



DIGITAL RELEASE OF CONTAINERS AT THE PORT OF ANTWERP



The Port of Antwerp has developed a new container release process based on the sharing of real-time information on a unique central data platform.

Originally unveiled in June 2020, Certified Pick Up (CPU) will be used operational on 1 January 2021 and replace the current system of PIN codes.

This new way of working will guarantee a secure, transparent and optimised release process for incoming containers, which will then leave the port by rail, barge or truck, the Port explained. The CPU assures that the right container is assigned to the right carrier.

EVOLVING THE OPERATION

Today unique PIN codes are needed to pick up a container terminal in the port and the time between providing the PIN code to the shipping company and the driver entering this code at the terminal is considerable. The PIN code is also seen by multiple parties which increases the risk of abuse.

The CPU should make this process more secure and efficient as it is a neutral, central data platform which connects all stakeholders involved in the container import process.

The CPU platform works by receiving and processing container information to generate an encrypted digital key, with which the eventual carrier can pick up the container.

This digital key is only created when the final carrier is known. The time between the creation of the digital key and the collection of the container is therefore minimal.

It will also be possible to trace which parties were involved in the collection of the container. This allows the competent authorities such as customs and police to access the data exchanged and generated in CPU within the boundaries of their legal powers.

ANTWERP AS A DIGITAL PORT

The CPU has been developed by the Port of Antwerp and NxPort, the logistics data platform for Port of Antwerp and subsidiary of Port of Antwerp port authority.

NUMEROUS MEMBERS OF THE PORT COMMUNITY ARE NOW INVOLVED IN HOW TO FURTHER SHAPE THE CPU AND IMPLEMENT IT IN PHASES.

“They have the specific digital and data expertise and are the best party to join us in this project,” a spokesperson for the Port told PTI.

NxtPort is a company that provides solutions to enable the sharing of existing data amongst port players. The NxtPort Data Utility Platform collects and pools data from various stages in the supply chain.

The CPU solution will be stored via Cloud computing and will be hosted on European servers. The application is subject to regular penetration testing, security audits and constant security monitoring.

NxtPort is also ISO 27001 compliant, which means that they meet the strict requirements for information security.

Connecting to the CPU will be completed via application programming interface (API). “This has the advantage that customers can use their own systems (TOS etc) to connect to CPU. For customers who do not want to connect their own systems there will be a user interface available,” the spokesperson explained.

Access to the CPU solution is initiated via C-point, the Port of Antwerp port community system. Companies must be registered to C-point to gain access.

It has also been explained by NextPort that while all parties involved in the container import flow will be prompted to give release information only two parties are considered to be data providers and these are the ship agents and terminals. These parties must give their approval before a container can be picked up.

The Port of Antwerp highlighted that the CPU has operational benefits for all logistics partners in the port chain. It simplifies administrative processes, allows employees to



work more securely and reduces the turnaround time of import containers in the port.

Numerous members of the port community are now involved in how to further shape the CPU and implement it in phases.

In the longer term, the CPU should allow the digital key to be eliminated. An identity-based security process with fingerprints or eye scans might be developed.

“We are focus on onboarding the shipping companies and agents, terminals, shippers, forwarders, logistics operators, truck companies, inland navigation and rail operators (all involved parties) at Port of Antwerp,” the spokesperson said.

“We are focusing on Antwerp locally – it’s too early to discuss this topic with other ports.”

Written by Beth Maundrill

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