

Abstract

The position of recreational boating in industrial ports.

This master's thesis explores how recreational boating can be safely integrated into industrial ports, aiming to foster greater insight and understanding of this interaction. The central question is: what is the role of recreational boating in and around an industrial port, and more specifically, in the Port of Antwerp? The research combined a literature review, a survey of 179 Belgian recreational boaters, and two in-depth interviews—one with a marina manager and one with a port authority representative from the Port of Antwerp.

The findings show that a uniform regulatory framework (AIS requirement, VHF reporting, designated routes) reduces objective risks but is perceived by recreational users as strict. Two-thirds of respondents use AIS Class B; they report feeling safer and note more predictable behavior from commercial vessels. Key challenges include limited infrastructure (e.g., restricted lock access), fragmented communication and insufficient information dissemination.

Conclusion: Recreational boating can take a responsible place in industrial ports when three conditions are met—clear rules, mutual respect, and smart use of technology—with AIS serving as a connecting element.