



The Port of Copenhagen: from a heavily polluted industrial port to a clean and thriving aquatic environment

Huge financial investments in techniques that handle discharge from sewers and clean up large amounts of industrial waste and chemicals in the Port of Copenhagen as well as a unique early warning system have helped the Port of Copenhagen to flourish with life in only ten years.

Today the Port of Copenhagen and the harbour pools are some of the more trendy places to hang out in the capital. The water is clean, there are loads of fish and birds and the apartments close to the waterfront are some of the most expensive apartments in Copenhagen. However, this was far from the reality ten years ago. The port was primarily an industrial port that was becoming increasingly unnecessary.

For many years, industry had poured mercury and other persist-

ent chemicals into the port, which accumulated in the sediment. And as in most other large cities, the Danish capital was faced with large amounts of discharge from sewers. During heavy rainfall, the problem was particularly strong. The result was health damaging water with only few species of fish and birds.

The City of Copenhagen decided to make long-term investments in improving the recreational area of the port and reducing the discharge from the sewers. The

first solution was to improve the existing waste water system; an old and unintelligent system not geared for handling overflows. With large financial investments the City of Copenhagen established new water-saving pools in order to obtain a general reduction in the discharge of waste water into the port. A Danish technology, the Kruger technology, was applied; however, some questions remain unanswered. The new pools have minimised overflow from the old pools and ensured cleaner water.



» In cooperation with citizens and businesses, the City of Copenhagen will ensure that the city is handed over to future generations in a better environmental state than when we received it. We are committed to demonstrating to ourselves and the world around us that local and global environmental challenges can be tackled

City of Copenhagen, The Technical and Environmental Administration



These investments were combined with a unique early-warning system, which warns swimmers if the water is not fit for swimming. The system consists of sensors and water-level meters that register the discharge from sewers. Sensors are placed in water-saving pools and register the discharge. As soon as a discharge is registered, a text message is sent to the harbour patrol.

The result of the efforts is that the pollution of the port is reduced to less than a quarter of the levels of 1996. The port has gained new species of birds and fish and more plants are flourishing at the bottom. Now most of the waterfront is a highly attractive place to live, which has also seen a boom in new house building.

However, a few challenges remain: the sediment is still too polluted and this can be measured in the levels of mercury in flatfish, and the overflow of discharge has not been completely stopped.

Read the complete article here: www.ecoinnovation.dk/english – chose Danish Lessons

Other relevant links: www.byoghavn.dk – chose English

