port of Antwerp, of Antwerp, Belgium, is a hub of international and maritime trade that has been active since the 12th century. In 2022, the port merged with the Port of Zeebrugge, located in Bruges, Belgium, to create the Port Authority for the Port of Antwerp-Bruges. The Port of Antwerp-Bruges has four main roles: community builder, landlord, operator, and regulator. This large-scale operation manages 290 million tons of cargo annually.

The Port of Antwerp-Bruges prides itself on innovation and managing challenges head-on, whether it be energy transition, digitalization, or mobility. Their goal is to be the port of the future: safe, smart, and highly efficient.

Maintaining a secure environment has become very important for the Port of Antwerp-Bruges for a few critical reasons. Firstly, the Port of Antwerp-Bruges depends upon digital means for day-to-day port operations, and, like many organizations, faces constant cyberthreats. And with the rise in ransomware and current geopolitical challenges, the threat level has never been higher.

Yannick Herrebaut, Cyber Resilience Manager and CISO for the Port of Antwerp-Bruges, is responsible for cybersecurity strategy, policy, and compliance at the port.

He leads a team that manages all security operations, including the security technology stack, and helps the business with security questions, service tickets, and incident response.

The business challenge

Cybersecurity is the number one risk for the Port of Antwerp-Bruges. The port is an industrial complex responsible for a significant percentage, nearly 5%, of the Belgian GDP. Disruption of the port could ripple into the Belgian economy, Belgian society, and more broadly into Western Europe. "Having a cyberattack is, of course, something we have to avoid at all costs, and that's why we need the visibility into our entire environment," says Herrebaut.

Herrebaut and his leadership team knew that a more robust security solution, offering better insights into the entire port organization, was a critical business need. "Detecting incidents is not always very easy. Sometimes threat actors are in the background for weeks or even months, and no solution is a silver bullet to detecting all these different threats in your environments," shares Herrebaut.

The Port of Antwerp-Bruges already had many security solutions in place, but they all came with their own dashboards and insights. "It's impossible for a small team like mine to manually correlate all these different events appearing in different dashboards, and really detect certain threats that are potentially ongoing within the organization. Therefore, we needed a single pane of glass to bring all this information together and to allow our security team to really identify important events before they become real incidents," explains Herrebaut.

While the team compared several different solutions on the market, most still used out-of-date technology and a legacy approach. As Herrebaut confirms, that's where Exabeam stood out from the others: "We needed a solution that relied heavily on automation and it had to be user-friendly, so we could use it within the current confines of our small, growing team."

The Exabeam solution

Exabeam checked all the boxes. Herrebaut continues, "The most attractive thing about Exabeam was that it's very easy to use, and especially the level of automation involved. It really correlates the events and brings only the relevant things to the attention of our team, so we can focus on real threats and not go on wild goose chases all the time."

Increased efficiency, reduced risk

Since the Port of Antwerp-Bruges implemented the Exabeam SIEM solution in 2021, their security operations have become far more efficient.

"Thanks to implementing Exabeam SIEM, we've been able to streamline our operations and do everything far more efficiently. Before we had to check every dashboard of every solution manually, and now we're able to just look at Exabeam and we are informed about all the things that are happening within our environment."

The insights that Exabeam offers give Herrebaut and his team a full view across their entire environment and the behaviors within it. "Now with Exabeam SIEM, we bring all this information together in the single pane of glass, and then we are able to see the noise from what's really important."

As the team handled the merger of the two ports in 2022, they turned to cloud-native Exabeam SIEM to help manage their IT and cybersecurity environments, and maintain visibility into them. "Thanks to our choice for Exabeam SIEM, we will be able to onboard the Zeebrugge environment very quickly and efficiently as well."

Partnering for customer success

The Port of Antwerp-Bruges has seen tangible results from the Exabeam solution, thanks also to the partnership with Exabeam preferred partner Telenet Business. Telenet Business works with Exabeam to provide technical consulting services and ensure customer success for the Port of Antwerp-Bruges through regular check-ins and knowledge shares for technical tasks such as log parsing, alert monitoring, and more.

"Our goal is to continuously improve our clients' security programs, and Exabeam has been a valuable partner in that effort," shares Angélique Quiévy, Enterprise Consultant at Telenet Business.

Strong security at maximum efficiency

With Exabeam, the Port of Antwerp-Bruges was able to cut through alert noise, eliminate manual processes, and centralize information, which ultimately allows their small but strong security team to achieve maximum efficiency.

"With the help of Exabeam automation and machine learning models, we are able to correlate all these different events and bring to the surface the threats that might be looming in the background," Herrebaut concludes. "It's very important that we manage a tight shop. That's why we need security technologies like Exabeam to help us deliver on this goal."

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Exabeam is a global cybersecurity leader that created New-Scale SIEM™ for advancing security operations. We help organizations detect threats, defend against cyberattacks, and defeat adversaries. The powerful combination of our cloud-scale security log management, behavioral analytics, and automated investigation experience results in an unprecedented advantage over insider threats, nation states, and other cyber criminals. We understand normal behavior, even as normal keeps changing — giving security operations teams a holistic view of incidents for faster, more complete response.

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