

# Record vehicle exports achieved at East London port

With over 10,000 new vehicles exported, Transnet and Mercedes-Benz South Africa (MBSA) recorded the highest units being handled in East London in April 2016. This significant record bodes well for the partnership of MBSA, Transnet Port Terminals (TPT) and Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) as well as the economy of the region and the country.



According to MBSA's CEO and executive director: manufacturing, Arno van der Merwe, the total number of Mercedes-Benz W205 C-Class vehicles exported via the East London port over the last three months amounted to 25,860. "In April, we were the highest exporter of new vehicles in South Africa when we recorded a total of 10,674 exports, which is a huge achievement and a record for MBSA, the East London Port and the Eastern Cape as a province. It is pleasing to see this type of successful collaboration between manufacturers, shipping lines and ports in achieving increased volumes with quick turnaround times as this will contribute to a much-needed injection into the economy," stated Van der Merwe.

He added that this achievement is part of building up from the record number of units that the East London plant produced in 2015, which has made it a net exporter from South Africa. "We are thrilled in being a key enabler of the automotive sector, an industry that makes up about 7% of South Africa's gross domestic product and accounts for almost 12% of the country's manufacturing exports. By being custodians of exporting such goods, we contribute immensely in the sustenance of jobs and in turning the tide against the current economic slump," said Karl Socikwa, chief executive of Transnet Port Terminals.

He added that TPT values its close working relationships with key stakeholders, such as MBSA, that are fundamental across the various sectors that contribute to the growth of the nation's economy. This achievement helps to not only instill further confidence in TPT's clients that Transnet Port Terminals is committed and geared up to take on increasing volumes through operational efficiencies – but it also speaks volumes for the nation's readiness on an international platform.

## High volumes

TNPA's invoiced figures for April 2016 also confirmed MBSA to have exported the highest volume of new vehicles of the six OEM exporters of which the RoRo exports amounted to 27,112 new vehicle units and containerised units amounted to 1,680 new vehicles units totalling 28,792.

Richard Vallihu, CEO of TNPA says this success story is also reflective of the strong value chain partnerships that MBSA and Transnet have developed and nurtured over the past few years. “As a proud partner and link in this chain, TNPA has seen first-hand the benefits of working closely with our customers and stakeholders, to the benefit of the entire regional economy. Together, MBSA and Transnet are engineering the fastest, most cost-effective and mutually beneficial model to bring product to market – wherever those markets are.

According to the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (NAAMSA) comment on the vehicle sales and export figures released by the Department of Trade and Industry, “new vehicle exports during April 2016 had registered a substantial improvement rising by 9,254 vehicles or 39.2% from 23,602 vehicles exported in April last year to 32,856 exports in April this year.”

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