

Logistics Economic Geography

Economic agglomeration has been a defining feature of the Chinese economy. It was an advantage that China readily capitalized on to build the formidable coastal manufacturing ecosystems that are now highly competitive, particularly the Yangtze River Delta (YRD) and the Pearl River Delta (PRD), what means about 10% of Chinese cities will be the engine of productivity and growth. The force of agglomeration is unlikely to be reversed anytime soon, creating dynamics that will likely reshape China's regional development strategy.

In this issue, we introduce to you the ranking of regional import and export commodities and growth trends in the past three years, coastal base ports, base airports and inland transportation center cities, our liner products as well as our strengths. We hope this will help you in your further business planning, if you are interested in any product category, please contact marketing@hk.aelbkm.com or your regular contacts in AEL-Berkman for further consultation.

CHINA





Joost van Opstal
Chief Commercial Officer

**... BEING TRUSTED ADVISORS.
WE WORK IN SUCCEEDING
IN EVER CHANGING CONDITIONS!**

Logistics truly is the backbone of modern-day society, especially during COVID-19, it showed how vulnerable the Supply Chain is and what effect disruptions can have on the Global Economy. Being part of that industry on a day-to-day basis, working in a Global environment, finding the right customer solutions, and as a company succeeding in ever changing conditions, as challenging as it can be, makes working in Logistics one of the most exciting industries to work in.



After having spent his twenties working in Hospitality & Event Management in positions around the globe, of which the three last years in China. Joost decided he wanted a career change, and one that could specifically bring him to Hong Kong, a city he fell in love with having spent a lot of time there while living just across the border in Shenzhen.

Going back to his home country of the Netherlands, he started researching established Dutch companies, that somehow would be able to get him to Hong Kong eventually and wrote an open letter to those companies. It was Ed Arnold, Managing Director and co-founder of Berkman Forwarding, the Dutch parent company of AEL-Berkman who responded first, as Berkman was looking for a Business Development Manager for their China Operation, AEL-Berkman.

After talks with Ed and fourth-generation Business Owner Jan Berkman Joost got the trust from both to start in February 2016. As at that point Joost had no experience in the Supply Chain industry he started at the very start, and worked his way through Documentation, Operations, Booking department, Inside & Outside Sales for two years in the Netherlands before joining AEL-Berkman in Shanghai.

With Global Business Development as his main responsibility, he started building a pipeline from scratch and in the first year carefully selected and contacted close to one thousand potential Agent Partners. By doing this, as well as regularly taking part in global forwarders conferences and undertaking Agent Development trips in both North America and Europe, Joost has made AEL-Berkman a well-recognised and respected name among medium sized forwarders and customers globally. After one year side by side with CEO Sven Kothe in Shanghai, he finally made the move to his beloved Hong Kong.

The reunion did not go exactly as expected as Hong Kong coped with first the protests, and after that, three very long years of COVID restrictions preventing him from meeting partners globally in person. That said, when the rest of the world opened, Joost went through the three-week quarantine three times in order to visit partners and customers, combining it with visiting his family in the Netherlands.

Over the years Joost got involved in more and more projects within AEL-Berkman to support the transition from a traditionally Operations-minded company to a full-on Commercial organisation.

After taking on the transition into CargoWise CRM as well as optimising Rate & Quotation Management together with the Business Excellence team, implementing a new Sales Lead Development Program, heading the Online and offline Marketing Development, and now also heading Hong Kong Direct Sales Joost was appointed to Chief Commercial Officer in February 2023.

Joost is particularly proud of the development AEL-Berkman has made in the past five years. Going from an organisation that was mostly relying on global partners to a pro-active, Commercial organisation, striving towards full IT Automation, offering competitive Procurement

Solutions worldwide and growing its own Global and Local client base every day.

This development, while staying true to the family values that made the company successful, makes Joost very excited and motivated for many successful years to come.

