

# A global logistics vision

By **MATTHEW FULCO** in Shanghai  
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Marie-Christine Lombard is the chief executive officer of Geodis, a global company based in France that provides end-to-end supply chain services. China Daily spoke with her ahead of the biannual Shanghai exhibition "transport and logistic China", in which Geodis will participate.

## Q: What are the particular challenges of the China market for Geodis and how do you manage them?

**A:** China has changed from an export-driven economy to an increasingly mature market, with a growing demand for domestic logistics solutions and with a need for reliable final mile deliveries to retailers and end consumers. The middle class is largely driving this, and there is a vast array of local providers competing in this market.

Designing green supply chains that are less CO<sub>2</sub> heavy, particularly in large cities like Shanghai, becomes an issue in this context. There is a growing environmental awareness. We believe we have good solutions to offer here based on the right expertise, given our company philosophy and our roots.

The infrastructure and the technical evolution in China are in constant progress. For us to be effective in answering customers needs we need to be both agile in footprint and expertise. So for us the right approach in China is to grow our own service portfolio and our existing network, and to cooperate with professional partners, to serve the market in the most innovative way, and at the same time to benefit from its dynamic development.

## Q: How does this fit into your regional and global development strategies?

**A:** Globally, there is a need for swift adaptability, in order to anticipate the growth paths of our customers, so that we are ready to service them. Geodis strategy is to make sure that the growth markets around the globe are accessible to all



**Marie-Christine Lombard**  
chief executive officer of Geodis

our clients. This ambition is reflected in our organizational structure, our geographical footprint and our investments in expertise.

## Q: Where are these markets, and how do you ensure accessibility for your clients?

**A:** We identify these markets via a customer-centric approach – we open corridors and services according to their needs. And we can certainly see a focus on the large economies such as Brazil, India, the US and again China.

It is not only about the capacity for goods going into and out of these economies, it is also about the right expertise, for example, in customs brokerage, local distribution and logistics for mega-cities and in industry-specific solutions.

In China for instance, we provide special services for FMCG and retail clients, including well-known fashion and luxury labels, as well as for the hi-tech, pharmaceuticals and automotive industries. And of course, there are further segments, such as the power and the oil and gas industries, which we service through a specialized unit for project logistics and oversized cargo.

## Q: Looking at your network, which are the most relevant trade partners for China?

**A:** In ocean freight Europe is still the biggest trading partner for us. Our biggest market share is in Nordics, in Central Europe with France, and with Italy in South Europe. This, as well as our overall network capacity, puts us in a position to service any large global industry player. Obviously the United States are a pivotal trading partner. Also in airfreight Europe is an important market for the Chinese manufacturers, despite the still struggling consumer market.

## Q: Does the evolving market in China affect your customers worldwide, and if so – how?

**A:** It does. Given the general expectations in the market, it is a must for us to be in the right countries. But having the right people is paramount. Because our clients face a constant need for innovative solutions to overcome logistical constraints, we need to bring the right people in front of them to cope with this trend. In China, there is certainly talent – and globally we can take competencies from China to the world.

Our customers in different markets ask us more and more often to do for them what we do well in China, and replicate this in India, the Middle East, Africa or South America. So you can see that China is about to become an important trendsetter in many ways.

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