ABOVE-AVERAGE RESULT

Counting just deals of over 5,000 m², the warehouse and logistics premises market of the Ruhr region generated a good result, with 228,000 m². Admittedly, this fell far short of the outstanding prior-year figure (-40 %), but that had been driven substantially by major deals by Amazon and Opel, each with contracts of nearly 100,000 m². In the first half of this year, such huge deals were lacking but overall the region featured ongoing strong demand, enabling the take-up total to exceed the long-term average by 18 %. There were all of seven new leases in the range upwards of 20,000 m². The three biggest of these, each for premises of around 30,000 m², were concluded in Dortmund: one was a letting to a retailer, the other two were owner-occupier leases, by logistics service-provider Rhenus and the manufacturing firm of Wilo.

LOGISTICS FIRMS TAKE OVER LEAD

The business-sector spread of take-up featured a change in leadership. Stepping up their share by more than 32 percentage points, logistics firms secured the top slot with over 49 %, setting a new sector record with turnover of 186,000 m². As well as the major deal mentioned above, that result was fuelled by contracts concluded by DB Schenker (over 25,000 m² in Duisburg) and pharmaceuticals distributor PharmLog (over 20,000 m² in Bönen). Retailers, which had led the field last year, had to be content with second place after their share fell by nearly 12 percentage points to just under 38 %. In third place, with just over 13 %, came companies from the industrial/manufacturing sector.

MAJOR DEALS PREDOMINATE

Just like last year, activity was dominated by large deals. The considerable number of large-unit contracts upwards of 20,000 m² gave this size category a share of almost 71 % of all take-up. That is a higher proportion than in any of the other logistics regions surveyed. Way behind in the size-class ranking came the 12,000-20,000 m² bracket, with just under 17 %. That represented an increase of more than 13 percentage points. Much the same as in the comparable period in 2016, the 8,000-12,000 m² category accounted for about 10 %. The contribution made by the smallest segment, of contracts between 5,000 and 8,000 m², was unusually low, at slightly less than 3 %.
RENTAL PRICE LEVELS MAINLY STABLE

Despite the good demand situation and the restricted scale of supply, all that rents could do in the first half was to maintain their previous level. So the prime rent in this region, which is obtained for modern warehouse and logistics premises in Duisburg, still stands at 4.70 €/m², the level already reached at the end of 2015. The average rent is also unchanged, at 4.00 €/m². In contrast, the rental prices commanded by older existing premises in the low-price segment are coming under pressure because they do not attract much demand. Where location is concerned, the focus of logistics firms is particularly on the eastern and middle parts of the Ruhr region. In Hamm, for instance, speculatively built premises were almost entirely let before completion.

OUTLOOK

The Ruhr region can look back on a satisfactory first half, shaped by good demand and a number of large-unit deals. In view of the favourable general economic situation, this dynamism looks set to be sustained during the months ahead and may even increase slightly towards the end of the year. As a consequence, the supply of attractive existing premises is likely to be reduced even further, which will presumably oblige many businesses to opt for space in newly planned facilities. In spite of the limited level of availability, there are still no signs of any rise in rental prices.