

## Visit to Parchim International Airport, Chinese logistics in Europe (by: Ton van den Hanenberg)

Two years ago I noticed a small article in the NRC newspaper stating: "Chinese logistics company buys former military airport in Germany". Few months later I attended a seminar by Annette Nijs, former Secretary of Education and a China expert, about developments in China. The image of the dragon suddenly strikes in the western world, after a long "profound" or invisible preparation time. What is going on here? Are there new logistics developments taking place? Is China willing to enter the global logistics market with its own brands? Such questions are quite intriguing for the undersigned transportation economics lecturer at Logistics management, University of Applied Sciences Rotterdam.

A visit to the airport might be able to give more clarity. That visit took place under the elective program for the third year logistics students' project "China logistics", March 2010. This project is now running for the second year and is supported by the program manager of logistics and economics, Margriet Langenberg. After a journey of over 7 hours by train and a stay in Schwerin we, a group of 8 persons, were hosted by the General Manager, Mr. Zhang and his technical manager Mr. Arnstadt of Parchim International Airport.



The Board of the Bundesland Mecklenburg-Vorpommern issued a tender in 2007 for the acquisition of this airport. They hoped thereby to attract additional economic activity in this former East German region. Even companies like UPS and the Hamburg airport made a bid. The tender was eventually awarded to Global Link Logistics, a Chinese logistics service provider. The purchase of a European airport by a non-European party is unique. A piece of China in Europe is created. The airport is a pure cargo airport with unlimited possibilities for night flights. There is a combined rail-air link from Henan province, China and Abu Dhabi where flights are planned three times a week to Parchim airport.

It has become clear that Parchim airport, with its air traffic, adds additional opportunities to the China-Europe relations. There are cheaper and faster connections than the existing alternatives offered. There are currently 50 employees working in Parchim International Airport, of which two are Chinese. The management board is working hard with every airport in Europe in order to gain more publicity and run more flights from/to Parchim airport. The Chinese are determined to make this airport a success. The deadline set to achieve this mission is less important. We were welcomed with a great interest as our host embraced our interest in the airport with much enthusiasm. This case is an example of how Chinese design their logistics in Europe. The results of this visit will to be further developed by the students. For every new insight raises new questions. On April 29<sup>th</sup> 2010 the students will present the results of this research. If you would like to be informed about the outcome of this project, please e-mail us on the following address: [a.g.m.van.den.hanenberg@hro.nl](mailto:a.g.m.van.den.hanenberg@hro.nl).

